

POPLAR, MONTANA COMMUNITY REVIEW MATRIX

May and July, 2018

A compilation of the main topics, recommendations, and resources from the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Poplar Community Review Reports.



A service of the Montana Economic Developers Association in partnership with Montana Department of Commerce, Montana State University Extension, the University of Idaho and the University of Wyoming.

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*A compilation of the recommendations, and resources on the topic of **ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** from the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Poplar Community Review Reports.*

WORKSHEET INFO

Possibility #1: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT – Public Sector (currently) Formation of a Taskforce

Resources necessary to achieve this goal (financial and other):

- Academic institutions
- Federal, State, Tribal Governments
- Existing Employers
- HPDP

Identify who the lead agency, organization or individual should be in this process, and other partners who should be involved:

- A taskforce will be formed.

Time frame (60 days, 6-12 months, more than 12 months): 6 – 12 months

Are you willing to make a time commitment to help this possibility become a reality? List names and best contact (point of phone and/or email)

- Gary MacDonald commissioner@rooseveltcounty.org, Felix McGowan mcgowan@nemont.net, Haven Gourneau will serve on the Steering Committee.

Possibility #2: PRIVATE JOB CREATION - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Resources necessary to achieve this goal (financial and other):

- Great Northern Development Corp/SBDC
- Fort Peck Community College
- Shakopee
- BNSF

- HPDP
- GAP Analysis
- Tribe
- Local entities

Identify who the lead agency, organization or individual should be in this process, and other partners who should be involved:

- Brownfields Cleanup
- Investment Co-op
- Business incubator
- Telework
- Marketing
- BB Capacity
- Ledger Art
- Star Quilts

Time frame (60 days, 6-12 months, more than 12 months): 6 months

Are you willing to make a time commitment to help this possibility become a reality? List names and best contact (point of phone and/or email); see Sign Me Up Card database.

Possibility #3: JOB CREATION BASED ON EXISTING ASSETS

Resources necessary to achieve this goal (financial and other):

- Great Northern Development Corp/SBDC
- Technical Assistance at State, Tribal, and Federal levels

Identify who the lead agency, organization or individual should be in this process, and other partners who should be involved:

Time frame (60 days, 6-12 months, more than 12 months):

Are you willing to make a time commitment to help this possibility become a reality? List names and best contact (point of phone and/or email); see Sign Me Up Card database.

Action Plan

ISSUE: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

ACTION STEPS What you need to do to reach the goal	PERSONS OR PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE Who is responsible for each action step	RESOURCES NEEDED INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL	PROGRESS INDICATED = BENCHMARK How you know that you have made progress	COMPLETION DATE When you expect to complete each action step
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		Resources needed to complete action steps	on each action step	
<p>Hold an organizational meeting to address workforce needs in Poplar.</p> <p>Gary MacDonald to invite</p>	<p>One person from each primary industry sector:</p> <p>Schools – Poplar Super.</p> <p>Health Services – Peg County – Gary Mac</p> <p>Poplar Mayor</p> <p>FPCC – Haven</p> <p>Tribe – Rodney Miller</p> <p>Industry – Felix</p> <p>Banks – Mike Lienen</p> <p>Fish/Wildlife – Robby</p> <p>Facilitator: GNDC</p>	<p>FPCC Host</p> <p>Combine Phase 1 Survey with 2017 Report</p>	<p>Meeting is organized, everyone contacted.</p>	

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES

MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Workforce Taskforce

Recommendation: The working group met during the Team’s Phase II visit and had a good discussion that concluded with the realization that workforce development will be a key component to help drive economic development. The working group determined that a newly formed Taskforce would be in a position to create an Action Plan designed to address specific issues and opportunities identified during the Community Review.

Taskforce members would represent a cross-section of the community and could be appointed by the County Commissioners to give the group a formal structure. Members identified to be a part of the Taskforce include:

- Poplar Schools Superintendent (James Baldwin)
- Northeast Montana Health Services (Peg Norgaard)
- County Commission (Gary MacDonald)
- Poplar Mayor (Greg Norgaard)
- Fort Peck Community College (Haven Gourneau)
- Tribal Economic Development (Rodney Miller)
- Industry Representation (Felix McGowan)
- West Electronics
- Financial Institution (Mike Lienen)
- Tribal Fish & Wildlife (Robby Magnum)

Haven Gourneau offered to host the initial meeting at the college and Commissioner Gary MacDonald offered to invite the members. It was further determined that Great Northern Development be asked to facilitate at least the first meeting and assist the group in the development of an Action Plan.

Rodney Miller provided a State of the Workforce Study (July 2017, prepared by Thomas P. Miller and Associates). We recommend the Taskforce reviews this document and use this document as a basis for the Action Plan.

In addition to the information provided in the Workforce Study, consider these elements, which were identified during the Community Review process:

- Survey of existing employers to determine specific needs and barriers
 - Analysis of survey results to determine priority areas to address
 - Include analysis of Phase I survey to determine community responses to workforce and economic development concerns
 - Research available programs to address specific needs
 - Host classes, workshops, and other training delivery methods to meet employer needs
- Community branding to overcome the negative stigma(s) connected to the community, which will be a factor in employee attraction and retention.
 - It is recommended that this activity be addressed and coordinated across several of the working groups to create a strong, common vision.
- Develop a plan to increase access to tradespeople (carpenters, plumbers, electricians, etc.). This plan should include utilizing the Fort Peck Community College as a training partner, along with programs available through the Department of Labor and Industry.
- Workforce Housing Needs Assessment to determine the availability of housing to attract workers in the 80-120% of Median Household Income.
 - You may want to incorporate this as a portion of a larger study conducted to assess your overall housing stock and condition.
 - Work with Housing Improvement Program staff to achieve this goal.

Please keep in mind that these activities should be prioritized (low, medium and high) and a timeframe assigned. You cannot take on everything at once. You should also discuss specific industry sectors (agriculture, tourism, health care, etc.) and how much they contribute to your local economy when determining priorities.

The Action Plan template will be helpful as the group works through these activities. The best Action Plans are broken down into very specific steps and the Taskforce needs to keep in mind that a realistic plan will involve patience and long-term commitment. The Plan should be realistic, flexible, reviewed and adjusted at least annually.

Recommended Resource(s):

Great Northern Development for facilitation and access to a network of resources
www.gndc.org

Small Business Development Center programs and staff at Great Northern Development. www.gndc.org Shandy Hanks sbdc@gndc.org 406-653-2590 or 406-980-0052

POWER Montana retraining program from the Department of Labor & Industry Career change or enhanced training/retraining for coal-impacted workers. Primary focus of program is for currently displaced workers.
Liz Ching, Coordinator liz.ching@mt.gov 406-696-4371

Employers Toolkit from BillingsWorks Workforce Council
<http://www.billingsworks.org/employers/employers-toolkit/>

Internship Guide from BillingsWorks Workforce Council
<http://www.billingsworks.org/wp-content/uploads/Easy-Internship-Guide.pdf>

Iowa Employer Survey to use as a potential starting point:
<http://www.wcedc.com/assets/files/pdf/2014%20Workforce%20Needs%20Assessment%20Survey.pdf>

Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program – assists in setting up structured yet flexible training programs recognized by federal and industry standards designed to meet the specific needs of Montana employers through on-the-job training (OJT) and related classroom instruction. Apprenticeship Programs can be sponsored by employers, employer associations, or labor/management groups (JATC's) that can hire and train in a real world working situation.
www.apprenticeship.mt.gov Bo Bruinsma 406-655-6064 BBruinsma@mt.gov

Issue: Private Job Creation and Entrepreneurship

Recommendation: Employment in Poplar is fairly dependent on public sector jobs. Community members and the visiting team agree that a wider range of private sector jobs would provide a more diversified, and more sustainable economy. Activities that would encourage private sector job creation include:

- Business retention to keep and grow what already exists
- Entrepreneurship initiative to increase the number of new business starts.
- Creative Arts support to increase access to markets for their goods. This could include seasonal and year-round opportunities. Online selling platforms should be explored as a viable sales and distribution option, either by a collective of artisans, or individuals. Ledger Art and Star Quilts were specifically mentioned.
- An improved physical environment to make the community more attractive to new residents and businesses. Recommend working with the Community and Downtown Revitalization working group on this task.
 - Incorporate a clean-up effort into your strategy

Recommended Resource(s):

Great Northern Development for a version of the Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) program www.gndc.org

Small Business Development Center for a series entrepreneurship skills training classes.

www.gndc.org Shandy Hanks sbdc@gndc.org 406-653-2590 or 406-980-0052

Kauffman Foundation programs for Entrepreneurial Learning to assist in gaining a better understanding of an entrepreneur's needs.

<https://www.kauffman.org/what-we-do/entrepreneurship>

Montana Artrepreneur Program (MAP) is an art-centered business development program taught by working artists and open to all visual artists. <http://art.mt.gov/map>

Montana Governor's Office of Economic Development maintains a site selector report tool that would assist you to identify gaps in product availability. Navigate to the Generate Reports Tab, select the report type and choose city, county or radius filters. The MarketPlace Profile is included as an attachment to this report as an example of the information available.

<http://svc.mt.gov/gov/siteselector>

Montana Department of Commerce's Main Street Program has tools to assist in the development of your physical environment, primarily downtown revitalization.

<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/MainStreet>

Issue: Job Creation based on Existing Assets

Recommendation: Poplar has many assets that are conducive to job creation. Available water sources, sandy soil, agriculture resources and experienced ranchers, the industrial park, rail spur, Tribal industrial building, and the Buffalo Ranch. Jobs that are created by leveraging these assets are more likely to occur at a faster rate and be more sustainable than those that are not tied to an existing asset. This type of development is especially important in rural areas.

We recommend that this working group create a list of assets, discuss job creation potential for each of the assets, and develop an Action Plan based on the highest potential. Start with those that can be accomplished in a relatively short timeframe and with existing financial resources and build from the success of these to move up to bigger projects.

Recommended Resource(s):

The Appalachian Regional Commission produced a "*Turning Assets into Opportunities*" report that is worth reading through to understand the benefits of this strategy.

<http://www.arc.gov/images/newsroom/publications/assets/assets.pdf>

Asset-Based Community Development is another strategy that would be useful in Poplar's broader development goals. The ABCD Institute strategy builds on the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, and the supporting functions of local institutions to build stronger, more sustainable communities.

<https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/about/Pages/default.aspx>

Branding Resources:

Destination Branding for Small Cities

Book by Bill Baker. Excellent resource and practical information. Includes sections on Why Bother with Place Branding?, What is Being Branded and Why?, Mobilizing the Forces, and The Seven Steps to a Place Brand.

<https://www.amazon.com/Destination-Branding-Small-Cities-Second/dp/0984957405>

Roger Brooks – Destination Development International

Good resources and good content in the book, webinars and videos. There is a cost of \$250 per year to gain access to all the resources available, but Poplar area partners would benefit from the videos and webinars.

<https://www.destinationdevelopment.org/cpages/resource-center>

Issue: Overall Workforce and Economic Development

The overarching theme for the participants in this topic session was jobs as a way to stabilize the community, create a self-sustaining economy, stop the downward spiral of mental helplessness and depression that accompanies joblessness and leads to other forms of negative behavior, and creates a positive outlook for the next generation.

Education at the elementary and secondary level was seen as the strongest element in creating a firm and stable jobs base. Conversations must take place with employers who must speak to their own workforce needs, both in number of employees and in skills, training and education, in order for their business to thrive. The Fort Peck Community College (FPCC) is seen as a strong partner, responsive to meet the current and future education and training needs of local residents, businesses and industry.

The Fort Peck Tribes have many projects proposed, in design or underway. These projects need to be vetted with FPCC and Great Northern Development Corporation (GNDC) to determine whether the workforce is available to implement the projects as designed. Great Northern Development Corporation is known to many as the regional economic development partner who collaborates with local, state, tribal and federal resources with knowledge about how programs fit together and are matched to get the biggest bang for the buck.

Refocusing on communicating the priorities of the various entities who participate in tribal and county-wide planning, regional economic development, regional workforce development and regional workforce education would combine efforts where it makes

sense by supporting each other and agreeing on how reaching one goal at a time can help the region economically.

The BillingsWorks 2018 State of the Workforce report is an excellent resource that has been distributed statewide as an example of a focused effort on workforce development within the business/industry and education sectors.

Recommended Resources:

- [Fort Peck Tribes Assiniboine & Sioux State of the Workforce Study, July 2017](#)
Contact: Rodney Miller, Tribal Planning Director, rmiller@fortpecktribes.net, 406-768-2344
- [BillingsWorks 2017 State of the Workforce Report](#)
Contact: Karen Baumgart, BillingsWorks Director, Big Sky Economic Development, Karen@bigksyeda.org, 406-869-8416

Issue: Increase Trades

Recommendation: A two-pronged approach -

- 1) Interview or survey employers about their needs, either through roundtables or existing regular meetings (local chamber, service organizations, local chapters of industry associations, etc.). This will be helpful to know their needs when coming back around to ask them about hiring local job seekers or potential apprentices. This could be built around Fort Peck Community College's business degree with students. If successful, this could also be built into a future process that offers feedback to employers about what trends are developing that could enhance or expand their business in the future.
- 2) Report back to Fort Peck Community College faculty on employer needs to make natural connections to include updating curriculum as well as internships and/or apprenticeships based on both associate degrees and certificates to connect the college with businesses and industry. Some of the certificate programs that would pair well with a student being prepared to enter state apprenticeship programs and earn higher wages if they make it to the Journeyman or Master level are:
 - a. Automotive Technology
 - b. Building Trades
 - c. Diesel Technology
 - d. Electrical Line Worker
 - e. Welding Technology

Other career choices include healthcare, information technology and more. Please refer to <http://apprenticeship.mt.gov/occupations> for a listing of apprenticeable occupations in Montana.

The MT Department of Labor and Industry is always looking to development new apprenticeable occupations that could be structured to follow certifiable training and pay standards. They work closely with both industry and trade unions.

Recommended Resource(s):

- Montana Department of Labor and Industry Registered Apprenticeship Program: <http://apprenticeship.mt.gov>
NAME: Mr. Shannon Kadrmas, Glendive CONTACT INFO: skadrmas@mt.gov, 406-377-3314 or cell 406-559-7417
NAME: Mr. Bo Bruinsma, Billings CONTACT INFO: bbruinsma@mt.gov, 406-655-6064 or cell 605-751-9037
- What Jobs will be in Demand in the next Decade? <http://lmi.mt.gov/MTLaborBlog/ArticleID/119/What-Jobs-will-be-in-Demand-in-the-next-Decade>
- Job Projections for Montana and its 5 regions <http://lmi.mt.gov/Projections>.
- An emphasis should be placed on a few students every year who can access resources like the Job Corps all the while planning to return home. [Apply for the Job Corps](#) where you'll receive the guidance and learn the skills needed to master a trade, be counseled for college or receive services like job placement, career counseling or relocation counseling. Job Corps is the nation's largest free education and jobs training program for young adults. There are three Job Corps Centers in Montana: [Anaconda](#), [Kicking Horse](#) in Ronan, and [Trapper Creek](#) in Darby.

Issue: Business Creation

Recommendation: Residents wonder why Poplar businesses are no longer here. Why didn't they make it? What could open up and be successful? Are there regulations that make it difficult for businesses to operate and what can we do about them? What are some ideas for new businesses?

Ideas for New Businesses

- Develop the old Poplar airport for an industrial park that is open for commercial development.
- The Franz Bakery in Billings just announced they will not deliver bakery goods past Glasgow. Is this an opportunity for a bakery partnership that fills the need for breads and other goods on Highway 2? What about a partnership with the Hutterites?

- How do we develop the talent of Native Creatives in NE Montana and market their brands?
- Is growing hops a possibility with the fantastic growth in the brewing industry?
- Sidney Sugars employs 50-60 workers during harvest. Are we missing this as possibility for other industries?
- Fort Peck Tribes has been working with Off the Beaten Path for bison tours and is working up more tours. Are we training a workforce to accept this influx? Are we offering other types of hospitality that accompany these kind of tours?

Recommended Resource(s):

- **GREAT NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (<http://www.gndc.org>)**
Great Northern Development Center (GNDC) in Wolf Point provides professional services that empower others to reach their economic goals and improve their lives. The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at GNDC provides confidential business counseling for small business owners and entrepreneurs. CONTACT INFO: 233 Cascade Street, Wolf Point, 59201, 406-653-2590, info@gndc.org or sbdc@gndc.org
- **INDIAN COUNTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ICED) PROGRAM (<http://marketmt.com/ICP>)**
- **MADE IN MONTANA (<http://madeinmontanausa.com/>)**
These programs under the MT Department of Commerce assist Montana Native businesses in developing and marketing their products both in and out of the state and helps build recognition for products that are "authentically Montana." That means they are grown, created, made, and/or enhanced in the state resulting in 50% or more in added-value. The program requires that individuals and businesses meet the program's value-added definition to utilize the trademarked image on their qualifying products.

CONTACT INFO: MT Department of Commerce, 301 S Park Ave, PO Box 200533, Helena, 59620, 406-841-2870
- Indian Country Program Booklet:
<http://marketmt.com/Portals/129/shared/ICP/docs/ICEDProgramBooklet.pdf>
- Heather Sobrepena, Section Manager, hsobrepena@mt.gov; 406-841-2775
- **HANDMADE MONTANA (<https://handmademontana.com>)** HandMADE Montana in St. Ignatius is a professional organization for art & handcrafted

goods. We organize events (MADE fairs & workshops), provide resources to artists, and encourage growth and support in our community efforts. Thank you for supporting your local artists and a sweat-shop free economy.

CONTACT INFO: Carol Lynn Lapotka, PO Box 1314, St. Ignatius, Montana, 59865, 406-214-9078

- **NATIVE AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION + MT INDIAN BUSINESS ALLIANCE / MIBA** (<http://www.mibaonline.org>) The NADC in Billings and the Montana Indian Business Alliance (MIBA) promotes private Indian business development by maximizing and developing resources that encourage and support Montana Indian Entrepreneurs.

CONTACT INFO: Leonard Smith, Executive Director, lsmith@nadc-nabn.org; 406-259-3804; MIBA@nadc-nabn.org; 17 N 26th Street, Billings, 59101

- **MONTANA COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTER** (<https://mcdc.coop/cooperative-advantages/>)

A cooperative is an organization that is owned and democratically controlled by the people who use its products, supplies or services. Cooperatives are formed to meet the specific objectives of members, and are structured to adapt to member's changing needs. Working together as a group, members find they can accomplish more collectively than they could individually.

The benefits of belonging to cooperatives include:

- **Access** to quality supplies and services at reasonable costs
- **Increased visibility** and leverage in the marketplace
- **Share in earnings** based on use of co-op
- **Effective political action**
- **Enhance local economy** through services and job creation

An overview of cooperative advantages:

- **Not for profit** (profit is made for the members)
- **Equal voice** of members/shareholders
- **Special tax treatment** (sometimes)
- **Limited liability** for members/shareholders
- **Exempt** from Blue Sky laws
- **Improved marketing** of member products or services

CONTACT INFO: Jan Brown, Executive Director, jan@mcdc.coop; 406-727-1517;

Issue: Business Retention

Recommendation: Create a Business Council or Chamber that advocates for individual businesses and treats the existing business corridors as valuable assets for the community. The Poplar Phase 2 process has prioritized this process for implementation. Neighboring communities may be willing to speak to a group of businesses about their own successes and strategies for a successful business community alliance.

Recommended Resource(s):

- NAME: Glasgow Chamber Executive Director Lisa Koski CONTACT INFO: 406-228-2222, chamber@nemont.net
- NAME: Sidney Chamber/Visitors Bureau Executive Director Susan Joy; CONTACT INFO: 406-433-1916, info.chamber@sidneymt.com
- NAME: 2018 Montana Downtown Conference, 10/25-26, Bozeman affiliated with the Montana Downtown Coalition.
- Take a peek at the process Bozeman is undertaking to update the Downtown Bozeman Improvement Plan. <https://downtownbozeman.org/plan>; CONTACT INFO: Downtown Bozeman Partnership Executive Director Chris Naumann, chris@downtownbozeman.org, 406-586-4008

Issue: Tourism and Visitors - Attractions

Residents agree that people visiting for business, education, vacations or traveling to other destinations are a valuable source of outside dollars that positively impact the local economy. Local attractions and amenities need additional development and sustainable plans to generate the interest and to thereby motivate travelers to stop and spend time and money in Poplar. There are several possibilities and examples that exist that could be expanded, further developed or reinvented using partnerships and resources that may not have previously existed.

Recommendation for possible attractions, events, activities:

Develop self-guide driving tour to the bison herd(s), incorporate a mobile app, have a visitor tipi with information on the Yellowstone bison, the significance of the bison, have a food truck or tipi serving bison menu items, perhaps bison jerky, other specialty foods. Use as art gallery, rental shop, gear sales, Made in Montana goods, sleeping quarters for seasonal workers and more!

Make existing museum, arts & crafts building accessible from highway (the chainlink fence screams “stay out”).

Have a visitor information, gift shop be located inside an actual tipi setup along side Highway 2. Visitors could go inside tipis for various demonstrations, viewing, etc. Have several set up and have actual Assiniboine and Sioux tribal members in authentic dress serve as ambassadors. Have a glamping tipi camp complete with luxury amenities (buffalo hide rugs, old west charm, etc.). This employs local people while providing education and cultural preservation.

Tipis are popular on Airbnb.com and glampinghub.com, please searching online for travel and lodging would find Poplar's offerings and want to incorporate other experiences while staying in a tipi.

Hire or have volunteer Native Americans in authentic dress ride horses along side the tracks as Amtrak travels through twice a day, could link up with other stops along the highway in Wolf Point, Malta.

Restore the theatre on main street to its original glory. This would be part of the overall main street improvement project. Once restored, this would be a crown jewel historic building and attraction that locals could enjoy as well as visitors. Feature vintage films, documentaries, develop a film product to go along with the bison tour.

Develop paddle board route on the Poplar River with existing access points. Have a tipi with rentals available.

Recommended Resource(s):

Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development – MARKETMT.COM and VISITMT.COM

- Tribal Tourism Montana| marketmt.com/ICP | Carla Lott, Tribal Tourism Officer
Carla.lott@mt.gov 406 841 2734
- VisitMt.com - Include business, attractions, events in the business listings searchable online directory on visitmt.com
- Tourism grants | marketmt.com/grants – available for cultural heritage preservation, visitor sites and niche product development
- Missouri River Country tourism region | <http://missouririver.visitmt.com> (new website coming soon), coordinate/leverage tourism partners' efforts
- Made in Montana, Grown in Montana, Native American Made in Montana | madeinmontanausa.com

Lewis and Clark Historic Trail | lewisandclark.travel (nominate local places to be included on web map, free resource from The National Park Services

Montana Hi Line | hilinetrail.com - online searchable site featuring Montana Cowboy and Indian Adventure

[American Indian Foods](#) / Intertribal Agriculture Council / USDA Foreign Agriculture Service

American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association | www.aianta.org - define, introduce, grow and sustain American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian tourism that honors traditions and values

Examples:

Pale Horse Tipi Camp, Riel Houle <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/teepee-camp-reserves-tourist-destination-1.4718547>

undercanvas.com – glamping in canvas tents and tipis (Moab, Yellowstone, Glacier, Zion, Mount Rushmore, Grand Canyon and Great Smokies) founder Jacob Dusek is from Havre, Montana

sundancelodges.com – in Canada

[Tipi Village](#) – in Browning

[Terry Bison Ranch](#) – bison train tour, guided trail rides and steakhouse

montanadinnertrain.com – Charles Russell Chew Choo in Lewistown, small section of operating train with live re-enactment of train robbers to delight riders

Little River Smokehouse | americanindianfoods.com – buffalo jerky, meat sticks, sausages, packaged for retail sale

Issue: Overall Workforce and Economic Development

The people of Poplar wanted to create economic opportunities in the community and address workforce development needs of the people. Specific areas stated were to increase the availability of the trades industry professionals, business creation and retention and to increase the availability of community services.

Recommendations:

The first steps toward developing your economy may be to survey the existing businesses in the community and identify their needs. This may be accomplished with the working group identified during the community meetings. Then you will have specific data to help determine a direction to address the needs.

Utilize Fort Peck Community College (FPCC) and Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) to identify existing local training programs and requirements for businesses to operate. Additional local resources for business development and workforce training opportunities is the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) that is hosted by Great Northern Development Corporation. They offer a variety of services for these specific needs.

If access to funding is required for any of the activities, for this topic, there are a few different sources to choose from. USDA Rural Development has funding to assist with technical assistance, planning, training and access to capital through Rural Business

Development Grant (RBDG). Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP) and the Intermediary Relending Program (IRP). Both RMAP and IRP programs can be accessed through the Loan Officer at GNDC. Additionally, Montana Big Sky Trust Fund (BSTF) has funding to assist with job creation and planning projects.

Recommended Resources:

USDA Rural Development

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/MT_Home.html

Martin DeWitt, Business Program Specialist, 1629 Ave. D, Building A Suite 6, Billings, MT (406)657-6297

Montana Department of Commerce

<http://businessresources.mt.gov/BSTF>

Alyssa Townsend, Program Specialist, 301 S. Park Ave., Helena, MT (406)841-2748

Great Northern Development Corporation

<http://www.gndc.org>

Kelcie Bates, Loan Officer, 233 Cascade St., Wolf Point, MT (406)653-2590

Shandy Hanks, SBDC Director, 233 Cascade St., Wolf Point, MT (406)653-2590

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/CDBG/CDBGED>

Tash Wisemiller, Program Manager, 301 S. Park, Helena, MT (406)841-2756



*A compilation of the recommendations, and resources on the topic of **COMMUNITY AND DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION** from the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Poplar Community Review Reports.*

WORKSHEET INFO

Possibility #1: DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL SITES

Resources necessary to achieve this goal (financial and other):

- Cooperation of existing land and building owners
- Clean-up Funding
- Cooperation of City, Local, Tribal Governments

Identify who the lead agency, organization or individual should be in this process, and other partners who should be involved:

- Existing business owners
- Property owners
- Local, state tribal funders
- Brownfields

Time frame (60 days, 6-12 months, more than 12 months):

Are you willing to make a time commitment to help this possibility become a reality? List names and best contact (point of phone and/or email)

- Ashleigh Weeks, Wilfred Lambert

Possibility #2: COMMUNITY PARK

Resources necessary to achieve this goal (financial and other):

- City, State, Tribal Government Support
- MSU Program

Identify who the lead agency, organization or individual should be in this process, and other partners who should be involved:

- Fort Peck Tribes/EPO
- Community volunteers
- Law Enforcement (prevent loitering, littering, etc.)

Time frame (60 days, 6-12 months, more than 12 months):

Are you willing to make a time commitment to help this possibility become a reality? List names and best contact (point of phone and/or email)

- Ashleigh Weeks has already begun work on this project.

Possibility #3: COMMON VISION FOR POPLAR DOWNTOWN

Resources necessary to achieve this goal (financial and other):

- Existing businesses
- People of Poplar
- MT Dept. of Commerce – Technical Assistance

Identify who the lead agency, organization or individual should be in this process, and other partners who should be involved:

- Form a Downtown Association
- Great Northern Development Corp.

Time frame (60 days, 6-12 months, more than 12 months):

Are you willing to make a time commitment to help this possibility become a reality? List names and best contact (point of phone and/or email); see Sign Me Up database.

Action Plan

COMMUNITY AND DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

ISSUE: Downtown Revitalization

Goal: Create and build an active Poplar downtown.

ACTION STEPS	PERSONS OR PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL	PROGRESS INDICATED = BENCHMARK	COMPLETION DATE
What you need to do to reach the goal	Who is responsible for each action step	Resources needed to	How you know that you have made progress	When you expect to complete each action step

		complete action steps	on each action step	
Form a Poplar Downtown Association	Mert Frank and Mike Make Poplar Great Again	MT Main Street Program	Association is formed	Late summer 2018
Apply for Downtown Master Plan Grant	John Grainger, Mayor	Great Northern Development – Grant Ap	Grant submitted Master Plan Developed	Fall 2018 By 2020
Main Street Community Park And tree planting	Wilfred and Ashleigh	MSU Bozeman plans	Park Development	1 – 2 years
Adopt a lot				

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES

COMMUNITY AND DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Issue: Increase Community Services

Recommendation: Begin an informal process for a planning and growth policy with the business community to gain support for this process. What does the community of Poplar want to look like in 5 years? What will that mean for residents, schools, seniors, workforce, the community college, healthcare, housing and more?

Recommended Resource(s):

- **Montana Department of Commerce – Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) - <http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/CTAP>**

The Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) provides professional planning assistance to communities across Montana in support of sound land use and development decisions, economic revitalization, and overall community resilience. Technical assistance is provided through workshops and trainings, direct assistance by phone or email, collaboration with local, state, and

federal partners, the creation of model documents, and guidance on planning best practices.

- MT 211 mobile app - <https://www.montana211.org/faq.php>

Poplar Area Stressors – Community Survey

- Substance Abuse
- Crime & safety
- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Homelessness
- Lack of Job Opportunity

Poplar Area Shocks

- Business closure
- Infrastructure failure
- Drought
- Severe winter weather
- Severe summer weather

Issue: Downtown Revitalization

Recommendations:

Prepare a Downtown Revitalization Plan

It is recommended that the City of Poplar, in coordination with the Ft. Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, Roosevelt County, Montana Department of Transportation, Fort Peck Community College, and Great Northern Development Corporation, prepare a plan for the revitalization of the Poplar downtown consisting of that area along Second Avenue lying generally south of U.S. Highway 2. During the Resource Team meetings, the desire to re-develop and revitalize the downtown core of Poplar was consistently expressed.

Revitalization Plan Elements -

A revitalization plan for the Poplar downtown would encompass at least the following efforts:

- analysis of existing land use and building conditions;
- analysis of infrastructure – especially current water, wastewater, stormwater, roadway, on- street and off-street parking needs, and sidewalk conditions;

- consideration of streetscape alternatives, including streetlights, benches, pedestrian usage, and street trees, including related landscaping;
- review of marketing trends and opportunities, including promotion, signage, and wayfinding;
- consideration of historic preservation opportunities;
- consideration of design guidelines to promote a special community character;
- development of final plan implementation elements, including identification of individual actions and projects for improvement, assignment of responsibilities, timelines, and financing. This final section would focus on both short and long-range actions.

Many options can be considered design-wise in terms of the physical redevelopment of the downtown. The width of Second Avenue Southwest (approximately 60 feet) would accommodate diagonal parking, two lanes for traffic movement, as well as bulb-outs to better encourage pedestrian movement and provide space for street trees, benches, and public art. Figure 1 – see attached – is an illustrative example of a plan for continuing renovation of one of the key blocks in downtown Grand Junction, Colorado. Note that this plan includes a winding two-way roadway, staggered diagonal parking, and broad areas for pedestrian movements combined with extensive landscaping. This plan option and many more can be evaluated for Poplar’s downtown.

Linkage to Tribal and Montana Department of Transportation Initiatives -

To achieve success, it is vital that the proposed downtown Poplar planning effort be coordinated with the efforts of the Fort Peck Tribes to develop the master planned area in the vicinity of the Tribal headquarters’ offices as well as the efforts of the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) to make improvements to U.S. Highway 2 within the Poplar community. This concept of key, community linkages is sketched in the attached Figure 2.

Given the history, culture, and presence of the Tribal headquarters, redevelopment of the Poplar downtown should be considered in the context of efforts to redevelop and revitalize the entire Poplar community, as well as adjoining Tribal properties, so that all redevelopment and development activities can be coordinated, to result in a comprehensive community revitalization effort.

Recognizing the responsibility and resources of the Montana Department of Transportation and the key role played by Highway 2 in the community, cooperation with MDT is essential. Contacting the Transportation Alternatives Program at MDT (please see below) would be a key first step in identifying possible assistance in

implementing downtown improvements. In addition, extensive outreach to the current businesses and individual citizens and residents of Poplar in all stages of the development of the downtown plan is vital, supported by the efforts and resources of the Great Northern Development Corporation.

Establish a Downtown Improvements Association –

It is also recommended that the City of Poplar support the establishment of an informal downtown Poplar improvements association. Such an organization comprised of downtown property owners and City representatives could lay the foundation for development of the downtown plan and eventual revitalization of the Poplar downtown area. Tribal participation should also be invited to facilitate coordination between the city and Fort Peck Tribes.

The downtown association could meet informally once or twice a month as necessary to advise the city on redevelopment issues as well as coordinate improvement efforts on the part of private property owners. The Poplar Downtown Association would play a key role in the development of the downtown master plan.

Create and Support an On-going Community Transportation Planning Process

Directly related to Ryan Kopp's (Interstate Engineering) recommendation for a meeting to consider Active Transportation issues within the Poplar area, establishment of an ongoing transportation planning process would significantly enhance both the promotion and coordination of transportation improvements within the entire Poplar area. Representatives in this process would include the city, downtown association, general citizens, and Ft. Peck Tribes, working closely with the Montana Department of Transportation.

Recommended Resources:

- Montana Main Street Program

The Montana Main Street Program can provide technical assistance oriented toward the revitalization of Poplar's downtown. With membership in the program, communities are eligible to pursue competitive grant funding for downtown-related planning or brick-and-mortar projects. A required first step towards membership is a local meeting inviting staff of the Community and Economic Vitality program of the Montana Department of Commerce to present about the potential of the program, downtown Montana success stories, and discuss next steps for Poplar.

Tash Wisemiller, Community and Economic Vitality Program Manager,
(406) 841-2756, twisemiller@mt.gov
<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/MainStreet>

- CDBG Planning Grants

CDBG Planning Grants can be used for a wide variety of community development related planning needs. The grant ceiling is \$50,000. Funds have to be matched on a 1 to 3 basis (\$1 local for every \$3 requested from the State). Applications for current funds have already been received, but depending on the availability of Fiscal Year 2018 funds, a second round of CDBG Planning Grants may be available this fall that the City of Poplar could apply for to prepare a downtown master plan.

Galen Steffens, Planning Manager, (406) 841-2819, gsteffens@mt.gov
<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/CDBG/PlanningActivities>

- Key Resources

National Main Street Center <https://www.mainstreet.org/home>

Downtown Roundup and Thompson Falls Master Plans – good examples of Montana community downtown planning documents.

<http://www.roundupmontana.net/planning-documents.html>

<https://cityofthompsonfalls.com/downtown-master-plan>

- Publication -

Revitalizing Main Street, A Practitioner's Guide to Comprehensive Commercial District Revitalization, 2009. National Trust for Historic Preservation,
<http://nhtod.org/revitalizing-main-street-a-practitioners-guide-to-comprehensive-commercial-revitalization-2009/>

- Montana Department of Transportation – Transportation Alternatives Program

https://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta_application.shtml

Dave Holien – Transportation Alternatives Engineer – dholien@mt.gov (406) 444-6118

Note – on September 25, 2018 a workshop is scheduled in Glendive for local governments to learn about the Transportation Alternatives Program. Contact Dave Holien for more information.

Issue: Downtown Revitalization

Recommendations: Main Street Community Park and Tree Planting –

Building on plans prepared by students at Montana State University – Bozeman, the Poplar city government is working on plans for park development to be located immediately adjacent to Poplar's downtown. Possible sources of assistance are outlined below. Tree planting assistance may also be available:

Resources:

- Park Development with Emphasis on Health/Exercise - Montana Healthcare Foundation
- (406) 451-7060 <https://mthcf.org/>
- Urban Tree Assistance – Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation - Urban & Community Forestry Grants <http://dnrc.mt.gov/grants-and-loans>
- Trails Assistance - Michelle McNamee, State Trails Coordinator, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks michelle.mcnamee@mt.gov (406) 444-7642
- <http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/recTrailsProgram.html>

MAIN TOPIC: Community

Issue: Appearance

Residents agree that an inviting appearance, especially on Highway 2 and the main streets, is important to attracting visitors or those who would otherwise just drive through to stop and visit for food, gas, shopping, attractions or overnight stays.

Recommendation:

Annual attention to trees along highway. Keep grasses and other vegetation mowed; sidewalks cleared. Add curb appeal along walking path with xeriscape plants, gravels, rocks that require minimum care (sagebrush and yucca are very attractive). Add benches along walking path; picnic tables to the park that is close to the highway and at the water access areas (sun shelters already exist). Plant more trees throughout town; not only do they help provide a greener space, they cool the local climate with shade and hold moisture. Fall leaves provide color and attractive dimension to the flat land.

Clean up garbage, perhaps have semi-annual Poplar Pride cleanup of yards, businesses and the highway. Remove junk vehicles, piles of dirt, debris...anything that is visible from Highway 2. Remove or replace signage that is negative or scary!

Place signage that is sturdy and permanent, perhaps with art installation (buffalo, tipi) at the entrance to town on Highway 2, east and west. Think about the Hi-Line and Poplar being not only a beginning, but the first stop traveling west or the last best stop traveling east!

Wayfinding and signage as to “what there is to see and do in Poplar”; not just “entering Poplar, Montana”. These could be sandwich boards put out just for events, or permanent banners hanging from street lights. Billboards on Highway 2 – the [Theodore Roosevelt Highway](#)

- Visit authentic Trading Post, turn here
- Visit Yellowstone Bison Herd (or whatever the name), turn here
- Museum and Trading Post, open
- Huckleberry Shakes
- Farmer’s Market or Peoples’ Market
- Signage to events held on campus of Fort Peck Community College
- Visit historic cannon from Battle of Camp Poplar

Recommended Resource(s):

Montana Department of Transportation wayfinding and signage [guidelines](#)

Montana Dinosaur Trail | mtdinotrail.org – Fort Peck Interpretive Center at Fort Peck is “on” the trail; signage or billboard in Poplar directs folks on the Dino Trail to visit Poplar (museum, bison herd, trading post, tipi village, etc.)

Montana State Parks | stateparks.mt.gov – [Recreational Trails Program, Recreation Grants](#) can be used to develop trailside facilities, trail maintenance and more

Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development – MARKETMT.COM and VISITMT.COM

- Tribal Tourism Montana| marketmt.com/ICP | Carla Lott, Tribal Tourism Officer Carla.lott@mt.gov 406 841 2734
- VisitMt.com - Include business, attractions, events in the business listings searchable online directory on visitmt.com
- Tourism grants | marketmt.com/grants – available for cultural heritage preservation, visitor sites and niche product development
Jan Stoddard, Bureau Chief, Industry Services Outreach jstoddard@mt.gov 406 841 2894
- Missouri River Country tourism region | <http://missouririver.visitmt.com> (new website coming soon), coordinate/leverage tourism partners’ efforts

- Carla Hunsley, Executive Director 2mtmrc@nemont.net 800 653 1319
- Montana Film Office | montanafilm.com | Allison Whitmer, Montana Film Commissioner Allison.Whitmer@mt.gov 406 841 2881

Examples:

[Entrance](#) to Blackfeet Reservation at Browning, sculpture by Jay Laber

[Chester,MT](#) welcome sign

[Deer Lodge billboard](#) - Discover Historic Deer Lodge, Visit Grant-Khors Ranch, Old Montana Territorial Prison, exit now to city center

Medora North Dakota – “Medora - Explore It. Adore It.” Poplar Montana “the most Poplar place in Montana!” What’s missing in Poplar – U make it the most popular place in the state! “Welcome to the most Poplar place in Montana” What makes us Poplar popular – U! The most popular places in Poplar – trading post, bison herd, coffee pot, Tastee Freeze, Poplar River trail, etc.

MAIN TOPIC: Community and Downtown Revitalization

Issue: Blight, Brownfields, Master Plan, Engagement, Investors

The main topics that were discussed regarded blight removal, brownfields redevelopment, master plan development, community engagement and identify investors.

Recommendations:

Planning is key to proper development and addressing community needs in any situation. Equally as important to planning is the implementation and continuous review of the planning efforts. This allows the opportunity to identify priorities, address or adjust the approach and celebrate meeting the defined goals of planning.

First area to address begins with developing an inventory of existing planning documents and determine what is obsolete and what is still usable documents. Develop committees utilizing local government, community organizations and youth to review and assist in updating the pertinent documents. Then identify funding assistance opportunities to hire a planning consultant as necessary and begin addressing needs.

Continue the support and efforts of the Tribal Department of Environmental Quality, they are advancing several sites to potential redevelopment. Make sure to leverage opportunities of other funding sources. Locally, GNDC has funding to address brownfields sites. USDA Rural Development has RBDG funds for technical assistance and planning efforts that can additionally provide funding for environmental assessments or revitalization planning to benefit business development. Revitalization may also be addressed through the Montana Main Street Program in the CDBG division.

Recommended Resources:

USDA Rural Development

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/MT_Home.html

Martin DeWitt, Business Program Specialist, 1629 Ave. D, Building A Suite 6, Billings, MT (406)657-6297

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/CDBG/CDBGED>

Tash Wisemiller, Program Manager, 301 S. Park, Helena, MT (406)841-2756

Great Northern Development Corporation

<http://www.gndc.org>

Tori Matejovsky, Executive Director, 233 Cascade St., Wolf Point, MT (406)653-2590



A compilation of the recommendations, and resources on the topic of EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND HEALTH from the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Poplar Community Review Reports.

WORK SHEET INFO

“Community Heartstrings”

Possibility #1: PROMOTE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Resources necessary to achieve this goal (financial and other):

- Parents
- Alternative Education Tools

Identify who the lead agency, organization or individual should be in this process, and other partners who should be involved:

- Fort Peck Community College
- Public School District
- Tribal support

Time frame (60 days, 6-12 months, more than 12 months):

Are you willing to make a time commitment to help this possibility become a reality? List names and best contact (point of phone and/or email)

- Suzanne Turnbull will serve on the Steering Committee. Also in this working group: Dr. Kenneth Ryan, Mike Leiner, Deb McGowan, Dennis Four Bear, Abbie Oak.

Possibility #2: EFFECTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT

Resources necessary to achieve this goal (financial and other):

- Incarceration capacity

- Judicial reform
- Grant funds

Identify who the lead agency, organization or individual should be in this process, and other partners who should be involved:

- Tribal Law, BIA, Multi-jurisdictional Law Enforcement must all be on the same page. For example, identifying a certain behavior is wrong and deciding together what will be done when such behavior takes place.

Time frame (60 days, 6-12 months, more than 12 months):

Are you willing to make a time commitment to help this possibility become a reality? List names and best contact (point of phone and/or email); see Sign Me Up database.

Possibility #3: CAPITALIZE ON TOURISM

Resources necessary to achieve this goal (financial and other):

- Leverage cultural assets
- USDA
- EDA
- SBA
- MT Dept. of Commerce

Identify who the lead agency, organization or individual should be in this process, and other partners who should be involved:

- Western Heritage
- Those involved in Agriculture
- Great Northern Development Corp.
- People of Poplar

Time frame (60 days, 6-12 months, more than 12 months):

Are you willing to make a time commitment to help this possibility become a reality? List names and best contact (point of phone and/or email); see Sign Me Up database.

ACTION PLANS

EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND HEALTH

ISSUE: Education Opportunities

Goal: Improve graduation rates, parenting, and offer alternative education choices.

ACTION STEPS What you need to do to reach the goal	PERSONS OR PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE Who is responsible for each action step	RESOURCES NEEDED INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL Resources needed to complete action steps	PROGRESS INDICATED = BENCHMARK How you know that you have made progress on each action step	COMPLETION DATE When you expect to complete each action step
Collect data on historical graduation rates	Keith Erikson	Access to Data	Data is in hand	1 month
Tuancy data	Keith Erikson	Access to Data	Data is in hand	1 month
Parental Education to promote more parental involvement	Tribes Education Committee	Budget identifying programs	Participation surveys	6 months
Create alternative education opportunities	Fort Peck Community College OPI	Finance Dedicated space Personnel	Completion of program	2 years
Additional Assistance:	Dr. Kenneth Ryan, Mike Leiner, Deb McGowan, Dennis Four Bear, Abbie Oak			

ISSUE: Education and Law Enforcement

Goal: Improved coordination and cooperation with all law enforcement.

ACTION STEPS What you need to do to reach the goal	PERSONS OR PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE Who is responsible for each action step	RESOURCES NEEDED INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL Resources needed to	PROGRESS INDICATED = BENCHMARK How you know that you have made progress on each action step	COMPLETION DATE When you expect to complete each action step

		complete action steps		
Study city county tribe fine structures and compare to national average.	Work Study with the college	Cooperation from each government	Data collected	6 months
Obtain examples of successful multi- jurisdictional governments and share how they function.	Tribal/County/City enforcement entities			

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES

EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND HEALTH

Issue:

Members of the community wanted education to become a priority in the community and to see the graduation rates increase along with expanded opportunities for alternative learning, cultural language/ heritage education and engaged parenting courses. Additionally, they wanted to address ways to allow the law enforcement to be more effective and efficient to enhance public safety. There was also considerable discussion around opioid prevention and treatment.

Recommendations:

This topic will need to be driven by community engagement, potentially through focus groups that partner with the existing resources provided through the school district, college, city, county and tribes

These focus groups can develop a community listing of services and offerings throughout the community. Promote the availability of these services through community calendars, web presence and outreach.

Funding opportunities are limited in specifically addressing these needs as the burden of funding is expected from the local government.

Recommended Resources:

USDA/ Rural Communities Opioid Response-Planning Program

USDA/ Tribal Opioid Response Grants

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/opioids>



*A compilation of the recommendations, and resources on the topic of **INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING** from the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Poplar Community Review Reports.*

WORKSHEET INFO

Possibility #1: SWIMMING POOL/SPLASH PARK

Resources necessary to achieve this goal (financial and other):

- Working with local construction crews and suppliers to build
- BNSF Foundation
- Trans Canada

Identify who the lead agency, organization or individual should be in this process, and other partners who should be involved:

- City and County
- Women's Clubs
- Tribal Elves

Time frame (60 days, 6-12 months, more than 12 months): Within 2 years

Are you willing to make a time commitment to help this possibility become a reality? List names and best contact (point of phone and/or email)

- Frank 650-3004, Shane Haverson 895-7953. Frank will serve on the Steering Committee as well as Deb Madison.

Possibility #2: SOLID WASTE CLEAN UP – ROLL OFF SITE CLASS III

Resources necessary to achieve this goal (financial and other):

- Roosevelt County – County Landfill
- Recycler machine

Identify who the lead agency, organization or individual should be in this process, and other partners who should be involved:

- City, County, Tribes must all work together and make a commitment to the project.

Time frame (60 days, 6-12 months, more than 12 months): 2 years

Are you willing to make a time commitment to help this possibility become a reality? List names and best contact (point of phone and/or email)

- Deb Madison

Possibility #3: SIDEWALKS AND STREETLIGHTS

Resources necessary to achieve this goal (financial and other):

- MDU
- City TA Grant to build Transportation Plan to access funds

Identify who the lead agency, organization or individual should be in this process, and other partners who should be involved:

- Local leadership

Time frame (60 days, 6-12 months, more than 12 months): 1 year

Are you willing to make a time commitment to help this possibility become a reality? List names and best contact (point of phone and/or email)

- Contact Ryan Kopp, Interstate Engineering

ACTION PLAN

INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING

ISSUE: Splash Park

Goal: Build a splash pad/splash park for Poplar.

ACTION STEPS	PERSONS OR PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	PROGRESS INDICATED = BENCHMARK	COMPLETION DATE
What you need to do to reach the goal	Who is responsible for each action step	INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL Resources needed to complete action steps	How you know that you have made progress on each action step	When you expect to complete each action step

Establish our committee and partners	Frank Gourneau Shane Haverson	Phone, time, email	Hold two meetings	1 month
Site selection	Committee	City services available, available site, environmental review	Site selected	3 months
Finalize plans	Committee and needed engineer review	Final drawings Finalize plans for needed infrastructure	One set of final plans	January 2019
Funding asks	Committee, GNDC, ED	Set of final plans Letters of support	Identify 3 – 4 funding sources, complete applications	March 2019
Establish construction schedule	Committee and interested contractors	Engineer review – plans, survey ,etc.	Completed schedule	May 2019
Build it	Contractor who committed by letter	Funds for construction	Splash pad installed	July 4, 2019

ISSUE: Solid Waste District for Class III

Goal: Facility for disposal of construction waste and recycling.

ACTION STEPS What you need to do to reach the goal	PERSONS OR PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE Who is responsible for each action step	RESOURCES NEEDED INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL Resources needed to complete action steps	PROGRESS INDICATED = BENCHMARK How you know that you have made progress on each action step	COMPLETION DATE When you expect to complete each action step
Establish meeting with Roosevelt County	Deb Madison Tina Magnen	Time establish meeting date	One meeting with powerpoint	Oct 2018

Establish lots for Class III	Engineer	Money for the planning phase GAP AW	One feasibility analysis for class III	June 2019
Review recycling opportunities	Engineer		Feasibility option	June 2019
Complete district approval	County, Tribes, City	Ballot needed? Resolution?	District Established MOA with Tribe	January 2020
Purchase equipment	District meeting	Funds from district/Grant	Site, equipment purchased	October 2020
District meeting	County, Tribes, City	Fund from district/Grant	Open for Business	May 2021

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES

MAIN ISSUE: HOUSING

During our listening sessions with the people of Poplar, deficient housing was often cited as a general problem in the community. Housing grant resources are available from the Montana Department of Commerce, Community Development Division for the following three programs- Community Development Block Grant, HOME, and Housing Trust Fund, as noted below. In addition, the Montana Board of Housing administers the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program that can provide rental units for families with lower incomes.

Recommended Resources:

- Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

Pending receipt of FY 2018 Federal HUD funds, the Montana CDBG program plans to accept applications for Multifamily (Large Scale) Housing this fall. The city can also apply for CDBG assisted housing rehabilitation funds (one home at a time) that can be used in combination with USDA Rural Development funds. Each housing project must demonstrate that the projected beneficiaries would be households earning less than 80 % of the area median income. Low interest loan assistance is also available to help businesses that would retain or create jobs for low and moderate income persons.

Julie Flynn, Housing Program Manager, (406) 841-2890, Julie.Flynn@mt.gov

Gus Byrom, Outreach Coordinator, Community and Economic Vitality Program, (406) 841-2777 gbyrom@mt.gov

- HOME Program and Housing Trust Fund

Applications to the HOME program for affordable housing can be accepted at any time. Applications for the new Housing Trust Fund (multi-family housing) will most likely be accepted this fall, pending receipt of funds. The HOME program is designed to assist households with annual incomes less than 80 percent of the area median income. The Housing Trust Fund program is targeted to assist households earning less than 30 % of the area median income.

Julie Flynn, Housing Program Manager, (406) 841-2890, Julie.Flynn@mt.gov

Gus Byrom, Outreach Coordinator, Community and Economic Vitality Program, (406) 841-2777 gbyrom@mt.gov

<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/HOME>

<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/HTF>

- Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, Montana Board of Housing

Mary Bair, Multifamily Program Manager, (406) 841-2845, mbair@mt.gov

<http://housing.mt.gov/MFDevelopment>

- USDA Rural Development –

In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development has several programs that can assist single family and multi-family housing units. Contact information is provided below:

Cindy Coleman, Area Specialist – Multi-Family, (406) 657-6297 x 126
www.rd.usda.gov/mt

Gail M. Pomeroy, Area Specialist – gail.pomeroy@mt.usda.gov Single Family :
gail.pomeroy@mt.usda.gov (406) 657-6297 x 124

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

The City of Poplar recently received funding assistance from USDA Rural Development for wastewater system improvements. Primary financial resources for additional water and wastewater system needs are listed below:

Recommended Resources:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

To be eligible to receive funds for public facility improvements, such as water and wastewater projects, the community must demonstrate that at least 51 percent or more of the households that are proposed to be assisted can be classified as low and moderate income (under 80 % of the area median income) according to data of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Data for Poplar shows the community at 70.89 % low and moderate income, exceeding the threshold for CDBG eligibility.

CDBG applications for public facility assistance most likely will be due this fall, depending on the availability of HUD funds. For more information, please contact the following:

Becky Anseth, Infrastructure Manager, (406) 841-2865 banseth@mt.gov

Gus Byrom, Outreach Coordinator, (406) 841-2777 gbyrom@mt.gov
<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/CDBG/PCF>

- Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP)

Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) funds are an excellent source of financial assistance for water and wastewater system improvements. The next round of TSEP applications for construction assistance is anticipated to be the spring or summer of 2020. Grants are expected to be available for assistance in preparing Preliminary Engineering Reports in May 2019. Preliminary Engineering Reports must be prepared for any proposed project prior to submittal of an application for construction assistance.

Becky Anseth, Infrastructure Manager, (406) 841-2865 banseth@mt.gov

Gus Byrom, Outreach Coordinator, (406) 841-2777 gbyrom@mt.gov
<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/TSEP>

- State Revolving Fund (SRF), Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Mark Smith, Drinking Water Program SRF, (406) 444-5325, marks@mt.gov
<http://deq.mt.gov/Water/DrinkingWater/dwsrf>
Paul LaVigne, Wastewater Program SRF, (406) 444-5321, plavigne@mt.gov
<http://deq.mt.gov/Water/WasteWater/WPCSRF>
- USDA Rural Development – Montana
Eleanor Kindness, (406) 657-6297, Ext.125 Eleanor.Kindness@mt.usda.gov
<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program/mt>
- Montana Department of Natural Resource and Conservation / Montana Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program
Lindsay Volpe, (406) 444-9766, LmVolpe@mt.gov
<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/docs/resource-development/forms/2014rrgl supplement.pdf>

MAIN TOPIC: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Issue:

Any time you drive through the Poplar Community, you will notice one thing: there are people always on the move, walking from here to there. You will also notice children trying to cross the busy Highway 2 corridor without a protected crossing. While spending some time in Poplar this week, I realized that the various government agencies; Fort Peck Tribes, City of Poplar, and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) each have their own version of a sidewalk/trail project they are looking to move forward. The problem is that each entity is not communicating well with each other and I feel they can benefit from an overall Active Transportation Plan.

Recommendations:

The safety of pedestrians is very important in any community, and especially in Poplar where foot traffic is a widely used form of transportation. Here are some ideas to grow and improve the existing pedestrian infrastructure:

1. Coordinate a meeting with the following groups: MDT, Fort Peck Tribal Transportation Program, Roosevelt County, City of Poplar and discuss the want/need of an overall transportation plan and the willingness to commit time and funds to the project.
2. Research grant opportunities and develop a plan for creating an Active Transportation Plan.
3. Using grant/matching funds, select a consultant to provide professional expertise and begin creating a report. Use as much local knowledge and manpower as possible to reduce cost.
4. Complete the report and begin divvying out a portion to each entity to accomplish.
5. Once again research grant opportunities (don't forget private sources as well!) for construction of the project.

Recommended Resources:

- Shane Halverson – City of Poplar
- Curry Kirn – Tribal Transportation Program
- Ryan Kopp – Interstate Engineering
- Montana Department of Transportation - https://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta_application.shtml

Highway Improvements

Highway improvements must be coordinated with the Montana Department of Transportation, Glendive District, at the following:

Shane Mintz, District Administrator, District 4 – Glendive, Montana Department of Transportation <https://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/organization/districts.shtml> (406) 345-8200

Issue: Various Projects – Solid Waste, Parks, Sidewalks, etc

Throughout the meetings held there was concern mentioned over the availability of community facilities for solid waste, parks and a swimming pool along with infrastructure improvements to sidewalks, lighting and water systems. Additionally, Community members stressed the limitations to the quality of the existing affordable housing stock and the need to remove vacant and dilapidated housing.

Recommendations:

Potential options are to work through a community housing study to check on availability of existing structures for renovation or demolition and potential areas for expansion of existing availability. The housing study can provide a viable approach to prioritize need while addressing need to potentially revitalize existing structures. Research potential developers to accommodate adding to the existing housing stock that is well versed in tax credits and additional funding sources. There are a variety of funding programs to address infrastructure below.

Recommended Resources:

USDA Rural Development

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/MT_Home.html

- Gail Pomeroy, Area Specialist, Single Family Housing, 1629 Ave. D, Building A Suite 6, Billings, MT (406)657-6297
- Cindy Coleman, Area Specialist, Multi-Family Housing, 1629 Ave. D, Building A Suite 6, Billings, MT (406)657-6297
- Eleanor Kindness, Area Specialist, Water/ Wastewater 1629 Ave. D, Building A Suite 6, Billings, MT (406)657-6297
- Steve Troendle, Program Director, Community Facilities, 2229 Boot Hill Court, Bozeman, MT 59715 (406)5854-2551

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/CDBG/Housing/Overview>

- Jennifer Olson, Division Administrator, 301 S. Park, Helena, MT (406)841-2773
- Julie Flynn, Housing Development Program Manager, 301 S Park Ave, Helena, MT (406)841-2890
- Becky Anseth, Infrastructure Program Manager, 301 S Park Ave, Helena, MT (406)841-2865
- Galen Steffens, Planning Program Manager, 301 S Park Ave, Helena, MT (406)841-2819

Great Northern Development Corporation

<http://www.gndc.org>

Brianna Vine, Housing Specialist, 233 Cascade St., Wolf Point, MT (406)653-2590

CONCLUSION:

The Poplar Community Review has been a great success to date due to a dedicated Home Team, our top-notch Visiting Teams, and the enthusiastic, willing-to-work people of the Poplar area. The community is now in Phase 3: Launch! The Steering Committee structure is in place with Coach Tori Matejovsky to provide expertise and encouragement along the way. The Poplar Community Review Team looks forward to returning to the Poplar area and celebrating your success within the year. Thank you for sharing your valuable time, expertise, and passion for the Poplar area and its future with us.