North Central Montana Region

OPPORTUNITY LINK, INC.
www.vibrantfuturesmt.org
Greatest Project Successes

- Communities have started to think and work together as a region (REGIONAL THINKING)
- Communities recognized that goals, strategies, and actions call for a “systems approach” where each component is dependent on another and each community is interdependent on the other (SYSTEMS APPROACH)
Greatest Challenges Faced

- Tradition of rural communities to work alone (or not at all) rather than combining resources to advance large projects
- Distrust of top-down government planning, and of another regional planning project
- Scale of region
1. Continued support of communities invested in the planning process through
   ◦ Preferred Sustainability Status
   ◦ Technical Assistance from Capacity Building Team
   ◦ Implementation Assistance from Partnership

2. Support continuity of community engagement and plan implementation
   ◦ Leverage community partners and networks from regional planning process by continuing to support Opportunity Link for plan implementation
   ◦ Provide modest funding to Opportunity Link to continue its role as resource coordinator for the region

3. Recognize our concerted effort
   ◦ Credit region-level collaborative efforts, awarding priority to projects who aggregate rural and tribal communities and that coordinate investment across multiple jurisdictions
In 20 years, North Central Montana...

- Has scaled up investments in housing, infrastructure, healthy food systems
- Is connected through multiple transportation options with a highly networked rural tourism
- And young families live with more telecommuting options
- Continue to work regionally

“There is community awareness, but taking action is key to helping the community thrive.”

Source: Vibrant Futures Survey Comment