

APPENDIX A

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

2014

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Environmental Assessment and Community Impact Statement

Using best available information the subdivider shall provide narrative responses to the following questions and provide materials as required; sources of information must be identified. Preparation of the environmental assessment shall follow this outline and shall be identified with the appropriate section, heading, number and letter. On-site inspections may be made regarding any question. Falsification or omission of any part of the questionnaire shall constitute grounds for rejection of the application for plat approval.

I. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Describe the following environmental features, provide responses to the following questions and provide reference materials.

A. Surface Water

1. Locate on a plat overlay or sketch map:
 - a. Any natural water systems such as streams, rivers, intermittent streams, lakes or marshes (also indicate the names and sizes of each).
 - b. Any artificial water systems such as canals, ditches, aqueducts, reservoirs, and irrigation systems (also indicate the names, sizes and present uses of each).
 - c. Time when water is present (seasonally or all year).
 - d. Any areas subject to flood hazard or in delineated 100 year floodplain.
 - e. Describe any existing or proposed stream bank alteration from any proposed construction or modification of lake beds or stream channels. Provide information on location, extent, type and purpose of alteration, and permits applied for.

B. Groundwater

Using available data, provide the following information:

1. The minimum depth to water table and identify dates when depths were determined. What is the location and depth of all aquifers which may be affected by the proposed subdivision? Describe the location of known aquifer recharge areas which may be affected.
2. Describe any steps necessary to avoid depletion or degradation of groundwater recharge areas.

C. Topography, Geology, and Soils

1. Provide a map of the topography of the area to be subdivided, and an evaluation of suitability for the proposed land uses. Address conditions such as: shallow bedrock, unstable slopes, unstable or expansive soils, and excessive slope.
2. On the map identify any areas with highly erodible soils or slopes in excess of 15% grade. Identify the lots or areas affected. In considering any unusual conditions specifically address any problems which may be encountered in excavating for: basements, water supply trenches, sewer line trenches, septic tanks and drainfields, and underground electrical and telephone lines.
3. Locate on an overlay or sketch map any known hazards affecting the development which could result in property damage or personal injury due to: falls, slides or slumps (soil, rock, mud, and snow), rock outcroppings, seismic activity, and high water table.
4. Describe measures proposed to prevent or reduce these dangers.
5. Describe the location and amount of any cut or fill more than three feet in depth. Indicate these cuts or fills on a plat overlay or sketch map. Where cuts or fills are necessary, describe plans to prevent erosion and to promote vegetation such as replacement of topsoil and grading.

D. Vegetation

1. On a plat overlay or sketch map:
 - a. Indicate the distribution of the major vegetation types, such as marsh, grassland, shrub, coniferous forest, deciduous forest, mixed forest.
 - b. Identify the location of critical plant communities such as: stream bank or shoreline vegetation, vegetation on steep, unstable slopes, vegetation on soils highly susceptible to wind or water erosion, and type and extent of noxious weeds.
2. Describe measures to:
 - a. Preserve trees and other natural vegetation, e.g., locating roads and lot boundaries and planning construction to avoid damaging tree cover.
 - b. Protect critical plant communities, e.g., keeping structural development away from these areas or setting areas aside for open space.
 - c. Prevent and control grass, brush or forest fires, e.g., green strips, water supply, access.
 - d. Measures to control noxious weeds.

E. Wildlife

1. What species of fish and wildlife use the area affected by the proposed subdivision?

2. On a copy of the preliminary plat or overlay, identify known critical wildlife areas, such as big game winter range, calving areas and migration routes; riparian habitat and waterfowl nesting areas and habitat for rare or endangered species and wetlands.

3. Describe proposed measures to protect or enhance wildlife habitat or to minimize degradation (e.g., keeping buildings and roads back from shorelines; setting aside wetlands as undeveloped open space).

II. SUMMARY OF PROBABLE IMPACTS

Except where exempt by state law (per 76-3-509, 76-3-609 or 76-3-608(6), MCA) all subdivisions must be reviewed for the impact on agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, local services, the natural environment, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and public health and safety (76-3-608 (3)(a), MCA).

The evaluation of the effect of the proposed subdivision on the six criteria listed below determines if there are significant unmitigated adverse impacts. Unmitigated adverse impacts are potential grounds for denial of a proposed subdivision. Depending on the proposed subdivision, some of these items may not apply. In addition, some proposals may require evaluation of other factors not included in these examples to weigh the subdivision's effect on these criteria. It is the subdivider's responsibility to document proposed mitigation of any adverse impacts on these six criteria.

Provide a written response that clarifies the probable impact of the proposed subdivision in relation to the specific item.

A. Effect on Agriculture

1. Number of acres that would be removed from the production of crops or livestock.

2. Acres of prime farmland (as defined by the USDA) that would be removed from production.

3. Effect on use of remainder (if any) and adjoining properties as farm or ranch land

4. Potential conflicts between the proposed subdivision and adjacent agricultural operations including:

a. Interference with movement of livestock or farm machinery, maintenance of fences, weed proliferation, vandalism or theft, or harassment of livestock by pets or humans.

b. Other items to be considered include the effect on market value of surrounding land and the net effect on taxes resulting from additional services.

B. Effect on Agricultural Water User Facilities

1. Location of or proximity to agricultural water user facilities.
2. Potential conflicts between facility users and subdivision residents including seeps, flooding, washouts; obstructions and interference, and unintended uses (recreation or landscaping).
3. Water rights.
4. Vehicular access to facility.

C. Effect on Local Services

1. Increased demand on services and need to expand services
2. Ability to provide services to subdivision:
 - a. Response times
 - b. Conditions of roads, bridges, and railroad crossings
 - c. Physical barriers.
3. Provision of adequate local services and public facilities simultaneous or prior to onset of impact.
4. Present County and school taxes generated by parcel before subdivision and expected tax revenue after subdivision is complete and structures built.

D. Effect on Natural Environment

1. Runoff reaching surface waters (e.g., streams, rivers or riparian areas).
2. Impacts on ground water quantity and quality.
3. Impacts on air quality.
4. Impacts on scenic resources.
5. Impacts on historic, pre-historic, and cultural resources
6. Noxious weeds.
7. Wetlands not covered under nationwide permits.

E. Effect on Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

1. Loss of significant, important, and critical habitat, as defined by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
2. Impacts on significant, important, and critical habitat including potential effects of: roads and traffic; closure of existing operations and/or potential to provide new access to public lands; and effects of humans and pets on wildlife.

F. Effect on Public Health and Safety

1. Creation of potential man-made hazards (e.g., unsafe road intersection, development in wild-land residential interface fire areas).
2. Natural hazards (e.g., wildfire, flooding, steep slopes).
3. Existing potential man-made hazards (e.g., high pressure gas lines, lack of fire protection, cumulative impacts).
4. Traffic safety.
5. Emergency vehicle access.
6. Emergency medical response time.
7. Condition of road leading to proposed subdivision.
8. Condition of bridges on road leading to proposed subdivision.
9. Any other item that endangers public health and safety

III. COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

Provide a community impact report containing a statement of estimated number of people coming into the area as a result of the subdivision, anticipated needs of the proposed subdivision for public facilities and services, the increased capital and operating cost to each affected unit of local government. Provide responses to each of the following questions and provide references.

A. Education and Busing

1. Describe the available educational facilities which would serve this subdivision.
2. Estimate the number of school children that will be added by the proposed subdivision. Provide a statement from the administrator of the affected school system indicating whether the increased enrollment can be accommodated by the present personnel and facilities

and by the existing school bus system. If not, estimate the increased expenditures that would be necessary to do so.

B. Roads and Maintenance

1. Estimate how much daily traffic the subdivision, when fully occupied, will generate on existing streets and arterials.
 - a. Describe the capability of existing and proposed roads to safely accommodate this increased traffic.
 - b. Describe increased maintenance problems and increased cost due to this increase in volume.
2. Describe proposed new public or private access roads including:
 - a. Measures for disposing of storm run-off from streets and roads.
 - b. Type of road surface and provisions to be made for dust.
 - c. Facilities for streams or drainage crossing (e.g., culverts, bridges).
 - d. Seeding of disturbed areas.
3. Describe the closing or modification of any existing roads.
4. Explain why road access was not provided within the subdivision, if access to any individual lot is directly from arterial streets or roads.
5. Is year-round access by conventional automobile over legal rights-of-way available to the subdivision and to all lots and common facilities within the subdivision? Identify the owners of any private property over which access to the subdivision will be provided.
6. Estimate the cost and completion date of the system, and indicate who will pay the cost of installation, maintenance, and snow removal.
7. What is the opinion of the Columbus Public Works Director or the County Road and Bridge Superintendent?

C. Water, Sewage, and Solid Waste Facilities

1. Briefly describe the water supply and sewage treatment systems to be used in serving the proposed subdivision (e.g., methods, capacities, locations).
2. Provide information on estimated cost of the system, who will bear the costs, and how the system will be financed.
3. Describe the amount of solid waste generated and the proposed method of collecting and disposing of such waste from the development.
4. What company will dispose of solid waste and where.

D. Fire Protection

1. What fire district serves the project?
2. What provisions for storage of fire fighting water are proposed?
3. Response time to subdivision.
4. Requirements of fire district to serve the site.
5. Source of above information by name, title, and telephone number.

E. Police Protection

1. Location of the nearest law enforcement personnel and response time to site.
2. Requirements of law enforcement to serve site.
3. Name, title, and telephone number of source of information.

F. Payment for Extension of Capital Facilities

Indicate how the subdivider will pay for the cost of extending capital facilities resulting from expected impacts directly attributable to the subdivision.