



VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

Citizens News

What's Inside

Games and camaraderie were themes at CBF's Annual Meeting
page 2

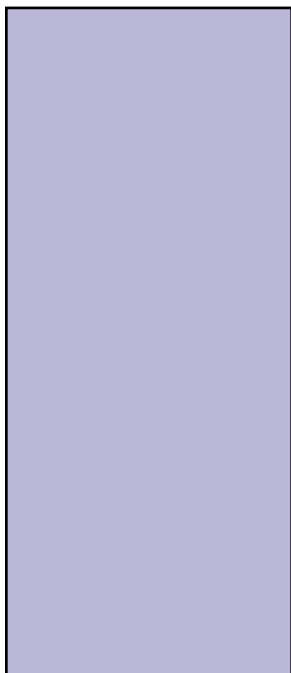
Citizens is on a quest for the best new Flathead
page 3

Strategies to keep our economy healthy
page 5

What will happen with Two Rivers - the Planning Board meets March 30th to decide
page 6

Buy your tickets for the Great Place Raffle by Mail

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Kalispell, MT
59901
PERMIT #162



Citizens for a Better Flathead
P.O. Box 771, Kalispell, MT 59901

Tools of the Trade

Development is a community business in which you own stock as a taxpayer, and a Growth Policy stocked with the right planning tools protects your investment.

By David Madison

A Growth Policy envisions the future. It prioritizes a community's needs. It promotes need-based development. It embodies the wisdom and confidence of citizens determined to do a better job of managing growth.

That means protecting long-term taxpayer investments—schools, police/fire, sewers and roads from being overrun by new development. As Flathead County Planning Director Jeff Harris puts it, "Growth never pays for growth. Never has, never will."

Between 1978 and 2002, basic services in Flathead County were haphazardly stretched into the countryside as the county lost 28 percent of its rural and agricultural land to development. By 2004, 67 percent of Flathead County residents lived in rural areas.



What legacy shall we leave our children? The new county growth can include policies that ensure we leave a legacy of working landscapes like this by using market-based tools to purchase and transfer development rights to areas more suitable for growth.

A 2004 report by interim Flathead County administrator Myrt Webb

The per capita cost for public services jumped from \$229 in 1990 to \$435 in 2004—an 84 percent increase. These tax "takings" that result when growth does not pay its own way come in the form of higher property taxes, and are driven not by forethought but the impulse for fast profits.

compared Flathead to other counties of similar size. In Cascade County, 28 percent of residents live outside city limits, and in Gallatin County 43 percent reside in the country, while 57 percent live in Bozeman, Belgrade and the other nearby towns.

Flathead County's decision to disperse its people is now accompanied by random tax hikes.

The per capita cost for public services jumped from \$229 in 1990 to \$435 in 2004—an 84 percent increase. These tax "takings" that result when growth does not pay its own way come in the form of higher property taxes, and are driven not by forethought but the impulse for fast profits.

The immediate payoffs are hard to resist. In certain areas of Flathead County, housing and lot prices have doubled since 2003. Everyone has a story, anecdotal and autobiographical, about how so-and-so made a killing in real estate.

What's not mentioned enough are the long-term investments made by taxpayers in the Flathead. Today's quick-cash real estate market owes a debt to these publicly funded assets. And that debt can't be repaid with money alone.

This community is owed the opportunity to craft a clear vision for

continued on page 5

Leaving a Future Our Children Can Still Afford

Mayre Flowers

❖ More than 70 studies conducted nationwide show that residential development equals higher costs for public services. Savings and lower taxes result, however, when growth is well planned. A recent analysis by researchers at Rutgers University determined that modest increases in development density could reduce total capital costs by 25 to 60 percent for roads and 15 to 40 percent for water and sewer infrastructure.

continued on page 5



Citizens News is a membership publication for Citizens For A Better Flathead, a 501 C-3 non-profit organization. Subscriptions are complimentary with any membership contribution. **Citizens** welcomes letters and articles from interested readers. All rights to publication of articles in this issue are reserved. Write or call for permission to reprint any articles or illustrations.

Phone: 756-8993, Fax: 756-8991
P.O. Box 771, Kalispell, MT, 59903.
citizens@flatheadcitizens.org

Mission Statement

“To inform and empower citizens in cooperative community development that respects and encourages stewardship of the Flathead Valley’s natural beauty and resource.”

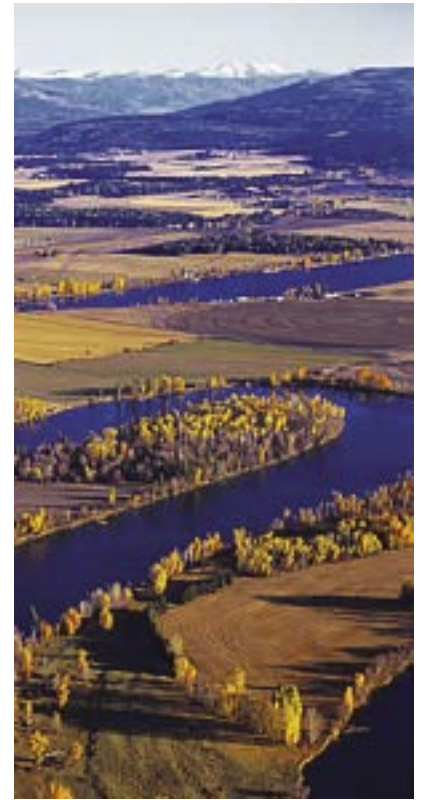
Our Principles

Stewardship - It is our responsibility together to care for the land, air, water, and character of the Flathead Valley for ourselves and future generations.

Open Government - Fair and ethical decision making requires respect for process, transparency, inclusiveness, and well-informed participants.

Community - We must find ways to balance and bridge our differences in order to maintain the unique quality of life in the Flathead Valley.

Citizenship - It is our right and our responsibility to become informed and to participate in the decisions that affect our lives and our community.



You get what you give

Believe it or not, before Brita, the Culligan Man, and reverse osmosis, people were drinking clean surface water all over the globe. Contrary to what many water companies would like you to hear, there are ways to get clean surface water free of charge, even today. What is the mysterious source of such pure, unadulterated H₂O? Something those pesky environmentalists have been bugging us to preserve for years: wetlands.

The reason so many of those “pesky environmentalists” are after us to protect the wetlands is that many of these systems are in trouble, not just from development directly on top of or adjacent to them, but also due to the “over-loading” and “understaffing” of the wetlands that remain. Overwhelmed and weakened by water that is too contaminated for the system to handle, these systems don’t have enough support from their ecological community to do the job they were created to do – provide clean water to that very community.

But this isn’t meant to be an appeal for the “save the wetlands society,” at least not directly. In fact, it’s a plea for your local non-profits, particularly the one responsible for this newsletter. Since beginning my work at Citizens last September, this ecology student has come to learn that non-profits are much like the natural systems I so greatly respect. Non-profits are designed to address a need of some kind in our society. In CBF’s case, that need is for a well-informed and involved group of Flathead Valley residents, taking an active role in the decisions being made every day to shape this beautiful and ever-changing place. Like a wetland, we must have the support of our community to best serve that community. CBF was created to serve the Flathead, and though most people only see our three staff members, seven board members, and perky mascot named Griffin, active and involved citizens are the life-blood of our non-profit wetland.

We need your support, whether it be in the form of volunteering, speaking up at public meetings, or contributing to us financially. Unfortunately, without proper funding and support, we become quickly overwhelmed by problems that we do not have the resources to rectify. Please buy a raffle ticket, lend us a hand, or contribute to Citizens today, and together we can realize refreshing change for the Flathead!

P.S. Save our wetlands

Staff

Executive Director **MAYRE FLOWERS**

Program Director **NIKKI KARPAVICH**

Office Administrator **LIESL PETERSON**

2006 Board of Directors and Officers

Co-Chairperson **MARY CRITCHLOW**
 KALISPELL

Co-Chairperson **ED MYERS**
 KALISPELL

Secretary **JOE BIBY**
 BIGFORK

Treasurer **DIANE TAYLOR**
 KALISPELL

Former Chair **JOLENE SMITH**
 BIGFORK

MICHAEL GOLEMBESKI
 HELENA FLATS

KRIS DeMEESTER
 COLUMBIA FALLS

MAJORITY SHAREHOLDERS IN THE COMMUNITY REAL ESTATE MARKET: A Planning tool that protects taxpayer investments

By David Madison

There are approximately 35,000 housing units in Flathead County. Most of these homes are owned by individuals and families who do not list “real estate investor” as a job description. But without the general population’s collective per capita investment in basic services, the real estate market could not sustain its present growth.

The Flathead County Growth Policy should enthusiastically acknowledge and protect the investment made by everyday homeowners and taxpayers. The policy should also expand property rights by giving property owners community-minded options when it comes time to sell. And

by enacting proven planning tools, including the transfer of development rights, a Growth Policy will spur quality growth that contributes value and preserves assets, instead of simply extracting profit.

A new free market planning tool: The transfer of development rights

By transferring development rights, or TDRs, a community protects open space and channels new growth toward established, city centers. This makes the delivery of public services more efficient, and protects individual homeowners from tax hikes.

Here is how it works:

The Growth Policy designates environmentally sensitive properties, unique open space, agricultural land, wildlife habitat, historic landmarks or any other places a community wants to protect as a “sending area.”

The Growth Policy then designates urban areas—and suitable locations directly adjacent to urban areas—as “receiving areas.” This allows landowners in the sending areas to sell and transfer development rights to builders in the receiving areas.

Sending site owners permanently deed-restrict their properties so no development can occur, but the land remains in their possession. They can keep farming or hiking on the property, and receive payment for protecting it as open space. TDRs



give landowners options. Instead of selling their acreage to a subdivision builder, they liquidate the land’s development potential by selling the development rights for use in a more growth-appropriate location. This protects the entire community from inefficiently scattering new growth—and it’s all done with private funds.

Those funds come from developers who buy TDRs from sending area sellers. The TDRs are a sound investment, because the Growth Policy allows developers to use the TDRs to increase the density of receiving site projects. This equals more profits for the developer, because with higher

continued on page 6



Future proposed site of Cooper Farms Development near Somers with 700 new homes and a twenty acre commercial site – the same size as the Kalispell Center Mall – at the intersection of US Hwy 93 and Hwy 86.

TDRs at work in Bozeman

By Rick Pruetz, David Madison

Last year, Gallatin County commissioners awarded wrestling trophies to committee members who grappled with the complexities of development rights transfers. The TDR committee—similar to one that could be set up through Flathead County’s Growth Policy—created a voluntary program that’s found nearly universal support in the community.

The Saddle Peaks Estates subdivision is one success story. The 520-acre receiving site was entitled to 26 lots at the baseline density of one unit per 20 acres. The developer, Bill Muhlenfeld, bought 15 density units for \$20,000 each, permanently preserving 514 acres of off-site open space, which continues in agricultural use. Half of the receiving site, or 262 acres, were also set aside as open space and are leased to a local farmer.



TDR programs help balance the weight of new taxes by shifting the growth to areas that can be more cost effectively served by existing infrastructure.

By using the TDR program, the developer increased his project’s individual lot density from 20 acres to 6.3 acres. The development is reported to have received no opposition from its neighbors and Saddle Peaks Estates is very successful from a financial as well as a design perspective.

Saddle Peaks developer Bill Muhlenfeld said the TDR program in Gallatin County has “succeeded beyond our wildest expectations.”

Muhlenfeld added, “I think it [TDR] is a wonderful tool and wonder why there have not been more transactions of this type.”

There could be more, if the Flathead Growth Policy opens the door to all kinds of proven planning tools like TDRs.

Tools of the Trade from page 1

itself. It deserves the chance to avoid a series of preventable regrets: over-crowded schools, traffic jams and amazing scenery replaced by poorly planned development.

The Flathead still leaves people in awe. Its shape, its light... its open vitality. More than anything else, that's what keeps the cashiers checks sliding across desks at title companies. Beauty closes deals.

Today, the gorgeous landscape that ultimately pays the bills isn't always given its due. And when it's gone, instead of losing ourselves in the wonder of the Flathead, we'll wonder why we didn't take the long-view—why the shareholders in this community didn't find a way to protect what's really important.

What's not mentioned enough are the long-term investments made by taxpayers in the Flathead. Today's quick-cash real estate market owes a debt to these publicly funded assets. And that debt can't be repaid with money alone.

This community is owed the opportunity to craft a clear vision for itself. It deserves the chance to avoid a series of preventable regrets: over-crowded schools, traffic jams and amazing scenery replaced by poorly planned development.

Leaving a Future from page 1

❖ Take a square mile of land that has been deemed appropriate for new development by good planning criteria, that's 640 acres. It can be developed many ways. Five acre ~~ranches~~ will net 128 new homes, ~~three~~ three units per acre, a density similar to some of the new housing being built along Three Mile Drive west of Kalispell, equals almost 1920 new homes. Then consider that we have an estimated 30,000 new residents expected by 2025 who will need approximately 1400 new homes. At one unit per five acres, it will take 7000 acres of land or almost 11 square miles to house these new residents. At three units per acre it will take about a third less land. As land gets more scarce, prices will continue to rise. Planning for the future must consider all these factors.

❖ Planning for high quality density is an important function of a growth policy. The patterns of growth—low density vs. moderate to high density—established in the new growth policy will greatly determine the future fate of our working lands and the affordability of our housing stock. Density ~~well done~~ is a choice that can provide affordability and the attractive qualities of parks, trails and less travel time and expense, part of the package.

Majority Shareholders from page 3

density, a builder can construct more units and bring more real estate product to market. Putting in place development standards in conjunction with a TDR program helps to ensure that great neighborhoods get built with inviting

TDRs are probably the most effective planning tool we have available for retaining a legacy of working landscapes that define our valley.

designs, safe streets, sidewalks or trails, parks and access to other recreational resources like public lands or lakes and rivers.

By using the county's Growth Policy to initiate a TDR program, citizens will gain another tool

for supporting working farms and timberlands, and the multiple natural resources they provide like clean water and wildlife habitat.

This is how a totally voluntary, case-by-case, customized TDR program created through the Growth Policy could work in the Flathead.

Problem—Exploding growth between Somers and Bigfork:

Since December, plans for almost 1,300 residential lots within two miles of Somers have been submitted to the Flathead County Planning Office. This area is full of critical wetlands important to water quality, productive farmland, bird habitat and view-sheds that define this community. Highway 82 running from Somers to Bigfork is flanked to the south by open grasslands extending out to the edge of Kalispell Bay. The bay forms the northern arch of Flathead Lake and the surrounding area is a priceless stretch of open space. But proposed subdivisions in the area will change it forever. The housing boom along Highway 82 will spread county services thin by increasing the total number of single-family homes from 263 housing units counted in the 2000 census to roughly 1,600 total in the next several years. What was once a bucolic roadway is poised to become the Flathead's newest city by the bay.

One Possible Solution—TDRs:

Just up the road along Highway 93, land within and adjacent to the Kalispell city limits is suited for high-density development. It is designated as a "receiving area"

through the Growth Policy. Density limits in the receiving area might be set at two houses per acre. But if a developer in a receiving area purchases TDRs

from developers in a sending area between Somers and Bigfork, then the receiving area density might increase from two units per acre to four units per acre.

The receiving area developer profits from the sale of more units. The sending area property owner may invest proceeds from the sale of development rights in many ways ranging from the purchase of property elsewhere, to new investment in their farming or timber operation, to retirement. Limited development rights may be retained. But the projects are scaled down to include more open space—land permanently protected thanks to the sale of its development rights.

Many other tools may ensure growth pays its way, but the legacy we leave, the landscapes that define the rare beauty of the Flathead, need the power of TDRs as a market-based, win-win, planning tool that provides certainty that poorly planned growth will not occur anywhere and everywhere.

The key, says TDR advocate Rick Pruetz, is to make sure the prices received by landowners in the sending area are high enough to realistically support preservation over development. At the same time, prices must be low enough that developers in the receiving area can bank on a healthy profit.

Ultimately, the exact price of development rights is determined by how much the developer is willing to pay for each TDR.

And TDR programs can't work, says Pruetz, if the county's density rules are too flexible. There must be a baseline density, so developers see an "advantage to getting more units per acre" through the purchase of TDRs.

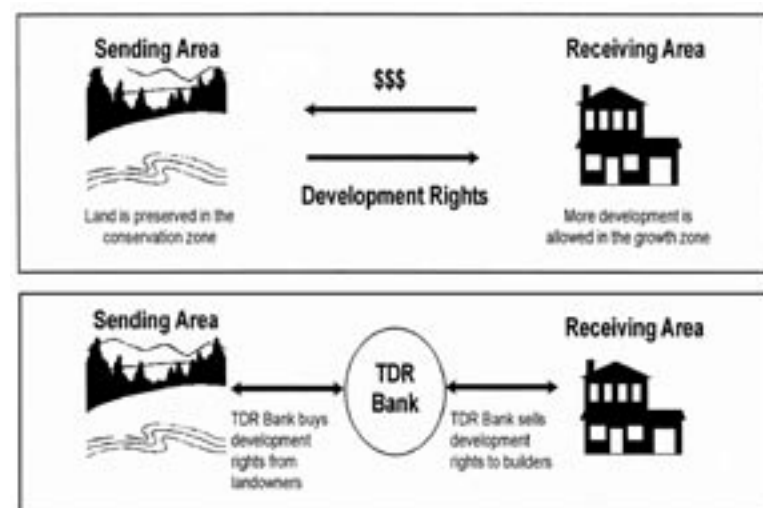
TDR programs are politically appealing to all parties because everyone is given a chance to benefit from the real estate boom. Sending area landowners are compensated for working lands that define our valley, receiving area landowners are allowed to build larger projects and the county as a whole benefits because development is pushed toward an established urban zone while pieces of the treasured landscape are spared.

TDRs are probably the most effective planning tool we have available for retaining a legacy of working landscapes that define our valley. Gallatin County, Montana, has recently joined a growing number of counties across the west and nation who are choosing TDRs as the tool of choice to shape the rapid growth they are experiencing. (see TDRs at Work story on page 3) Of course, TDRs alone will not offer solutions to all the challenges presented by big developments—not even close. That's why the Growth Policy should nurture a variety of planning tools in addition to TDRs. (See related story on page 4, How Shall We Grow?).

Yet, TDRs as a new planning tool for the Flathead are incredibly important for shaping where growth does and doesn't occur. Many other tools may ensure growth pays its way, but the legacy we leave, the landscapes that define the rare beauty of the Flathead, need the power of TDRs as a market-based, win-win, planning tool that provides certainty that poorly planned growth will not occur anywhere and everywhere. TDRs offer the promise that our grandchildren will too enjoy this rare beauty and quality life that we all cherish about the Flathead.



Rapid development in rural areas is costly for tax-payers and is stretching emergency services thin.



Stand up for conservation of private lands

By Ben Long

If you live in the Flathead Valley and enjoy the clean water, wildlife habitat and beauty of working farms, then you benefit from voluntary conservation agreements, also known as “conservation easements.” Likewise, everyone should be alarmed that a few folks involved in county politics have a grudge against these valuable, free-market tools for private lands that conserve community values.

Hunters, anglers, birdwatchers, boaters — frankly, just about everyone in the Flathead Valley — benefit from conservation easements. Maintaining our water, beauty and wildlife helps our entire valley prosper.

In short, conservation easements are agreements between property owners and a non-profit land trust. Under these agreements, landowners limit or restrict development on their property to conserve the working landscape, habitat, clean water or other public good. The land stays in private hands, remains on the tax rolls, is generally used agriculture or timber production. The public is guaranteed that public values such as scenery, open space and wildlife habitat will remain intact because the easement remains intact no matter who owns the land.

Here are some examples of private land conservation in northwestern Montana:

- The Flathead Land Trust and private landowners have agreed to conserve 2,000 acres of sloughs and associated wetlands in the lower valley, between Kalispell and Flathead Lake.

University of Montana experts have identified these lands as crucial natural filters that keep Flathead Lake clean. Under the agreement, the lands may be farmed or used in other ways compatible with clean water, but will never be subdivided.

- The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Plum Creek Timber Company have conserved 300,000 acres of corporate timberland in the Thompson River country. Under this agreement, Plum Creek (or a future landowner) is free to log the land as they see best, but the land will never be subdivided. So the land will be open to provide wildlife habitat and open for deer and elk hunting.

- Home Ranch Bottoms south of Polebridge is well known for its views of Glacier Park and for its resident herd of deer and elk. It’s prime habitat for endangered species, such as wolves and grizzly bears, as well as big game winter range. Shortly before he died, rancher Tom Ladenberg signed an agreement with the Nature Conservancy of Montana, again allowing the land to be ranched, but

not split up.

- Since 2000, Montana Land Reliance has helped 12 Bigfork-area landowners and families place voluntary conservation agreements on their land that protect its rural and scenic heritage as well as natural areas and fish and wildlife habitat. The agreements total some 1,608 acres in the Bigfork area alone.

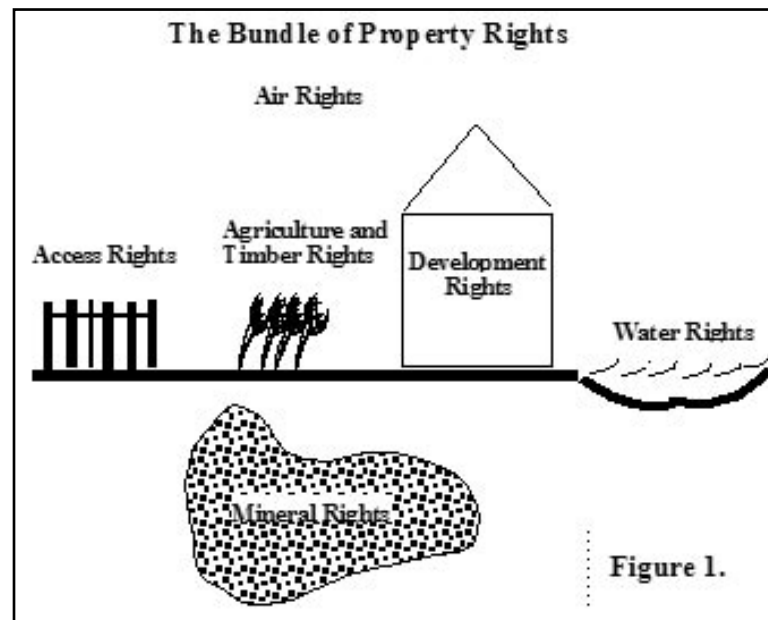
Communities like Missoula, Helena and Gallatin County passed local bonds that help fund conservation easements. Hunting groups like Ducks Unlimited and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation use conservation easements to protect crucial nesting habitat or winter range. Clearly, conservation easements are a flexible, voluntary land management tool that both landowners and communities find valuable. No wonder landowners in the Flathead are lining up to find ways to place easements on their land.

Unfortunately, some misguided critics are out to undermine conservation easements. For example, they are trying to discourage conservation easements in the county growth policy, now being written by Flathead County.

The valuable thing about conservation easements is they offer certainty. Future generations are guaranteed cleaner water, robust wildlife, and the freedom to hunt and fish, under traditional conservation easements.

Critics want to replace that certainty with “term easements” that expire after a set time, say a decade. The landowner only promises not to develop the land for a period of time, and may be compensated for it. This results in subsidized land speculation — where a landowner is rewarded for sitting on a parcel, but is still free to subdivide it later, most probably at a profit. This flawed tool lacks the long-term certainty for the public and do not carry the same kind of tax benefits for landowners.

Please contact the Flathead County Commissioners by emailing enelson@co.flathead.mt.us and Long Range Planning task force by contact the chair of the task force committee on Natural Resources, Karen Reeves at kbr@cyberport.net. Tell them that the voters of Flathead County appreciate the long-term benefits of traditional conservation easements. If we treasure our freedom, our clean water and our natural beauty, Flathead County must accept no substitutes.

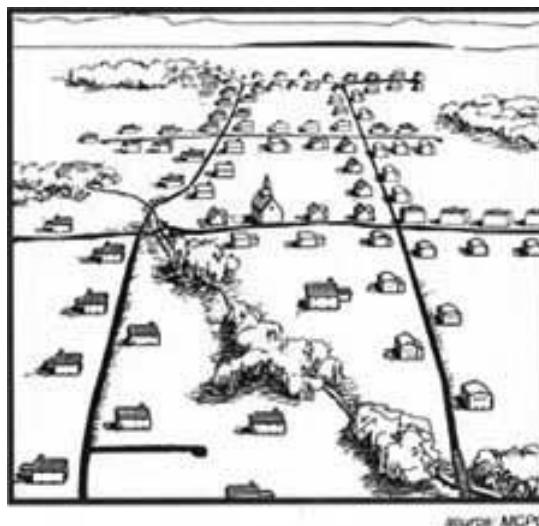


Conservation agreements can secure a variety of property rights for future use.

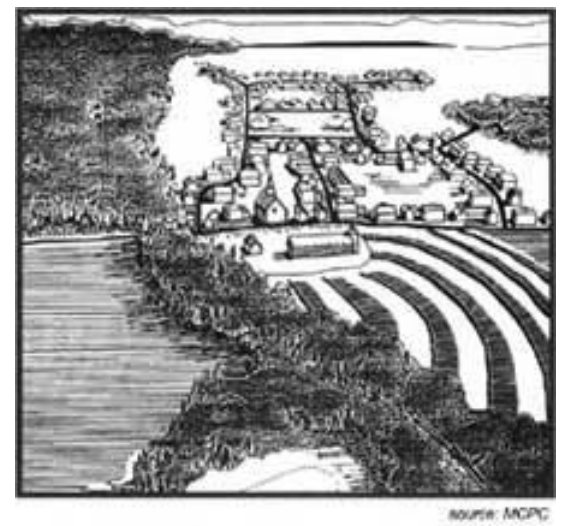
TDRs conserve land by clustering development in more appropriate growth areas in contrast to the center image where development is more haphazard.



source: MGPC



source: MGPC



source: MGPC

Citizens' Annual Candidate Survey

Citizens News sent a series of questions to all twelve candidates running for County Commissioner. These questions all focus on the candidate's positions on land use planning as a tool to address the rapid growth we are experiencing. Candidates were limited to 900 words total and were encouraged to include a photograph. All candidates were advised that the answers they submitted would be printed verbatim with no

edits or corrections by us. If comments exceeded the 900 word limit, they were told we reserved the right to shorten text. Only one candidate exceeded the 900 word limit. ~~Only one candidate chose not to respond.~~

We hope that the readers of Citizens News find this public service valuable in choosing our next county commissioner.

Questions for County Commissioner Candidates

1. Planning for 100 Years Forward

What would you like to see the Flathead look like in one hundred years? What special features do you want to remain intact?

- What policies will you put in place, if elected, in the next six years to ensure that these features / resources are secure?
- Should growth be directed away from areas with high public values (public access, important agricultural lands, lands critical to water quality or wildlife)?
- Should our growth policy provide for incentives to purchase development rights in these areas and move/sell these development rights to more growth appropriate areas?

2. Support for Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood plans in the Flathead have been put in place by a majority of residents of these plan areas, to give residents more say in the type, location and quality of development that can take place within the neighborhood plan area.

- Should existing neighborhood plans be supported and new ones encouraged, to guide future growth in Flathead County?
- Would you support neighborhood elections of advisory boards for these plan areas rather than the current appointment of these members by the county commissioners?
- Would you support the dedication of more planning staff to assist in neighborhood planning?

3. Public Access to Recreation and Neighborhood Parks

Accesses to many places where people have traditionally recreated and hunted over the last decade are being blocked by new subdivisions.

- What steps, if any, should the county take to make sure that the public has access to water, trails, parks, and public lands in the planning process?
- What importance would you place on planning now for new trails and parks that link neighborhoods and urban areas across the valley?

4. Respect for the Planning Process (see table on page 12)

As more and more people move to the Flathead, growth and change are inevitable. A growth policy is a tool that can provide incentives to direct growth to appropriate areas and set standards for development that enhance our quality of life, and encourage compatible forms of economic development. Please indicate your view of the importance of the following planning

principles for guiding growth by circling the appropriate number.

1. Establish clear criteria that defines when a growth policy can be amended.
Very important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Not important
2. Direct development to areas where roads and utilities are in place to service it.
Very important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Not important
3. Protect water quality by directing growth away from shallow aquifers.
Very important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Not important
4. Concentrate commercial development in the three incorporated cities.
Very important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Not important
5. Avoid strip commercial development along major traffic routes.
Very important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Not important
6. Provide incentives to encourage development in some areas and the purchase of development rights away from other areas where growth should be limited.
Very important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Not important
7. Adopt policies ensuring a percentage of affordable housing is built yearly.
Very important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Not important
8. Support family farms and forest industries by directing growth elsewhere.
Very important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Not important

5. Securing Adequate Funding For Roads, Fire, Sheriff, Parks and Water Quality

- Do you believe that new development should pay for itself in terms of services, utilities and infrastructure?
- What county services would you prioritize to improve? (such as the number of officers in the sheriff's department, the need for a new or expanded county jail, road maintenance, a county sewage treatment plant and other issues?)
- What steps would you take to address these issues?

6. Public Process

How might you address the following often heard public concerns:

- "The planning board and commissioners just don't listen or seriously consider public input."
- "We need better cooperation between the three cities and county."
- "Too many members of the planning board have ties to the development community and neighborhood plan areas are not represented."

Answers from County Commissioner Candidates



Don Avery (D)

Note: subsection of questions are not numbered by originator

1. Planning for 100 years

Goals: I would like to see the preservation of clean water in our lakes and streams; preserve our views and vistas; maintain our national forests; protect our wildlife; maintain and expand our recreational opportunities.

These planning objectives are specifically:

1. reducing sprawl- reduce the in-appropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low density development.
2. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
3. Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population.
4. Retain open space, recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural lands and water, and develop parks and recreational opportunities.
5. Encourage economic development through the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans.
6. Maintain and enhance natural resource industries including productive timber, and agriculture.
7. Protect the environment and enhance the state's quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
8. Encourage the development of multimodal transportation systems that are based upon regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
9. Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.

The objectives would be achieved through the adoption of the following policies:

- A. Joint county and city planning within the urban growth areas.
- B. County wide economic development and employment.
- C. The consideration of the need for affordable housing for all economic segments of the population.
- D. Countywide transportation facilities and strategies.
- E. Promotion of contiguous and orderly development and the provision of urban service to such development.
- F. Siting of public capitol facilities of a countywide nature.
- G. The adoption of policies that designate:
 1. Agricultural lands that are not already characterized by urban growth and that have long-term significance for the commercial production of food or agricultural products.
 2. Forest lands that fall under the same designation.
 3. Mineral resource lands that fall under the same designation.
 4. Critical areas, i.e. wetlands, frequently flooded areas, fish and wildlife habitat, areas with critical recharging effects on aquifers, and geologically hazardous areas.–

2. Support for Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood plans are not generally indigenous to local planning processes in the west. They seem to exist where both state and local planning mechanisms have failed. As stated in the question, they are promulgated by a majority of residents in an area at a given time to either enhance profits or preserve restrictions that they perceive may benefit themselves. However, times change. I have been in attendance through several hundred commissioner's meetings and have been made aware of the altercations that develop in one of these specialized areas when a sale of property is made and the new owner has different ideas on how he wants to utilize the land. I would like to see the planning process be uniform throughout the county and include the public through the formulation and adoption process. I have some misgivings when I see the commissioner's become referees in local land use disputes.

The appointment of more planning staff members would increase a budget that has already gone from \$ 440,000 in 2003 to \$ 692,000 in 2006.

3. Public access to Recreation and Neighbor Parks.

Under Montana law one cannot legally block access to state owned lands that are open to public use.

In 2003 the Flathead County Parks Dept. maintained 92 parks that principally originated through subdivision requirements. We need to get this situation under control. We are paying too much to maintain a myriad of small strips scattered throughout the county. I would like to see us adopt and follow a comprehensive public parks program that plans for the installation and use of grant funded trails installed throughout the county that may or may not be useful to the public.

4. Respect For The Planning Process (see table on page __)

5. Securing Adequate Funding For Roads, Fire, Sheriff, Parks, and Water Quality.

Yes, there is an old adage in local government that presents the position that, "Them that use, should pay". Period.

First and foremost, Flathead County is housing dozens of employees in a building that architects claim may collapse in a moderate earthquake. We had saved \$ 3.3 million dollars for this purpose. Now, there is little of it left. These employees must be moved while the courthouse is renovated, immediately. Second, the commissioners have left the community very vulnerable by failing to adequately replace the Emergency Services Officer. He was one of the best trained in the U.S. Now, we are primed and ready to repeat the disorganized mess that we saw in New Orleans, should a disaster arise. This is the County's most important position. The County budget needs a thorough review, and I am the only candidate qualified and capable of undertaking that task.

6. Public Processes.

This is absolutely true. My campaign material states that I am dedicated to a fair and open government. I watched while over 4,300 letters on the mall project went unread and certain commissioners boasted that they were in favor of it before it went to public input. I have also watched while planning board members brought their clients in for hearings. It gets worse. I am not a member of the good'ole boy club. If you are sick and tired of good'ole boy club, I am the candidate for you.

We need to again establish direct working relationships with the cities of our county.

Answers from County Commissioner Candidates



Gerald Banzet (R)

1. Planning for 100 Years Forward

I would like to see the Flathead kept as clean and open as some developed areas I recently saw in Ohio.

I felt they had done a great job of planning and Flathead could learn from them. As to what policies I would put in place--I believe we have limitations and policies would have to be a cooperative effort i.e. zoning, planning, etc. Growth should be directed away from certain sensitive areas. As to the incentives proposed, I would like to know more about how those work and

who pays for them.

2. Support for Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood Planning is a great way to get every one's input and can certainly be used as a guideline. An advisory board would possibly be a good way to have a representative spokesman for certain groups. I would not have a problem with more planning staff with these exceptions, the cost issue and sometimes "too many cooks spoil the broth".

3. Public Access to Recreation and Neighborhood Parks

I believe we definitely need to work with the developers to preserve as many of these freedoms as possible. I would like to see more trails as they reduce the main arterial traffic and still let people move about.

4. Respect For The Planning Process (see table on page __)

5. Securing Adequate Funding for Roads, Fire, Sheriff, Parks and Water Quality.

- (a) yes
- (b) road maintenance for safety, sheriff deputies as we grow.
- (c) I have ideas for these but space does not allow for it all!

6. Public Process

- (a) I would listen!
- (b) Yes, we need better cooperation between city & county.
- (c) I would like to know more about that situation before commenting.



Mark Crowley (D)

1. Planning for 100 Years Forward

I think you are starting to ask the right question. So many talk about planning for 5 to 20 years as long-range planning. We really need to start looking further down the road. The decisions we make today will be with us for generations and result in millions of dollars in capital invested in the valley. Let's make sure those dollars and decisions are invested wisely.

Let's consider a hypothetical subdivision with 8 lots on 40 acres. It would not be uncommon to see an approval that resulted

in half of the lots with areas in the floodplain, a waiver of right to protest the creation of an SID for upgrading the roads and no parkland dedication. We can do better. If we shift the number of lots out of the floodplain and establish a homeowner's park, the homeowners are spared paying for mandatory flood insurance or hiring a surveyor to verify the residence is out of harms way. The distance and cost to extend infrastructure into the new neighborhood is reduced. By requiring road paving up front, the homeowners do not have to worry about an unwanted tax lien to pay for road improvements years after the lots are built on. By establishing road right-of-ways for future orderly growth and provision of services, the safety and costs are positively affected.

2. Support for Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood plans should definitely be supported and encouraged. And occasionally, they will have to be revisited. When they are, they should reflect the values and character of the local community as well complement the rest of the valley.

The neighborhood plans in this valley used to have a different flavor. They were driven by the majority of the owners in an area in an effort to protect what they love about their neighborhood and establish guidelines for development. Lately, they are used as part of the checklist of things to do to split up your property. Our neighborhoods are changing and the plans need to be updated to reflect that. But, all good plans need to have the buy in of the landowners and recognize the impacts on the community. I'd like to challenge the development community to do great things.

3. Public Access to Recreation and Neighborhood Parks

In the hypothetical subdivision I envisioned above, all of the residents of the lots could enjoy the natural and beneficial functions of the floodplain and have quick access to fishing at the end of the street. The same flood hazard area can be used to provide a linear park that connects neighborhoods to schools and the larger community. I've been a Director of Rails to Trails of Northwest Montana for many years and I'm proud of the work that group has done. We have seen the benefits of these trails and the safety they provide our children and families. I know of a number of strong supporters of the trails who may never use the trails. But they understand the comfort of knowing that the kids are not walking on the shoulders of busy highways.

Too many subdivisions have been approved with roads that lack connectivity. This limits options for future growth and access, which results in increased development and maintenance costs for this and other developments.

Answers from County Commissioner Candidates

Mark Crowley (D) (continued)

4. Respect For The Planning Process (see table on page __)

5. Securing Adequate Funding for Roads, Fire, Sheriff, Parks and Water Quality.

Should new development pay for itself? Absolutely. Some people will point to the fact that the taxes received by the county from 8, five-acre lots is significantly more than the taxes received on 40-acres of agricultural land. What this misses is that the costs of providing schools, fire & police protection, trash and road maintenance are much higher than the increased revenue can cover. Also, the costs of providing those services rises as the homes get further from the valley floor. The developers recognize this, but expect the county to cover these increased costs without fuss.

We need to find creative ways to guide the growth to where the infrastructure is in place or can easily be improved. The Sheriff's Office is responsible for covering the entire county and is stretched too thin. We need to make sure they are adequately staffed to do their job.

6. Public Process

It can seem like the Commissioners don't listen when your view isn't given as much consideration as you'd like. Several other candidates have said they would see both sides of every story. I think seeing only two sides is taking too narrow a view. I'm one of nine children and so compromise is a way of life. While we may need to compromise our expectations, we can not compromise our principles. Or our future.

Through Northwest Montana Human Resources, I've worked to improve affordable housing options for low-income seniors throughout the county and let them stay in their homes safely. I established relationships with Flathead County's Agency on Aging, the Whitefish Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity. I have worked as a senior planner for not only Flathead County, but also each of the three cities. Now, I am the Construction Manager for Kalispell Public Works. Based on my relationships within the valley, I know I can hit the ground running and be an agent of change for the better.

Our city and county planning boards need to reflect the views of the entire community, not just the development community. The Commissioners must appoint members from all sides and create a more balanced planning board. And the planning board needs to hear and respect the neighborhood plans and input from the local land use advisory councils.



Kim Fleming (R)

1. Planning for 100 Years Forward

Our biggest treasure is the natural beauty and the abundance of natural resources, used by nearly everyone who lives here. Planning for the future of development needs to be premised on the conservation of these resources. Many communities failed to address traffic management, clean air, clean water and public access to the surface waters with consequent loss to everyone. Adoption of a comprehensive

growth policy can shape a vision that leads to thoughtful, efficient development in Flathead County. We must adopt an implementation strategy concurrently that makes the plan a true framework for continuing growth.

2. Support for Neighborhood Planning

People are realizing that some basic rules concerning property development and use are in order. I do not favor the developer driven neighborhood plans. Plans provide a framework for future development but they are not regulatory. Each neighborhood plan needs to have an implementation strategy just as the Growth Policy will need one. This means that citizens in each area will have to accept some regulation of land use to make the plan work. Appointed boards can result in a more diverse group steering the land use decisions than by election. However, people have to step up and volunteer. The planning office should outline the requirements of neighborhood plans and provide guidance, but should not write the plans for the communities.

3. Public Access to Recreation and Neighborhood Parks

Public access is a critical issue for me. The county needs a master plan for parks and recreation that addresses the problem of diminishing access to public land, surface water and public parks. A capital improvements plan will identify local need for these amenities and quantify the larger issue of: how much and where. The desire of living along the shoreline must be weighed against the public's right of access the water. The boat access is strained, but we have not planned for additional lake access on many of the area waters. The spiraling cost of lakeshore property will soon preclude the county purchase of any more access -- or perhaps the opportunity has already been lost?

4. Respect For The Planning Process (see table on page __)

5. Securing Adequate Funding for Roads, Fire, Sheriff, Parks and Water Quality.

While it might seem novel in this area, elsewhere developers of property build the infrastructure needed to service the new development. Currently, few argue that he who develops bears the cost of extending water and sewer lines. So why the reluctance to require public road improvements, park funding, investment fees for the future fire station, police station or school, etc? It is known as an impact fee.

We need a toolbox, as there is no single solution: improvement districts, latecomer agreements, development agreements, road construction coupled with a performance bond to insure the public roads will last (this gets rid of all the private roads proliferating in the county to our collective detriment). In addition, we should require the developer to survey and realign the county road into the right of way where it abuts the property.

6. Public Process

Nearly every decision means that someone will leave not getting what he/she wants. The planning board and commissioners are charged with making an informed decision that is best for the county -- not one that benefits a single party. Meetings have become very contentious in recent years because people have lost sight of their neighbors. We cannot live alone and still have a community. If I had an effective wand, I'd put regional planning back together. I served when there was such a concept and decisions were made with an eye to the future. I have no tie to the development community and people still don't like my decisions at times. The ability to provide leadership with integrity is critical.

Advisory boards are critical to the county, providing a wealth of information for the commissioners. A yearly refresher courses including board obligations, rules of conduct for the members and limits of authority might help.

Answers from County Commissioner Candidates



Brian Fulford (R)

1. Planning for 100 Years Forward

I would like a county that resembles the county I raised my family in and came to love in the hard times as well as the good times. Everyone has their own ideas what that means. I can not move to a beautiful country and tell everyone else to stay away. We therefore must accommodate growth in a cost effective orderly way.

I would prioritize the budget and concentrate on the infrastructure.

I do not generally support the sale of property rights. These rights should

remain in tact with the land. If an owner wanted to donate the property wholly to a project(as in a will) this would be keeping the property rights in tact.

2. Support for Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood plans should not encompass such a large area that it becomes its own growth policy nor have the same weight but should be a guiding tool for planners to shape the valley as a whole.

Would you support neighborhood elections of advisory boards for these plan areas rather than the current appointment of these members by the county commissioners? As long as the county did not have to pay for these elections, the plan has merit. I would support the dedication of more planning staff to assist in neighborhood planning.

3. Public Access to Recreation and Neighborhood Parks

Property rights should never interfere with access to public lands or waters. If there is a conflict, it should be decided based on the principals of fairness and equity to each party.

Organized trails are a positive feature for communities but the parks can be very straining on an already strained budget. If these trails and parks could be developed with the use of donations and grants, I would support the idea.

4. Respect For The Planning Process (see table on page __)

5. Securing Adequate Funding for Roads, Fire, Sheriff, Parks and Water Quality.

I support impact fees and would advocate to increase the types of infrastructures that could be paid for by the use of impact fees.

I support the criminal justice infrastructure which goes beyond the sheriff's dept and would include the prosecutors office, courts, diversions programs, misdemeanor probation program and a low security detention facility. The transportation infrastructure is also critical at this time.

I would prioritize the budget into three categories, essential, important, and beneficial services.

6. Public Process

I have always taken time to listen, but I am not listening for which ever way the wind is blowing, but listening for good ideas.

Cooperation between government leaders will be forced with the increased growth problems so we better start now and get ahead of the curve. Turf battles only waste the tax payers money.

When considering neighbor hood plans vs. development community representation on the planning board, I would first ask the following questions. How much representation from the "neighbor hood" was used to create the neighborhood plan? Does the neighborhood plan include an acknowledgement of property rights? When I read the Montana Constitution, it mentions that with each right comes an equal responsibility. If the responsibility half of the right was given equal time, we would have no contention or the need for all the conflict. My philosophy on this issue is guided by this statement, "Your right to swing your fist ends at someone else's nose."



Don Hines (D)

1. Planning for 100 Years Forward

No comment.

2. Support for Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood plans have been and will in the future be the foundation for our growth policies. The Flathead is very unique and has a very diverse group of neighborhoods. They all need to be heard from and additional neighborhoods established. Some of the neighborhoods would benefit from elections just as Lakeside does. The small plans should thrive on the appointments by commission.

With the new Growth Policy coming forward and staff now in place for long range planning, the neighborhood plans will all be reviewed. At that time, dedicated staff will be available to work with the plans and update them. While working the neighborhood plans over, it should be determined if elections or appointments will provide members for the overseeing of each plan.

3. Public Access to Recreation and Neighborhood Parks

Public access is being threatened everyday both by government, big business and development. Easements for access need to be secured and protected. With only 8 to 10 percent of Flathead County for private ownership, we need to identify and protect the access for the future. Each Developer needs to be screened as to it's effect on access. If questions arise, the issue should be addressed in the very beginning with the public, not at the end of the process.

It would be nice to get the Long Range Task Force back on track. Once the Growth Policy starts winding down, lets see some committee work done on new trails, parks and other recreational issues. I think that there is a lot of common ground on trails, parks and access between the Communities and neighborhood plans. Lets work together and get a foundation for the future.

4. Respect For The Planning Process (see table on page __)

5. Securing Adequate Funding for Roads, Fire, Sheriff, Parks and Water Quality.

New development is running away with our tax dollars. Everyone's property rights are being compromised. Each time a new project is started, developers need to provide monies up front to help pay for their use of the infrastructure during the construction stage. Impact fees need to be put in place to cover the future use until the tax base is established.

Question #4 was a multi-part question where the candidates were asked to rate the questions with the following numerical values:


Very important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Not important

are inevitable. A growth policy is a tool that can provide incentives to direct growth to appropriate areas and set standards for development that enhance our quality of life, and encourage compatible forms of economic development.

Here are the questions and how they responded:

 Respect for the Planning Process

As more and more people move to the Flathead, growth and change

	<i>Don Avery</i>	<i>Gerald Banzet</i>	<i>Mark Crowley</i>	<i>Kim Fleming</i>	<i>Brian Fulford</i>	<i>Don Hines</i>	<i>Dale Lauman</i>	<i>Corey Pilsch</i>	<i>Kathleen Robertson</i>	<i>Kip Willis</i>
1. Establish clear criteria that defines when a growth policy can be amended.	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	3	3.5	
2. Direct development to areas where roads and utilities are in place to service it.	2	2	1	3	3	3	2	3	1.5	VERY VERY IMPORTANT All topics are very very important
3. Protect water quality by directing growth away from shallow aquifers.	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	2	1.5	
4. Concentrate commercial development in the three incorporated cities.	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	2.5	
5. Avoid strip commercial development along major traffic routes.	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	3	1.5	
6. Provide incentives to encourage development in some areas and the purchase of development rights away from other areas where growth should be limited.	2	2	1	2	4	—	2	2	1.5	
7. Adopt policies ensuring a percentage of affordable housing is built yearly.	2	2	3	4	4	2	2	1	2.5	
8. Support family farms and forest industries by directing growth elsewhere.	1	—	1	1	3	2	1	1	1.5	

Answers from County Commissioner Candidates

Don Hines (D) (continued)

The new Sheriff should have a real good idea on its needs in the future.

Roads are going to be playing catch up for a long time. A creative look at funding the roads needs to be brought forward with a look at the public and private sector giving input.

A County sewage plant is a novel idea. Maybe we should sit down and get over some of the turf wars going on and plan on a proper sewage plan. We can spend a lot of taxpayers funds on short-term ideas or we can plan ahead for the much bigger picture of our future sewage needs. Sewage, solid waste and providing a clean and safe water supply need to be a priority now, not later.

6. Public Process

The Planning Board was starting to listen, but we seem to have backslid a bit. The Commissioners have always been singled out as to have not listened. The Public is getting involved. They want to be heard. This election year is going to prove that. The status quo is going to change.

As many know, I was instrumental in getting the County and City talking again. It's a start, but we need a very strong and open dialog within the Community. We are all in it together regardless of our personal thoughts, we need to plan and build together. We have enough haphazard projects now.

The only way to foster a change in the make-up of the planning board, is to recruit more from the private sector to step forward. This last year we had 20 plus applications for four positions. That is a great turn out. This year should be even better with public involvement that is taking place.

Pamela Holmquist (R)

Chose not to respond.



Dale Lauman (R)

1. Planning for 100 Years Forward

I chose to run for Flathead County Commissioner because we must plan for the future of our County as to what we want it to be like in the next 5, 10, and 20 years. If planned correctly it will take us 100 years forward. That future will be determined by the plans we make today. I would like to be an active participant in planning our future. The future quality of life in Flathead County needs to be determined by the citizens that live in our county.

I would like to promote clean industry that would provide reasonable growth for our County. With strong year round economical base we need to provide jobs which give our children the opportunity to live their lives in the Flathead.

I would be a County Commissioner with an open door policy and just good "Common Sense" government. It is most important that a County Commissioner listen to our citizens.

2. Support for Neighborhood Planning

I support areas of the County that may organize and develop a Neighborhood Plan that is compatible to the area and "Approved by the People Involved." The Neighborhood plan would provide residents of the area to have first review of proposed developments. This process could resolve some of the property owner's conflicts.

I would support the election of board members to Neighborhood Advisory Boards rather than appointed by the County Commissioners.

I believe in fair family transfer of property and we should not change that policy. We must always be concerned about land owner's property rights. I believe in responsible property rights for all citizens. We must find ways and means to protect those rights for property owners.

3. Public Access to Recreation and Neighborhood Parks

We need to preserve open space for the recreational benefit of our residents. Parks, playground areas, access to rivers and lakes and hunting areas must always be available for recreation. Those areas must be preserved and we need to continue to provide more recreational activities for that purpose.

4. Respect For The Planning Process (see table on page __)

5. Securing Adequate Funding for Roads, Fire, Sheriff, Parks and Water Quality.

Securing Adequate Funding for Roads, Fire, Sheriff, Parks and Water Quality County roads, Law Enforcement and the Judicial System should be the County's spending priorities.

As the County continues to grow a greater demand will be placed on all of our roads. It is essential we continue to maintain and pave the roads for the safety of our citizens.

Funding must be provided for law enforcement and support their efforts to curb the drug problem. We need to win the war on drugs.

One area of cooperation could be in the area of waste water treatment. The Cities and Counties water sewer districts are facing expansion and other related problems. Growth has pushed some systems to their maximum capacity. The County should develop a plan and seek cooperation for the benefit of all systems. We will all be impacted by TMDL, which is Total Maximum Daily Load. I believe that in 10 to 12 years we will need to change the methods for the treatment of waste water.

6. Public Process

I would like to encourage a better understanding and improved cooperation between the County and Cities. We must develop better communications between the Cities and the County to discuss our common goals. Laws, Rules and Policies from both entities have an effect on each other. City residents are also County residents and pay taxes to support both City and County Government. It only makes "Good Sense" that we work together for the benefit of all citizens in the County. Governmental agencies must serve the needs of our citizens.



Answers from County Commissioner Candidates



Corey Pilsch (R)

1. Planning for 100 Years Forward

I would like to see the Flathead Valley remain the special place that each of us loves. We live here because we are drawn to the natural beauty of the land. I do not believe that laws, ordinances and special interest groups should be allowed to push the prices of owning property, or a home, beyond the ability of the average person to afford.

2. Support for Neighborhood Planning

If neighbors living in a particular area desire a neighborhood plan then they should be able to develop one, as long as it does not infringe on individual owners rights in our valley. The problem comes when a bureaucracy is developed that somehow determines where and how people should live, as though they somehow know what is better for the people than the people themselves. More planning staff, requires more taxpayer's money, and more bureaucracy. Since we as citizens of the county, live here and pay taxes here, I believe, we the citizens, should direct growth. To that end I would listen and act accordingly.

3. Public Access to Recreation and Neighborhood Parks

I believe that we the people should have access to all our public lands. As land is developed there should always be access afforded so we can utilize these areas. At this point in time, maintaining the existing trails and parks is of the utmost importance; in addition we must be looking to the future to insure that future generations have the same privileges we have been afforded.

4. Respect For The Planning Process (see table on page ___)

5. Securing Adequate Funding for Roads, Fire, Sheriff, Parks and Water Quality.

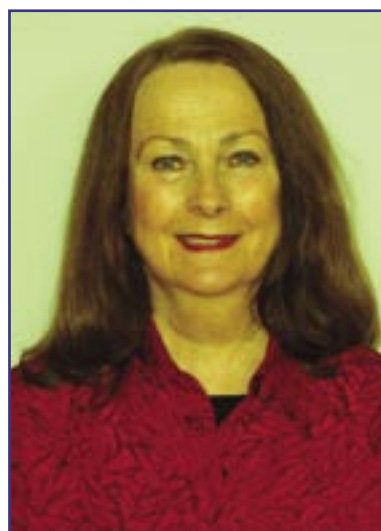
Growth should pay for itself. The idea that the county expects too much of developers is hogwash. A developer should be required to do whatever is necessary to bring a subdivision on line that meets all county requirements. Ultimately, the developer passes all costs on to the consumer. If the county would follow its own policies, rather than continually making exceptions, this would help resolve many problems. At some point all these exceptions and variances become the rule.

6. Public Process

These are huge concerns of mine as I run for county commissioner. I hear these complaints repeatedly in one form or another. We need to take a look at the questions at hand, no longer skirting difficult issues. Community involvement is essential in keeping our county accountable for its actions. Cooperation between city and county entities should enable us in the development of a bigger picture. I welcome representation from all community members and look forward to your presence and input at our meetings.

David Reynolds (R)

Due to time constraints, David was unable to respond.



Kathleen Robertson (R)

1. Planning for 100 Years Forward

I would like to see our pristine lakes and rivers, mountains, wildlife habitats, fresh air and fresh water still here for future generations to enjoy as we do. This is a one-of-a-kind special place that needs to be protected. People can live and flourish in the Flathead without leaving a blighted landscape behind.

There are numerous state, county and local agencies which research the natural environment. They will become increasingly important in analyzing the effects our growing population has on our resources. Conscientious

stewardship among citizens is necessary to assure economic prosperity coincides with proper management and development of natural resources. Fees charged to developers to improve roads and contribute to infrastructure need to be implemented

Our environment is why people live here – either for economic benefit or personal life style. If our valuable lands are absorbed by uncontrolled development, our heritage of quality water and air and scenic beauty is compromised.

We need to protect our sensitive natural resources. We need to consider Transfer Development Rights, as well as other options, to encourage reduction or elimination of development in areas a community wants to save and increase development where growth is desired.

2. Support for Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood plans in the Flathead have been put in place by a majority of residents of these plan areas to give residents more say in the type, location and quality of development that can take place within the neighborhood plan area.

Neighborhoods must be encouraged to develop a vision for their future. This county encompasses a diverse population of communities each of which needs to be able to affect its future while working with the larger community – the county as a whole.

Recently Bigfork has returned to an elected advisory board which makes recommendations to the county planning board. Representative government is a foundation of democracy and a privilege that should be considered by every community.

Presently the planning staff is overwhelmed with workload. If more tax dollars could be allocated to planning, yes, I would support more staffing. It may not be an option.

Applications could be more limited to give the staff a chance to keep up, especially while the growth policy is being written.

3. Public Access to Recreation and Neighborhood Parks

The growth policy needs to include a map of the county with overlay sheets. One of these should be to identify the need and appropriate location for access to the natural resources that we should all be able to enjoy and incorporate these into planning decisions. This is especially important as people move here and build in sensitive natural areas.

Recently there has been a strong move to connect areas in the county with a trail system. The county planning office is working on this. The internet lists over a dozen sites for trails in Montana. There are four in Flathead County. I believe a sense of community is important in the county, and this movement is a wonderful way to help revive that sense.

Answers from County Commissioner Candidates

Kathleen Robertson (R) (continued)

4. Respect For The Planning Process (see table on page ___)

5. Securing Adequate Funding for Roads, Fire, Sheriff, Parks and Water Quality.

Presently developers pay for infrastructure within the development. Until they are profitable and can repay loans developers need to explore funding sources such as bonds, federal loans, etc. Impact fees need be implemented to fund additional service capacity required by the development. The fees must be based on actual cost of public facility expansion or improvements or reasonable estimates of the cost to be incurred by the governmental entity as a result of new development.

My first priority would be road construction and maintenance. The dust from our county roads threatens both air and water quality. In consideration of health, safety and welfare of our citizens, a public-private task force could be formed to research the growing problems facing our jail and number of officers in law enforcement.

Property taxes need to be reduced and alternatives explored. Capping or reducing taxes as demands expand will result in capped or reduced services. Roads must be funded short term, but will be used for years and should be paid for over their useful life. As we plan for the future, it is important to study alternative approaches in decisions regarding funding (privatization, special assessments, issuance of bonds).

6. Public Process

The planning board has encouraged people from all communities to write, speak, email or communicate in any possible way, both as individuals and groups. The public input at board meetings is unlimited.

There have been previous attempts to establish means of cooperation, and this must continue. Cities are an integral part of the county. We have to understand there are differences which have to be dealt with cooperatively in a constructive way.

The makeup of the planning board changes regularly because members have two-year terms and do not always get reappointed. Applications for membership on the planning boards need to be carefully reviewed and applicants interviewed. It should be a diverse group representing a variety of communities, occupations, ages and attitudes.



Kip Willis (R)

1. Planning for 100 Years Forward

Planning for 100 years!

Our valleys future is in peril now, not 100 years from now, as we speak our growth policy is being written for us, not by us. Our neighborhood plans are under siege, being complied to death by developers, from across the county/country who only have to comply to the current outdated regulations and what 3 commissioners, most of the time what 2 commissioners decide, what is best for all of us and these developers do not share their spoils/profits

with the areas they are impacting. No help for new schools, fire stations, road improvements nothing. Why should we not have a vote or meaningful say in OUR new growth policy, if we do not act soon there will be nothing worth looking or voting for in 100 years.

I would like to see all neighborhood groups together AS ONE VOICE and ONE UNIT speaking for the valley. Wake up people.

2. Support for Neighborhood Planning

Support for neighborhood planning?

From my experience our neighborhood plans are deemed worthless, my neighborhood "West valley" is under siege and being destroyed by big business, which plan to move in our neighborhood and build MORE GRAVEL PITS and ALSPAHLT /CEMENT FACTORIES. These people who represent THE GRAVEL INDUSTRY and ROAD BUILDING CONTRACTORS, DO NOT care how much damage they can do to our wells Or damage roads, "that they build/plan to destroy". 4500 neighbors in west valley can't stop the gravel industry, except by taking them to the Supreme Court, what voice do you have in your neighborhood how big is your bank account?

3. Public Access to Recreation and Neighborhood Parks

Public access!

We need more than 3 commissioners, if this is not allowed, we will not have room left for access to anywhere. Our neighborhood plan states NO NEW INDUSTRY OR STORES allowed in West Valley, FORGET OUR CONCERNS, the planners have said "Our Plan" is too restrictive and needs to be rewritten for our own good, the planners want stores and more growth/industry in our neighborhood. We have no say and we want our neighborhood plan to stay the same.. We can not protect our sensitive resources and areas, what makes you think you are safe in your neighborhood? We must not plan for the NOW, we must plan for the future, we must UNITE AS ONE, not 25 or 30 little neighborhood groups, officials can pick us off one at a time, but not as ONE VOICE. Our neighbors are suing the county, to protect what is left. GOT-MONEY/ GOT-LAWYERS?

4. Respect For The Planning Process (see table on page ___)

5. Securing Adequate Funding for Roads, Fire, Sheriff, Parks and Water Quality.

We have growth and more money in the coffers, but we are not requiring, this Growth to stimulate the economy. How can we have a PROPOSED NEW CITY bigger than Bigfork with almost 3500 new houses to be built, this new city RIVERDALE built behind the county dump/arena, if this is allowed to happen and the developers are not required to pay for their profits, who will end up paying? We will all pay for this uncontrolled growth. If you make money and profits from your development you should pay something back to the area you are impacting, via new roads, schools, sewer, police support, it is a no brain'er! We can not allow our government officials to act like the "drunken" spend and tax clowns in Washington D.C., they must be held accountable for our money and how they spend our money, and also require developers to kick in support.

6. Public Process

The entire valley is in the process of being COMPLIED TO BY Developers; all they have to do is show proof of compliance to the zoning regulations. Go check out Southern California or Seattle WA. See where they are in the past 30 to 40 years.

To Protect Our Current Beautiful Valley, we should impose or require our

Answers from County Commissioner Candidates

Kip Willis (R) (continued)

Government representatives to have 3 GUIDELINES FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR VALLEY, in regards to development and future of our valley. THIS SHOULD BE IN OUR GROWTH POLICY as a rules to live by.

#1 DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR LAND SHOULD NOT DESTROY YOUR

NEIGHBORS OR DECREASE THEIR LAND VALUE.

#2 DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR LAND SHOULD NOT POSE A RISK OR CREATE A DANGER TO YOUR NEIGHBOR.

#3 DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR LAND SHOULD NOT HINDER OR DESTROY YOUR NEIGHBORS QUALITY OF LIFE.

Three Great Opportunities to Recycle and Protect Our Valley's Clean Water

- **Annual Business Hazardous Waste Collection Event June 2nd**
- **Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events, every third Saturday**
- **Electronic Waste Collection Events May 26-27 & July 15**

Flathead County Landfill. ~~That is the estimated quantity of hazardous waste dumped each day.~~ It is projected that of the 24,000 gallons of hazardous waste ~~that Flathead homeowners throw away annually,~~ only 27% is being diverted to the Hazardous Waste Collection Center at the County landfill. Add in hundreds of small businesses around the valley and the problem multiplies.

Hazardous materials, found in common products we all use, should not be thrown away with your regular garbage or dumped down the drain. ~~This significantly increases the likelihood of toxins leaching into our groundwater.~~ Look for warning words on the label to identify hazardous wastes including: Danger, Poison, Caution, Flammable, Caustic, or Hazardous. Then ~~separate~~ events. Learn more about reducing, reusing, and recycling hazardous chemicals at ~~this web site:~~ www.WasteNotProject.org

For hazardous waste items:

Homeowners/renters, Free of charge every third Saturday of each month. It accepts products including left over oil-based paints, pesticides or herbicides, automotive products and cleaners, and poisons. Call the landfill, 758-5910, for details.

Businesses, Friday, June 2nd the center offers a once-a-year, cost-saving collection program. Pre-registration required. Call Citizens for a Better Flathead, 756-8993, or the landfill at 758-5910. By providing a joint event for valley businesses, disposal fees for business hazardous wastes are greatly reduced, and compliance with state laws requiring businesses to properly dispose of such materials with a licensed collector are easily met.



For businesses or homeowners/renters with electronic wastes such as computers, TV's, phones, printers, etc:

May 26-27th, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for Whitefish and Columbia Falls at the Wave rear parking lot, 1250 Baker Street, in Whitefish (email to pre-register or with questions, susan028@centurytel.net).

July 15th, 9a.m. to 4p.m. for all Flathead County at Valley Recycling, 1410 Hwy 2 W., Kalispell, (to pre-register or for information call Valley Recycling at 257-2574, or Citizens for a Better Flathead at 756-8993).

Note: there is a reasonable fee for items brought to these collection events, with typical prices ranging from \$2.00 for a phone to \$8.50 for a monitor and \$15.00 for a TV (to check out price lists and additional information visit www.WasteNotProject.org).

Be sure to take steps to protect your privacy by downloading freeware to completely erase your hard drive before bringing your computer to the event. One such website with helpful links is <http://dban.sourceforge.net/> If you don't have access to the internet, or your computer does not work, please remove your hard drive and destroy it. Trained people will be on site and for an ~~ad~~ computer. Additional security questions can be directed to the electronics recycling company, Inland ReTech of Spokane, who ~~wi~~ reached at dford@inlandretech.com.

Mark your calendar: CBF's Spring into Summer Picnic and Raffle Drawing is coming soon!



What: Potluck, barbecue, great prizes, fun and games
When: Saturday, June 17th, 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 (Note: Time changed from previous mailing)
Where: Kalispell's Lawrence Park
Who: You, your kids, your friends, and anyone you think would enjoy the fun...
 Know someone new to the area who would be interested in Citizens?
 Bring them along!



What to bring:

- * A potluck dish and drinks for you and your family.
- * Energy and a fun-loving spirit for the many games we'll be playing, including bocce, badminton, and much more!
- * Some extra cash or that checkbook for the prizes and extra tickets you'll want to buy once you see our fantastic prize selection first-hand.
- * Your favorite good luck charm to increase your already great odds of winning a prize in our Great Place Raffle!

➤ *CBF will provide hamburgers, veggie burgers, hotdogs and all the fixin's.*

OPTIONAL: Spring cleaning? Save one good quality item for a silent auction the day of the picnic! Please stick to items still in good condition that you just don't have a use for any more, such as bicycles, baby strollers, exercise equipment, small kitchen appliances, etc. Not sure if your item fits the bill? Feel free to call the CBF office at 756-8993. Your best friend just might buy your old bike!

Raffle Reminder:

Our spring raffle is in full swing... have you bought your tickets yet? Every ticket you buy gives you a better than one-in-four chance of winning one of the 60 fantastic prizes your talented friends and neighbors have donated for this fundraiser. The average prize value is an amazing \$88, making any prize well worth the \$25 ticket price. We also have ten outstanding premium prizes available to purchase outright (but there are only eight left...so hurry!) Check out the full list and photos of the prizes on our website, at www.flatheadcitizens.org. Don't have internet and didn't get a raffle mailing already? Call our office at 756-8993.

Your membership dollars support our work to preserve the economic, cultural, and ecological health of the Flathead Valley. Call 756-8993 for more information.

CITIZENS FOR A BETTER FLATHEAD • 2006 CONTRIBUTION FORM

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Email _____

- \$250 Sponsor
- \$100 Hometown Hero
- \$50 Contributor
- \$35 Family
- \$25 Individual
- _____

Please send to Citizens for a Better Flathead
 P.O. Box 771, Kalispell, MT 59903