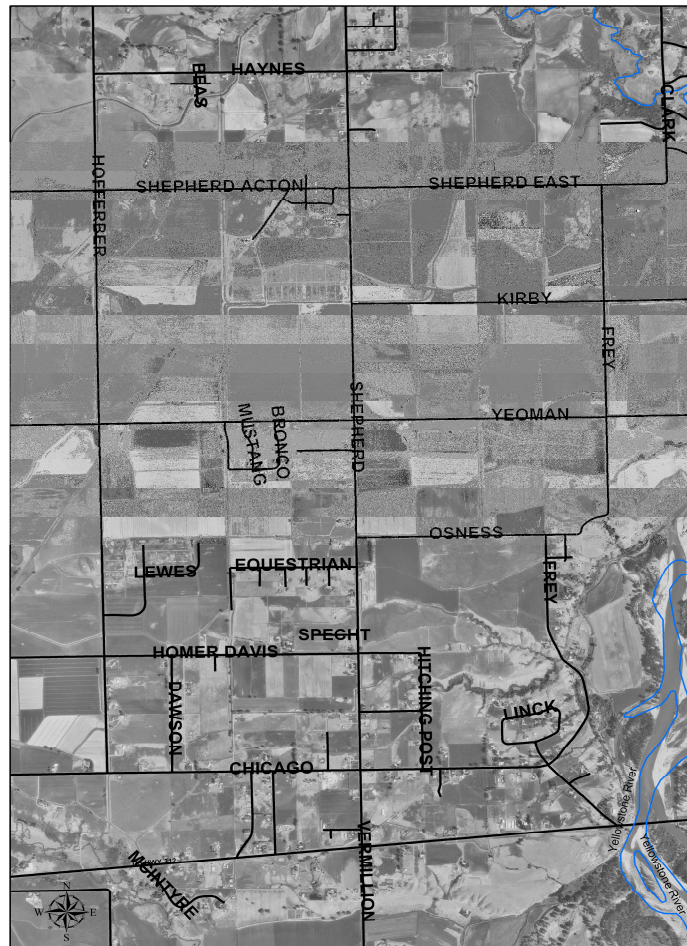


Shepherd



Community Action Plan

*Prepared by:
Planning Division*

*510 North Broadway; 4th Floor Library
Billings, Montana 59101*

Acknowledgements

Yellowstone County Commissioners

Chairman Bill Kennedy
Commissioner Jim Reno
Commissioner John Ostlund

Shepherd Community Steering Committee

Russell Curry, Chairperson
Jennifer Premo
Cindy Stewart
Kathy Spence
Jackie Schleder
Connie Herberg

City-County Planning Team

Ramona Mattix, Director
Candi Beaudry, Division Manager
Scott Walker, Transportation Planner
Darlene Tussing, Alternative Modes Coordinator
Juliet Spalding, Planner I
Wyeth Friday, Planner I
Nicole Cromwell, Planner I
Colleen Schell-Berg, County Code Enforcement
Lora Mattox, Planner II

The Shepherd Community Action Plan

Community Background

Originally, Shepherd was called New Holland and was located along the B & CM Railroad approximately 12 miles northeast of Billings. Many of the original settlers are buried in one side of the churchyard and locals refer to it as the Holland Cemetery. The name change occurred in the early 1990's, when Shepherd was re-named after R.E. Shepherd, owner of Billings Land and Irrigation Company and the Merchants National Bank. Although the community has never incorporated, the townsite was platted, a school constructed, and a few small businesses thrived. This area was used for cattle ranching in the early part of the 1900's, until the creation of an irrigation canal throughout the area, which made growing crops possible. Many immigrants poured into the area to try and start a new life in farming, but the Montana prairie is known for drought, thistle, coyotes, prairie dogs and grasshoppers, and a combination of all of these forced the land back to ranching. Today the townsite straddles the intersection of County roads and is an easy and often necessary commute to Billings. Rather than large ranches and farms, the area has been divided into small ranchettes and horse farms.

Introduction

The Shepherd Community Committee was formed in October 2002 to consider options for organizing as a community. One of the goals of this committee was to determine what kind of community structure would best suit Shepherd and assist them in the ability to access local, state, and federal funds. The Community Committee was created out of the existing Road and Safety Committee and asked for volunteers to serve as Chairman and Officers. With assistance from community residents, Yellowstone County Extension Office, Big Sky Economic Development Authority, and the City-County Planning Department, the committee has been able to meet monthly.

One of the initial projects originated by the committee was a survey to determine the degree of interest among Shepherd residents in helping to identify projects and goals for Shepherd's future. The survey was distributed on January 10, 2003 to over 1,300 residents. Of the 1,300 surveys sent, 160 (over 12%) were returned. Following is the three questions asked in the survey and the results of those questions.

1. Where would you like to see Shepherd go in the next 10 years?
 - A. 10 Become a suburb of Billings
 - B. 89 Become a more structured community
 - C. 38 Stay the same as it is now
 - D. 14 Other

2. Are you interested in seeing Shepherd become a more developed community?
 - A. 102 Yes
 - B. 44 No

3. In your opinion, what would help draw the community together?
 - A. 54 A park
 - B. 70 A developed central "hub" in the downtown area
 - C. 72 A community center
 - D. 18 Other

Residents were also given an opportunity to express other ideas or suggestions on the future planning of the Shepherd Community. The most mentioned comments are listed below with the number of residents who made the comment.

1. Clean up Main Street and the whole Shepherd Area. (24)
2. Have a Planned Growth Idea. (9)
3. City water, Natural gas lines and Public Sewer. (9)
4. Bike/Walking/Horse Trail. (9)
5. Safety issues with Highway 312/widening it. (5)
6. Either pave roads or maintain unpaved roads. (4)
7. Improvement of the Fire Services. (3)
8. Establish Community Projects. (3)
9. Change in the speed limit on Shepherd/Acton road from 60 M.P.H. to 25 M.P.H., some sort of warning or gradual decrease. (3)
10. Community events/barn dances. (3)
11. Restriction of mobile homes. (1)

Some other ideas listed were cafes, swimming pool, gas station, hardware/irrigation store, ice rink, sidewalks and streetlights.

Shepherd Community Planning Boundary

The community's first goal as an organized community committee will be to formalize a planning boundary. For the purpose of gathering pertinent demographic information, census information was analyzed by zip code 59079 data. The U.S. Census Bureau also provides demographic information for what is known as the Shepherd Census Designated Place (CDP) and is located as an appendix to this plan. This CDP area encompasses approximately 4 miles and is

Table 1: Population Comparison – Shepherd (59079) and Yellowstone County, Montana

	1990	2000	Percentage Change
Shepherd	2,068	3,059	+47.92%
Yellowstone County	113,419	129,097	+13.82%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics			

Age Distribution

Age characteristics in Shepherd shadow a similar trend for Yellowstone County and Billings where there has been a shift in the median age. In 1990 the median age of persons in Shepherd was 29.1 years. The 2000 Census shows that the median age has risen to 34.5 years. This increase in median age is a reflection of an aging population nation-wide.

Table 2: Age Characteristics – Shepherd, Montana (59079)

Age	1990	Percent of Total	2000	Percent of Total	Percent Change 1990-2000
Under 5	143	6.91%	223	7.29%	+55.95%
5 to 9	263	12.72%	265	8.66%	+.76%
10 to 14	240	11.61%	271	8.86%	+12.92%
15 to 19	215	10.40%	275	8.99%	+27.91%
20 to 24	55	2.66%	129	4.22%	+135%
25 to 34	356	17.21%	392	12.81%	+10.11%
35 to 44	382	18.47%	607	19.84%	+58.90%
45 to 54	228	11.03%	473	15.46%	+107%
55 to 64	74	3.58%	241	7.88%	+226%
65 to 74	65	3.14%	121	3.96%	+86.15%
75+	47	2.27%	62	2.03%	+31.91%
Total	2,068	100%	3,059	100%	
Median Age	29.1		34.5		
Source: U.S. Census Bureau of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics					

Race

The racial diversity of Shepherd has barely increased over the last ten years. In 1990, 96.76 percent of the community's population was white and in 2000 a decrease in the all-white population to 96.05 percent.

The 2000 Census shows an increase in the Hispanic population. According to the 2000 Census, the total Hispanic population was 57 or 1.86 percent of the population for Shepherd. This is an increase of 25 people or 78.1 percent since 1990.

Table 3: Racial Characteristics – Shepherd, Montana (59079)

Race	1990	Percent of Total	2000	Percent of Total
White	2,001	96.76%	2,938	96.05%
Black/ African American	0	-	5	.16%
American Indian Alaska Native	7	.34%	33	1.08%
Asian or Pacific Islander	10	.48%	1	.03%
Other Race	18	.87%	25	.82%
Hispanic Origin (of any race)	32	1.55%	57	1.86%
Total Population	2,068	100%	3,059	100%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics				

Education

Since 1990, the median years of education completed among persons 25 years old and older has increased. The percentage of the population in that age group that has completed a four-year college degree and/or graduate or professional degree has continued to increase as well.

In 1990, the percentage of people in Shepherd who had completed high school was 86.81 percent and the percentage of people who had completed four or more years of college was 17.71 percent. These numbers for Shepherd according to the 2000 Census is 88.55 percent high school graduates and the percentage of people who had completed four or more years of college was 19.28 percent.

Table 4: Education Attainment of 25 Years and Older - Shepherd, Montana (59079)

	1990	2000
Less than 9 th Grade	40	48
9 th to 12 th Grade (No Diploma)	112	164
High School Graduate (including GED)	469	658
Some College (No Degree)	280	464
A.A.	47	160
B.A.	163	289
Graduate or Professional Degree	41	68
Total Population 25 Years and Older	1,152	1,851
Percent High School Graduates	86.81%	88.55%
Percent Four or More Years of College/Bachelor's degree or higher	17.71%	19.28%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics		

Population Projections

According to the Census and Economic Information Center (CEIC) with the Montana Department of Commerce released population projections for counties up to the year 2025. Yellowstone County is expected to grow an average of 1 percent per year. At this rate, the County population will reach approximately 137,990 by 2005; 145,880 by 2010; and 162,410 by 2020.

According to the 2003 Growth Policy Plan, population densities are decreasing from the residential core of Billings outward to the newly annexed territories. This trend could lead to a greater build up of residential units between Billings and Shepherd as well as increase residential development in the Shepherd area.

Housing

Shepherd experienced a 46.92 percent increase in housing units between 1990 and 2000 compared to 11.85 percent for Yellowstone County between 1990 and 2000. This 46.92 percent increase amounts to 358 new houses constructed in the last ten years.

This increase in housing units is also reflected in the median year built data. In 1990, the median year built was 1970 and in 2000 the median date built jumped 3 years to 1973. According to the 1990 census for Shepherd, 1977 was the median year built, in the year 2000 this median year built number increased to 1984, reflecting the amount of new construction in the last twenty years.

Also important to note is the increase in the median household income. Although median income has increase 44 percent in Shepherd, housing costs throughout the county have risen even more. The median income for Shepherd in 1990 was \$28,607; in 2000 the median income is \$41,211.

Table 5: Housing Characteristics – Shepherd and Yellowstone County, Montana (59079)

	Shepherd		Percent Change	Yellowstone County		Percent Change
Year	1990	2000		1990	2000	
Housing Units	763	1,121	+46.92%	48,781	54,563	+11.85%
Median Year Built	1977	1984		1970	1973	
Occupied Units	665	1,056	+58.80%	44,689	52,084	+16.55%
Vacant Units	58	65	+12.07	4,092	2,479	-65.07%
Owner-Occupied	552	915	+65.76%	29,371	36,026	+22.66%
Renter Occupied	113	141	+24.78%	15,318	16,058	+4.83%

Table 5 Continued

Median Household Income	\$28,607	\$41,211	+44.06%	\$25,942	\$36,727	+41.57%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau of Profile of Selected Housing Characteristics						

Planning Process

Through the results of the community survey, the Shepherd Community Organization identified six (6) potential community-preferred projects to further investigate. These projects included:

1. The construction of a community center.
2. Determine preferred land use and community organization.
3. The development of a multiuse trail system.
4. Transportation issues.
5. Public safety Improvements.
6. Community projects and events.

To further investigate community interest in these proposed projects a community-wide workshop was held on November 15, 2003. Approximately 39 residents attended the workshop.

The first exercise completed by the participants included prioritizing 6 projects. The projects are listed in order of priority above. Next, residents separated into 6 groups to discuss each individual project.



A representative from the City-County Planning Department acted as facilitator for each group and assisted with identification of an issue statement. Through discussions, the groups identified Shepherd's opportunities and constraints, and determined what additional information was needed and what steps were needed to accomplish the project.

At the completion of this workshop, the Planning Division gathered all the information provided by residents and set forth to prepare this action plan as a tool for the Shepherd community to accomplish the identified goals.

Priority #1 - Community Center

Issue: Shepherd is in need of a Community Center to provide a location for community events.

Workshop Discussion: The local Lions Club has volunteered to be the lead agency for this project with their non-profit status. This organization identified a potential location for this community center on Haynes Road. An architect is on the Lions Board and could provide technical assistance. Insurance would be available through the National Lions Club Organization. Example of events which could be held at this center include meetings, weddings, dance floor, senior and youth activities.

Another potential opportunity for a community center is the availability of the fire station. Recently, a new facility has been constructed to house the local volunteer fire department. There has been discussion of the potential of “giving” the existing fire station to the community to use for community events. The benefits of this include its location in the center of the community, and the fact that it is already constructed and of fairly good size.

At this time construction sites are limited for the building of a community center with a close proximity to the community core, also existing buildings appropriate for this center do not exist, due to the condition of the building or of inadequate size needed for the center. In addition, the site chosen by the Lions Club may have some septic issues; the Lions Club, with communication with the State Building Officials, are currently working to resolve this issue. Constraints of the existing fire station include the occupancy capacity of infrastructure and other codes, which would need to be explored to ensure safety.

Grants may be another avenue of assistance with this project. If the community determined that the community center should be located separately from the Lions’ organization, the Department of Commerce through the State of Montana administers the Community Development Block Grant Program. Funds from this program can be used to establish a public facility such as a Senior Center. Shepherd would need to approach Yellowstone County as the applicant, there is also a local match and the community must show a certain percentage of low and moderate-income residents the center would serve. This program may not work absolutely for the community, however, contact and further discussion needs to be examined.

Grants are also available through the United States Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development Organization. Rural Development also provides grants for community facilities. Contact information for various organizations, which may assist with this project, are located in the appendix.

Tasks

1. Gather information that will provide steps on the development of a community center.
2. Work directly with Lions Club Organization to assist with their community center project.
3. Contact state grant administrators for information and guidance on making this project happen.

Actions

1. Gather information that will provide steps on the development of a community center.
 - A. Appoint Community Center Committee to accomplish the following:
 - 1) Contact Real Estate Company or local community members who may have knowledge of potential tracts of land or buildings available.
 - 2) If tracts of land are available, determine if suitable for development. Land topography, septic and water issues, size of tract, costs of acquiring and developing, and ownership.
 - 3) If a building is available determine if it is suitable for a community center. Things to consider would include size of building, occupancy limitations, acquisition and maintenance cost, rehabilitation costs, ownership and management.
2. Work directly with Lions Club Organization to assist with their community center project.
 - A. Attend Lions Club meeting or make a request to be kept updated regularly on the progress of their efforts. Make reports back to entire steering committee on a regular basis.
 - B. Explore ways the Shepherd Community Committee and residents could assist the Lions Club with their development and make suggestions to the steering committee.
3. Contact state grant administrators for information and guidance on making this project happen.
 - A. Contact the Montana Department of Commerce who administer the Community Development Block Grant Program. Ask them for a packet of information on grant availability, applicant eligibility, types of projects funded, and process for application. Make the Commerce Department aware of potential projects in Shepherd. The number for the Montana Department of Commerce is 406-841-2791. Casey Joyce from Big Sky EDA would also be a beneficial contact. He can be reached at 256-6871, Ext. 241
 - B. Contact the USDA Rural Development Office for information on their grant programs. Introduce the community to them and ask for information packets. Request similar information as listed above from the Montana Department of Commerce. Again, Casey Joyce would be of assistance also.
 - C. As non-profit organization, investigate opportunities at community events to seek private donations. Develop a list of opportunities for a fund-raising campaign

Priority #2 - Land use and Community Organization

Issue: Community organization is needed to achieve the preferred land use pattern.

Workshop Discussion: The land in the vicinity of Shepherd has been subdivided without consideration given to a preferred pattern. Large agricultural operations (>320 acres) still exist amidst small-subdivided lots of less than 5 acres. Most parcels in the area range from between 5 to 10 acres. The first group exercise was to establish what Shepherd would look like in 10 years. The result of this effort was that residents of the area don't expect or want Shepherd to grow as a concentrated town. The preferred development pattern is similar to what exists today. There is a desire however, to control the type of development and most of the participants wanted to develop a growth management plan for the area. This would involve a discussion of regulatory and voluntary growth management techniques. Five options were described to the discussion group and included the level of government involvement, type of land use, grant funding requirements, revenue sources and time frames. The Planning Department facilitator offered potential types of community organization, which included incorporation, creation of a Sewer and Water District or a Rural Special Improvement District. Residents expressed the desire for minimal government involvement; therefore incorporation and the Sewer and Water District were immediately eliminated due to the fact that the area does not want to have the necessary density to support the needed tax base needed for a Sewer and Water District. Rural Special Improvement District is an organization that has merit because the taxes raised could be applied to a variety of projects. Eligible projects could include curbs and gutter, street lighting, and sidewalks. However, it also has the disadvantage of being tax revenue dependent on population density. It was determined that to be able to proceed with desired community projects the community would investigate the potential of a local affiliate of the Montana Community Foundation.

Elements of Community Organizations

	Level of Government Involvement	Future Land Use	Grant Funding Options	Revenue Sources	Time Frame
Incorporation	High	Compact	Planning, Utility, Transportation	Taxes	Long Range
Sewer & Water District	Moderate	Compact	Planning, Utility	Taxes	Long Range
Rural Special Improvement District	Moderate	Dispersed	Limited	Taxes	Short to Medium Range
Non-profit Organization	None	Dispersed	Match funds for all grants, project specific, some liability	Contributions	Short to Medium Range
Foundation Affiliate	None	Dispersed	Match funds for all grants, project specific, limited liability	Contributions	Short to Long Range

Tasks

1. Create Community Foundation.
2. Establish planning area.
3. Develop land use plan.

Actions

1. Create Community Foundation.
 - A. Contact Linda Reed of the Montana Community Foundation at 406-443-8313 and invite her to a Shepherd Community meeting to give a presentation on the Montana Community Foundation. Prepare a list of questions to ask such as instructions on setting up a local foundation, financing start up, creating a local board, etc.
 - B. Develop financing opportunities such as soliciting private donations and establishing fundraising events.
 - C. Start communication on establishing a Shepherd Community Foundation Board. Determine who should sit on the board and what responsibilities will the board be charged with.
 - D. Initiate necessary paperwork required to establish a local community foundation. Determine who will be responsible for this completion of paperwork.
2. Establish planning area.
 - A. Involve residents by having a community wide meeting to establish. Prior to this meeting information could be provided at local events such as the community wide garage sale, Little League Games, etc.
 - B. Gather background such as census data, school boundary, fire district, etc.
 - C. Make consensus agreement on boundary.
3. Develop land use plan.
 - A. From workshop it was determined that the current land use pattern of the area is appealing to residents. Therefore a review of the workshop exercise map denoting the land use pattern should be used to guide the development of a land use plan.
 - B. In writing, make a request to the County Planning Department that when proposed development occurs in the area, such as subdivision requests, that this request be brought to the attention of the Shepherd Community Committee. This information can be reviewed and allow the committee to be aware of this development and provide citizens with information regarding proposed development.
 - C. "Community Core" development. If desired, determine what type of development, i.e. services such as gas/convenience store, hardware, etc. What incentive could be offered to promote this type of development? If not in the community core, would along Highway 312 be more appropriate?

Priority #3 - Multiuse Trails

Issue: Develop a multi-use trail to establish a link from the surrounding Shepherd Community to the school and to various subdivisions in the area.

During the Shepherd Planning session, the Multi-use Trail group looked at potential corridors for the trail system. It was discussed that the most important facility to link to in the Shepherd community was the school and to make connections from the school to various subdivision in the area. The previous CTEP (Community Transportation Enhancement Program) application had the trail running along the Shepherd Road, however, this group felt it would be better to avoid the trail along the busy roadway. Several group members identified the ditch bank (which is part of the Billings Bench Water Association system and lies between the Shepherd Road and Hofferber Road) as a more ideal location for the trail corridor as it lines up with the school property with the old railroad corridor that access into the bus barn area. The group felt it should run from Chicago Road, which is a low use country road that could be used as a bike route to access several subdivisions to the east and then all the way north to past Haynes Road and follow the ditch corridor to several subdivisions to the north. It was also determined that a future link to the Yellowstone River would be important as it could provide them a link to a trail system that someday may run along the Yellowstone greenway, which may link Billings to Pompey's Pillar. The group also discussed that some of the east/west side roads such as Shepherd East, or Kirby could be used as bike routes to connect to the river. Several members also expressed that eventually it would be nice to link the Shepherd trail to Billings, so people could actually use it as a commuter route. The old railroad corridor runs into the ditch bank and depending on the ownership of the abandoned rail line that might be a viable option for connecting to the Billings trail system.

There are two major Federal funding resources that have been available to Trail Development which include the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP). Both of these programs are dependent on Congress renewing these programs through the Transportation Bill that is being considered at this time. Another potential Federal source is the LWCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund). This program is administered through the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. This is a competitive application program and has strict guidelines.

Other potential ideas include exploring if right-of-way can be acquired and if the community wanted to at least establish some surface material for a trail corridor with labor provided by a volunteer crew, the group could gravel trails at an estimated cost of \$5.60/ton which would surface a 10-foot wide trail, 4 – 5 inches thick for 3-feet.

Another proposal is that when the city, county or state does road-resurfacing projects, they create asphalt millings, which could be used for a trail surface. This was discussed with one of the City Engineers and those millings could be gifted to the Shepherd Community, the local group would need to provide hauling.

Initiatives have already been implemented to raise funds for the creation of a trail. Local residents are forming a non-profit organization to host an annual 5K run that would benefit and call attention to the construction of a trail system in the Shepherd community. The first race is scheduled for May 15, 2004, the week before graduation at Shepherd High School and at the same time as the annual community-wide garage sale. A website has been established to promote the race and the Rim Runners, an established running group in Billings, has agreed to do a mailing to promote the race.

Tasks

1. Identify routes and design preferences.
2. Establish a trail priority list.
3. Determine funding sources.
4. Apply for grants/solicit matching funds or resources.
5. Construct trails as funding allows.
6. Address maintenance needs.

Actions

1. Identify routes and design preferences.
 - A. Refer to trail routes identified by participants in the workshop. Review Heritage Trail Plan and determine if these routes would partner with future trails identified in the Heritage Trail Plan.
 - B. Determine through communication with established trail organizations the different design patterns. Ask what design patterns work the best for a multi use trail that will be accommodating a variety of uses such as pedestrian, bike and equestrian.
2. Establish a trail priority list.
 - A. Establish a trail priority list by inviting participants of the workshop personally as well as all residents with interest in the trail proposal to a regular meeting and have them guide the steering committee with setting trial priorities.
3. Determine funding sources.
 - A. Contact Darlene Tussing, the Alternative Modes Coordinator for information on the grant programs available for trail construction.
 - B. Continue support of the fund raising efforts established by Shepherd 5K committee.
4. Apply for grants/solicit matching funds or resources.
 - A. Determine which grants would be the most beneficial to complete trail project. Determine local match requirements, will it be cash or can it be donated services (in-kind). Darlene Tussing can offer information and professional guidance on this determination and she should be contacted.
 - B. Develop a list of contacts for solicitation of donations for local match whether it is a cash donation or in-kind donation (materials or labor).
 - C. Determine who the applicant will be.
5. Construct trails as funding allows.
 - A. As funds become available, develop construction plan that includes grant administration requirements (if needed), bidding procedures, scheduling of construction and determine who will oversee construction.
6. Address maintenance needs.
 - A. Determine trail maintenance needs and scheduling of maintenance.
 - B. Determine method of maintenance funds, either through the development of a Rural Special Improvement District (RSID).

Priority #4 – Transportation

Issue: Improve traffic and transportation.

Three main topics were discussed to improve roadway safety.

1. Increase roadway safety. Several points were discussed to increase roadway safety and included:
 - A. Improve roadway signage by maintaining proper signage and by replacing damaged or stolen roadway signs.
 - B. Improve pavement markings.
 - C. By using signage to define areas of reduced speeds. Re-evaluate passing zones. Increase law enforcement.
 - D. Construct bike/pedestrian trails.
2. Roadway Improvements. Below are listed options for improved roadways.
 - A. Maintain good accesses. Install turn lanes and widen Highway 312 from Billings to where Highway crosses Yellowstone River.
 - B. Pave Shepherd/Acton Road to the intersection of Highway 87. This project is budgeted for 2004.
 - C. North by-pass. High priority project. Truck route. In 2002/2003 a feasibility study was initiated. The feasibility study determined that a North By-Pass was feasible from the I-90/94 interchange to Montana Highway 3. Currently this project is in the environmental assessment/location phase and will not be completed for up to 18 months. Information about the feasibility study can be found on the city web site at the following address:
www.ci.billings.mt.us/Government/planning.php
 - D. Widen shoulders. Recently shoulders have been added to Shepherd Road.
 - E. Grade and plow as needed. Increase sanding, salting, snow and ice removal. The suggestion was made to sand icy roads a minimum of a ¼ mile from intersection to allow traffic sufficient time to stop.
 - F. Maintenance and upkeep. Dust control to include Magnesium Chloride, paving of county roads and encouraging residents to pave driveways and approaches.
 - G. Make better use of millings in the area.
 - H. Maintain and enforce proper site distances.
3. Public Awareness
 - A. School Education
 1. Youth Groups
 2. 4H
 3. Drivers Education
 - B. Maintenance
 - C. Seat belts
 - D. Shuttle service to and from Billings

Another factor discussed was funding. How does the community follow through and fund some of these activities? Possible funding discussed included establishing a Special Improvement District (SID), local area tax, bond, mill, or private contributions through the Montana Community Foundation.

For the tasks listed below a communication network must be developed with the appropriate agencies. These agencies could include the Yellowstone County Commissioners, the Public Works Department, Montana Department of Transportation, and Yellowstone County Emergency Services.

Tasks

1. Request a Transportation Study through the Planning Division.
2. Require study to program transportation improvements and identify funding sources.
3. Implement study findings.
4. Establish maintenance agreement with Yellowstone County.

Actions

1. Through a formal letter to the Yellowstone County Commissioners, request a Transportation Study to be completed through the Planning Division.
 - A. Require study to program improvements and identify sources of funding.
2. Once Transportation Study is complete, implement study findings.
3. Establish maintenance agreement with Yellowstone County. This could be done through a Rural Special Improvement District (RSID) or by entering into a private contract.

Priority #5 - Public Safety

Issue: Improve response time and services from local and state public safety officials.

During this discussion it was evident that residents feel they have an excellent volunteer fire department. The group hopes that in the future the department will be able to expand to full time. The Fire Department has taken advantage of the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program, which allowed them to purchase personal protection equipment. Another grant program the Shepherd Volunteer Fire Department may be able to access is the Rural Fire Assistance Program. This program originates from the Department of the Interior to enhance firefighter safety and strengthen fire protection capabilities. Safe and effective fire suppression in the wildland urban interface demands coordination among local, state, tribal, and federal firefighting resources.

The main cause of concern in the area of public safety is the lack of communication with local and state authorities on safety concerns in the Shepherd area. The group determined that more outreach and communication with local and state elected officials would benefit the community by sharing public safety concerns. One of the concerns is the amount of response time for County Deputies to respond to emergency. There have been serious incidents within Shepherd and residents feel that the response time by deputies was too slow. The group asked if this delay is due to a lack of deputies to cover the jurisdiction.

Residents stated concerns over safety of school children citing an incident involving a man displaying a weapon on school grounds last year and the response time for County Deputies. Also mentioned were traffic accidents, which have claimed lives in the last few years and concerns of the amount of time for ambulance and emergency crews to arrive.

It was also discussed that the lack of a community water/sewer system is also a cause for resident safety and concern. However, this project would be difficult to accomplish due to the low population density of the community core.

Tasks:

1. Create Public Safety Committee.
2. Continued support of local Volunteer Fire Department.
3. Complete land use plan.

Actions:

1. Create Public Safety Committee to strengthen communication between all entities with a direct interest in resident safety. These entities should include the County Commissioners, County Emergency Management, Planning Division and other pertinent state and federal agencies.
2. Continued support of local Volunteer Fire Department in efforts of excellent service through fund raising events and public awareness. Examine local fire insurance rating and determine if there are ways to improve.
3. Complete land use plan. This plan will help direct type of development in the area. Zoning for water quality protection.

Priority #6 - Community Events

Issue: Establish community events and community improvement projects.

This group discussed suggestions made by citizens in the survey. Those projects included a cleanup day, tree and flower planting, elderly assistance, community dances and social gatherings, and the creation of a community park.

The group decided to focus on three projects they thought could be accomplished in the community in a relatively short time period and with the most community interest. The projects are:

Cleanup – Participate in the countywide Bright N' Beautiful Cleanup Day in April 2004. This project is scheduled to happen and representatives from Bright N' Beautiful will attend community meetings to discuss. Also discussion included organizing some specific work crews in Shepherd to cleanup roadways and other areas around the community.

Tree and Flower Planting – Investigate the possibility of planting trees and flowers in the right-of-way easements at the intersection of Highway 312 and Shepherd Road as part of a welcome to the Shepherd Community. This landscaping would include a simple welcome sign to people entering Shepherd from Highway 312. Another project idea was to investigate tree planting at the ball fields near the bus barn on school property. It was determined later that the Little League Association is in the process of adding additional landscaping and amenities to the ball fields. It was agreed that the community organization could provide volunteers to assist the Little League with work and resources. Finally, it was discussed planting trees along the Shepherd-Acton Road through the town center.

Assist the Elderly – The group decided to start by using the churches and community groups, like the Lion's Club, to locate elderly people in the Shepherd area who may need assistance in cleanup. It was also recommended to investigate the Rebuilding Together Program and see if help and resources could be pulled from that organization to do some projects in the Shepherd area for the elderly or disabled residents.

Tasks:

1. Little League ballpark planting.
2. Bright N' Beautiful Cleanup.
3. Elderly or Disabled Resident Assistance Program.

Actions

1. Further communication with the Little League about the ballpark planting. Members of the steering committee may be able to access donated materials or solicit volunteers to assist. Lowe's is interested in helping, a community letter to Administrative Manager Terry Brown that outlines what the community is planning, when and what is needed; gloves, garbage bags, landscaping materials, etc. Mr. Brown said the more lead-time the better to plan out community projects the Lowe's participates in. Contact Mr. Brown at 406-655-9317. Community letter can be mailed to Mr. Brown's attention: 2717 King Ave. West, Billings MT 59102.
2. Communication with Bright N' Beautiful for a spring cleanup in Shepherd has been initiated and could occur in April. This should be maintained as an annual event.
3. Contact local church pastors and other organizations to start forming a network to contact and help the elderly or disabled in the area.

Appendix

Shepherd Census Designated Place (CDP) Information

Population – 2000 Shepherd CDP

Shepherd CDP	193
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Age Characteristics – 2000 Shepherd CDP

Age	Shepherd CDP	Percent of Total
Under 5	14	7.25%
5 to 9	23	11.92%
10 to 14	19	9.84%
15 to 19	13	6.74%
20 to 24	8	4.15%
25 to 34	29	15.02%
35 to 44	28	14.51%
45 to 54	27	13.99%
55 to 64	16	8.29
65 to 74	6	3.11%
75+	10	5.18%
Total	193	100%
Median Age	29.7	

Racial Characteristics – 2000 Shepherd CDP

Race	2000	Percent of Total
White	182	94.30%
Black/African American	0	0
American Indian Alaska Native	8	4.14%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	0
Other	2	1.04%
Hispanic (of any race)	1	.52%
Total	193	100%

Education Attainment of 25 Years and Older 2000 – Shepherd CDP

	2000
Less than 9 th Grade	4
9 th to 12 th Grade (No Diploma)	5
High School Graduate (including GED)	42
Some College (No Degree)	26
A.A.	13
B.A.	12
Graduate or Professional Degree	5
Total Population 25 Years and Older	107
Percent High School Graduates	91.59%
Percent Four or More Years of College/Bachelor's degree or higher	28.04%

Housing Characteristics – 2000 Shepherd CDP

Housing Units	79
Median Year Built	1971
Occupied Units	71
Vacant Units	8
Owner-Occupied	47
Renter Occupied	24
Median Household Income	\$31,250

Contact Information

- Yellowstone County Board of Commissioners – (406) 256-2701
jreno@co.yellowstone.mt.us; jostlund@co.yellowstone.mt.us
bkennedy@co.yellowstone.mt.us
- Planning Department – (406) 247-8622 mattoxl@ci.billings.mt.us;
(406) 247-8660 fridayw@ci.billings.mt.us
- County Code Enforcement – Colleen Schell-Berg; (406)247-8675
schellbergc@ci.billings.mt.us
- Broadview Lions Community Center – (406) 667-2121
- Big Sky EDA – Casey Joyce; (406) 256-6871 Ext. 241
- Montana Department of Commerce – Community Development Block Grant
Public Facilities Program, Joanne Gilbert (406) 841-2791
http://commerce.state.mt.us/cdd/cdd_home.html
- USDA Rural Development/Rural Housing Services – Community Facilities (406)
585-2515 www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/cf/cp.htm
- USDA Rural Development Local Office Contact – Debbie Swanson, Area
Director (406) 657-6297 Ext. 4
- Montana Community Foundation – Linda Reed; (406) 443-8313
www.mtcf.org
- Yellowstone County Health Department – (406) 256-2770
- Montana Building Codes Division – (406) 841-2040
- Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP), Trails Planning -
Scott Walker, Transportation Planner; (406) 247-8661
walkers@billings.ci.billings.mt.us
- Darlene Tussing, Alternative Modes Coordinator – (406) 657-8327
tussingd@ci.billings.mt.us
- Recreational Trails Program – Bob Walker or Steve Gilbert of Fish, Wildlife and
Parks; (406) 444-4585 bwalker@state.mt.us sgilbert@state.mt.us
www.fwp.state.mt.us/parks
- Land and Water Conservation Fund – Walt Timmerman, Resource Manager,
Parks Division, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; (406) 444-3753
wtimmerman@state.mt.us www.fwp.state.mt.us/parks

Contact Information Continued

- John Spencer, Yellowstone River Parks Association – (406) 245-9651
jspencer.billings@att.net
- Suzanne McKiernan, Bike Net – (406) 254-6631 smck212@aol.com
- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy – (888) 202-9788 www.railtrails.org
- Yellowstone County Public Works Department – Kevin McGovern, Director; (406) 256-2753 pubworks@co.yellowstone.mt.us
- Montana Department of Transportation – Bruce Barrett, Billings District (406) 525-4138
- Yellowstone County Sheriff – Chuck Maxwell, (406) 256-2929
cbracken@co.yellowstone.mt.us
- Yellowstone County Emergency Services – Jim Kraft, Director (406) 256-2775
jkraft@co.yellowstone.mt.us www.co.yellowstone.mt.us/des/
- Public Safety Grants – State of Montana
www.montana.gov/itsd/techmt/publicsafety/grants_psc.asp
- United States Fire Administration – www.usfa.fema.gov
- Bright 'N Beautiful – Carolyn Miller, (406) 248-6617, Ginger Macrow, Shepherd resident, Bright 'N Beautiful Board Member and County Solid Waste Disposal Board member, (406) 373-5721
- Rebuilding Together – Sandy Wong, (406) 652-0111, ext. 227
- Yellowstone County Council on Aging – Joan Kimball, (406) 259-9666, interested in potential meals-on-wheels program
- Senior Helping Hands – program to assist elderly resident in area with homemaking and medical services. Executive Director Christiane Sikora, (406) 259-3111
- Lowe's Home Improvement Center – Administrative Manager Terry Brown, (406) 655-9317. Letters can be mailed to Mr. Brown at 2717 King Ave. West, Billings, MT 59102