

FLATHEAD COUNTY

MASTER PLAN

I. Agriculture

ISSUES

- a. *Agriculture is a main economic component to Flathead County. Agriculture is directly responsible for approximately 950 farm related jobs, 200 retail related jobs, \$25 million in yearly agriculture product sales and \$34.5 million in retail sales/year (1982-1984 figures).*
- b. *Agricultural lands provide open space, wildlife habitat and ground water recharge areas for the County.*
- c. *Approximately 31% of all agricultural lands of at least local importance (as of 1980-) in the County have been subdivided into lots of 20 acres or smaller.*
- d. *Agriculture land in the County is being converted to semi-agriculture and non-agriculture uses threatening the future of the agriculture-based industry.*
- e. *Between 1959-1982 cropland declined 17% and total farmland declined 44% in Flathead County.*
- f. *Larger farm holdings are being split up as farmers need extra income or cash flow or via inheritance where heirs have no intent to continue farming.*
- g. *It is extremely difficult to pass on intact farming operations from generation to generation because of estate taxes, etc.*
- h. *There is a trend toward mini-farms where people buy small acreages as a hobby farm, tax shelter, and/or for land speculation purposes.*
- i. *Uncontrolled speculation and development have driven up all land prices in the County. Agriculture land prices have increased in price beyond the ability of the land to pay for itself. Thus farmers are precluded from the land market – new farmers cannot get established and established farmers cannot expand.*
- j. *The traditional policy of restricting development on Class I-IV soils is impractical because of the scattered nature of these soils and the amount of already existing subdivision activity.*
- k. *An agriculture lands classification system is needed that examines both the soils ability to produce and the adjacent land uses and character of the area. The Flathead Conservation District has developed and adopted the Upper Flathead Farmlands Designation Assessment as the preferred method of defining prime agricultural lands which are suitable and legitimate to preserve. The Flathead*

Soil Conservation Service has adopted the UFFDA system for reviewing impacts on agriculture by any product receiving Federal assistance in the County.

GOALS

- 1A A VIABLE, PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LAND-BASED INDUSTRY.
- 1B RECOGNIZE THAT AGRICULTURE IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE COUNTY'S ECONOMIC BASE.
- 1C RECOGNIZE THAT HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS ARE A FINITE NATURAL RESOURCE AT THE LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL.
- 1D RECOGNIZE THAT THE AGRICULTURAL USAGE OF SUCH PRIME AGRICULTURAL LANDS IS APPORPRIATE AND IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.
- 1E RECOGNIZE THAT THIS RESOURCE SHOULD BE PROTECTED BY ALLOWING THE LIMITED CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS ONLY IF THOSE AREAS WHICH ARE NOT PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS OR WHERE THESE LANDS ARE NEEDED FOR PROPER URBAN EXPANSION.
- 1F FRECOGNIZE THAT AGRICULTURAL LANDS ARE IMPORTANT TO THE AESTHETIC AND WILDLIFE QUALITY OF THE OCUNTY AND AS SUCH ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE COUNTY'S TOURISM INDUSTRY AS WELL AS ITS QUALITY OF LIFE.
- 1G RECOGNIZE THAT OVER ONE-THIRD (1/3) OF THE COUNTY'S PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS ARE LOCATED WINITH MUNICIPAL PLANNING JURISDICTIONS AND AS SUCH MUNICIPALITY NEEDS TO ACTIVELY WORK TO PROTECT THE AGRICULTURAL BASE OF THE COUNTY.
- 1H RECOGNIZE THAT DUE TO THE RELATIVE ISOLATION OF FLATHEAD COUNTY, THERE IS A DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN THE REMAINING AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND THEIR ABILITY TO SUPPORT THE COUNTY'S AGRI-BUSINESS BASE.

POLICIES

- 1.1 Flathead County should consider adopting the Upper Flathead Farmlands Designation Assessment (UFFDA), as developed by the Flathead Conservation

District, as a primary planning tool to evaluate land based impacts to agriculture caused by potential development or political action. Typical actions would include the subdivision review process, public construction projects, extension of public roads, changes in zoning district boundaries, any private construction or use which requires a permit or application.

- 1.2 If it is used, the UFFDA system should be consulted whenever agricultural lands are involved in a proposed subdivision, public construction process, extension of public roads, change in zoning district boundaries, original zoning applications any private construction or use which requires a permit or application in a zoned area, etc.
- 1.3 Utilization of the UFFDA “land evaluation” system for classifying and ranking soils in Flathead County for agricultural suitability should be considered.
- 1.4 Consider utilizing the UFFDA “site assessment” system, modifying and fine-tuning as appropriate, as the method of determining the appropriateness of land for agriculture in light of existing and adjacent land use factors.
- 1.5 Criteria to consider in determining the appropriateness and suitability of land for agricultural and conservation/preservation might include:
 - a. Its agricultural soils Group Rating.
 - b. The percent of surrounding land in agriculture.
 - c. The percent of adjacent land in agriculture.
 - d. The percent of the site in agriculture.
 - e. The size of the site.
 - f. Distance to the nearest urban area.
 - g. Availability of public sewer.
 - h. Soil limitation for on-site sewer, road construction and erection of buildings.
 - i. Wildlife impacts.
 - j. Irrigation improvements.
 - k. Presence of historical or cultural features.
 - l. Floodplain.

- 1.6 Because the UFFDA system uses points to determine the suitability of a site for agriculture, a point threshold should be established if it is adopted. Sites scoring above the threshold are considered important agricultural lands to the County and sites scoring below the threshold are not considered important agricultural lands to the County.
- 1.7 Where or not the UFFDA system is adopted:
 - a. The important productive farm lands which are not in the urban growth area of a city, which are not served by community sewer or water systems and which are not already excessively impacted by existing or impending (approved) development should be preserved;
 - b. Growth should be directed to already established urban areas which are not environmentally sensitive or productive agricultural lands;
 - c. Extending municipal services and roads into agricultural lands which would result in the premature development of such areas should be avoided;
 - d. All commercial non-farm development on productive farmlands meeting the criteria for farmland preservations should be prohibited; and
 - e. Creative subdivision design should be utilized in those areas where prime agricultural land must or will be developed. Techniques such as locating building sites on the least productive area of the tract, clustering developments on smaller lots while still maintaining the bulk of the lot or size in open farmland, utilizing agricultural or conservation easements to maintain desired open space, etc., should be the norm.
- 1.8 Promote State and Federal programs and develop local policies that support agriculture as an industry and help maintain its presence in the county as a profitable viable industry worthy of protection.
- 1.9 Develop land use programs which will protect the agricultural land base in the County.
- 1.10 Avoid the use of large lot zoning techniques in prime farmlands areas that have the result of creating lots too small to conveniently farm yet too large to domestically maintain. Thus, they become idle weed patches. Tracts of 2-10 acres pose such problems.
- 1.11 Cooperate with other Planning Jurisdictions to develop one agricultural lands policy which considers the entire agricultural base rather than the four separate approaches.

- 1.12 Work with and support the activities of such private groups as the Flathead Land Trust as a private means of preserving quality agricultural lands, floodplains, key wildlife habitat areas, plus protecting scenic and historic values, all having significant interest to the general public.

II. LAND USE ELEMENT

2. Rural Communities

ISSUES

- a. *Rural communities in Flathead County include Lakeside, Somers, Bigfork, Kila, Hungry Horse, Martin City, Coram, and West Glacier.*
- b. *These communities do not have a local governing board or council. They are entities of the County served by the County Commission in Kalispell.*
- c. *Rural communities do not have their own police protection. They utilize the County Sheriff.*
- d. *Rural communities do not have their own road maintenance programs. They are served by the County Road Department (excluding State and Federal roads).*
- e. *Rural communities typically contain the semblance of a town or city offering basic services, housing and location/access.*
- f. *Services typically include a post office, fire station, grade school, church, gas station, general store, community hall and community water system.*
- g. *Rural communities serve as place names, local service centers, meeting places, local employment areas, and residential neighborhoods.*
- h. *Rural communities all have good immediate access either on or adjacent to state or federal highways.*
- i. *Rural communities have all existed for 40-80 years in Flathead County and thus have a history and a heritage.*

GOAL

- 2A RURAL SERVICE CENTERS WHICH PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE MINIMUM LEVEL OF URBAN SERVICES, CONVENIENCE REATAIL TRADE, EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND RESIDENTIAL HOUSING SITES FOR THE SURROUNDING AREA WHILE MAINTAINING A SEMI-RURAL LIFESTYLE.

POLICIES

- 2.1 Promote the rural communities in Flathead County as rural service centers.
- 2.2 Retail service centers in Flathead County should include Lakeside, Somers, Bigfork, Kila, Hungry Horse, Martin City, Coram and West Glacier.
- 2.3 Encourage the installation, maintenance and expansion of community sewer and water systems to serve these areas.
- 2.4 Support the formation of County Sewer and Water Districts to facilitate the financing and management of community water and sewer systems within designated service centers.
- 2.5 Promote the growth, development, and expansion of rural service centers.
- 2.6 Encourage the location/expansion of planned, residential subdivision in these communities.
- 2.7 Promote the location and development of centralized commercial service and trade in these communities.
- 2.8 New commercial activity should be located adjacent to existing commercial development, should be compact in form and should have adequate access and off-street parking.
- 2.9 Community parks and athletic fields intended to serve a portion of the County should be strategically located within rural service centers to provide optimum usage and access and to support the vitality of these communities.
- 2.10 Establishment of building setbacks from property lines should be considered for reasons of privacy, fire protection, shading of neighbors property and to keep buildings from encroaching too close to street rights-of-way.
- 2.11 Establishment of building height limitations should be considered for fire protection, shading of neighbors property or blocking of neighborhood views.
- 2.12 Establishment of limitations on the amount of lot coverage with impervious materials (roofs, asphalt, concrete, etc.) should be considered to limit surface runoff, erosion, and to avoid excessively increasing the density of development.
- 2.13 Local road maintenance programs should be adopted and coordinated with the County.

3. Water and Waterfront Development

ISSUES

- a. *The vast majority of private non-corporate timber lakeshore has been split into five acre or smaller tracts.*
- b. *Lake Blaine and Flathead and Echo Lakes have experienced the most substantial lakeshore development due to easy access, developable shoreline and closeness to major communities.*
- c. *Smith, Tally, and portions of Ashley, Bitterroot and McGregor Lakes are undeveloped due to the adjacent public and corporate timberlands.*
- d. *Corporate timber holdings occupy a considerable amount of potentially developable lakeshore. It cannot be assumed that these lands will remain as open space-greenbelt forever.*
- e. *The primary water source for waterfront residents is directly from the adjacent lake, river or stream.*
- f. *Almost all waterfront development utilizes private sewage systems.*
- g. *Development of waterfront properties carries with it the risk of sewage effluent contamination into the water body, accelerated erosion, shoreline degradation and aesthetic compromise.*
- h. *There are many past examples of waterfront areas with inappropriate structures including excessively long docks, oversized decks, improper retaining walls, oversized or poorly located boat houses, shore stations, storage sheds, living quarters over the lake and other buildings which extend up to or into the lake obstructing views and aesthetically and environmentally blighting the shoreline.*
- i. *There are many cases of poor shoreline management involving dredging and filling activities such as the construction of inland canals to provide additional waterfront access to property, the dredging of wetlands, the deepening of channels and the importing of sand to create beaches which necessitate constant maintenance, disturb or destroy fish habitat, cause the suspension of fines in the water and lower water quality.*
- j. *Poorly constructed, unstable, substandard road access to water front property is common as existing lots pre-date road improvement standards.*

- k. *Montana Statutes provide for the adoption of County administered Lakeshore Regulations to guide all land development activity occurring in, on or within 20 feet of the average high water line.*
- l. *The statutory 20 foot limitation on lakeshore regulations is sometimes inadequate as major activities can occur landward of the 20 foot mark which may have long term impacts on the lake or lakeshore.*

GOALS

- 3A RIVER AND LAKESHORE DEVELOPMENT IN WHICH THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION ACKNOWLEDGES THE AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS, ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITATIONS AND GENERAL FRAGILENESS OF THE AREA.
- 3B THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF THE COUNTY’S LAKES, RIVERS AND STREAMS.

POLICIES

- 3.1 Conserve and protect natural lakes, rivers and streams because of their high scenic and resource values.
- 3.2 Conserve and protect the aesthetic value of lakeshore and riverfront property.
- 3.3 Conserve and protect the value of lakes, rivers, and streams for the State’s residents and visitors who use and enjoy them.
- 3.4 Lakebed and Lakeshore and the river and riverfront areas should be preserved in their natural condition as a green belt in either public or private ownership in order to:
 - a. Preserve aesthetic values;
 - b. Protect water quality (reduce erosion, surface run-off containing pesticides, fertilizers, etc.; stream bank degradation, and defoliation);
 - c. Protect fish and wildlife habitat; and,
 - c. Assure free and unrestricted navigation and other lawful recreation.
- 3.5 Waterfront development should not directly or indirectly cause increased sedimentation or discharge of nutrients into the river or lake either during or after construction.

- 3.6 Excessive areas of impervious cover on or near the waterfront should be discouraged as they contribute to greatly increased surface water runoff.
- 3.7 Floating docks and docks which incorporate free movement of water underneath are encouraged over solid docks which form barriers.
- 3.8 All structures built on land or extending into the water should observe appropriate setbacks from neighboring property lines for safety and aesthetic reasons.
- 3.9 All structures extending into a lake should be limited in length to assure free and unrestricted navigation, for aesthetics and to allow lawful recreation.
- 3.10 The use of retaining walls or similar structures which create an unnatural shoreline and alter wave actions, beach dynamics and shoreline erosion patterns should only be used where there is a documented needs (erosion, loss of vegetation).
- 3.11 Actions of a property owner which will ultimately necessitate a retaining wall to be placed now or in the future shall not be allowed.
- 3.12 Breakwaters, jetties, and groins alter currents, shift erosion patterns, interfere with navigation and create stagnate water areas. They should be discouraged.
- 3.13 Dredging a river, shoreline or lakebed should be discouraged.
- 3.14 Filling a wetlands area, shoreline or lakebed should be discouraged.
- 3.15 Fuel and chemical storage tanks in, over, or adjacent to water areas and the application of stains, varnishes and paint to structures over the water should be prohibited because of the potential negative impacts on water quality.
- 3.16 Suspected areas of failing private sewage disposal systems should be investigated.
- 3.17 Known failing or substandard private sewage disposal systems should be immediately addressed.
- 3.18 All living quarters should be appropriately set back from the waterfront to avoid blocking adjoining views, to minimize man-made impacts, to preserve the natural aesthetics of the lake or riverfront and to meet sanitation requirements and protect water quality.
- 3.19 All road construction associated with water front development should be monitored and actions such as excessive vegetation clearing steep sidecuts into hillsides, creating of spoil banks, etc. which dramatically alter views, destabilize hillsides or increasing erosion should be mitigated.

- 3.20 Suitable public access should be provided on all rivers and lakes in the County to assure boating and recreation access for the general public.
- 3.21 A land acquisition program should be initiated as funds become available to increase public access on lakes and rivers where access is deficient.
- 3.22 The maximum development density (total residential, commercial, resort and accessory structure development) should be established for each lake in Flathead County. This should apply to both lakefront property as well as to lands adjacent to the lake.
- 3.23 Height restrictions in the lakeshore area should be investigated and where appropriate implemented to protect lakeshore views.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Flathead County Lake and Lakeshore Regulations should be regularly reviewed and updated to keep them abreast of changing technologies, design concepts and new scientific and environmental data.
- 2. Maintain an active, aggressive, uniform enforcement program to ensure that the intent of the Lake and Lakeshore Regulations are being carried out.

4. Residential Development

ISSUES

- a. *The ability in Flathead County to build and live in the rural area on small acreages in a highly sought after amenity.*
- b. *Unplanned scattered rural growth:*
 - *Burdens the public road system due to extra traffic and multiple and conflicting access points;*
 - *Strains the school bus system because of extra mileage;*
 - *Requires a more extensive snow removal program as rural dwellers need to get to work in adjacent communities on time;*
 - *Makes fire and police protection and garbage collection more difficult and expensive to provide;*
 - *Creates potential environmental and health hazards due to lack of public water and sewer systems; and,*
 - *Is non-energy efficient because of long travel distances to shopping, place of work, recreation, etc.*
- c. *Unplanned rural growth complicates development of adjoining lands, i.e.:*
 - *Adjacent development may block the most ideal access;*
 - *Private access easements vary in width, may carry limitations, can be difficult to enforce and may not be improved;*
 - *Utilities may be lacking or may be impossible to extend; and,*
 - *High-impacting developments such as industrial sites or wrecking yards reduce desirability of adjacent lands.*
- d. *As of 1980, 24% (145,000 acres) of private land outside of cities excluding corporate timber holdings was subdivided into parcels of less than 20 acres.*
- e. *(36,956 acres as of 1980) of the County's better agricultural soils (Class I-IV) have been subdivided into parcels of less than 20 acres.*
- f. *Many vacant lots in the County are potentially unbuildable due to floodplain, slope, access limitations and sewage disposal constraints.*
- g. *The development of Big Game Winter Habitat reduces or eliminates the desirability of this land for habitat because of human contact, presence of pets i.e. dogs, and site clearance and removal of foliage.*

- h. The development of prime agricultural lands removes the immediate site from production and typically creates conflicts with or constrains adjacent farming production and land management operations.*
- i. Development of septic systems on land with severe soil constraints such as high groundwater, steep slopes, bedrock, clay soils, etc. increases the potential occurrence of ground and surface water pollution.*

GOAL

- 4A PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH MEETS MARKET DEMANDS, PLACES MINIMAL STRAIN ON PUBLIC SERVICES AND MITIGAS ANY ADVERSE IMPACTS.

POLICIES

- 4.1 Residential development should be divided into three groupings: rural residential; urban residential; and high-density, urban residential.
- 4.2 Rural Residential
 - a. A low-density residential area which provides for an average gross density of two or less units per acre.
 - b. Areas would typically be located in or adjacent to rural service centers or be located in rural aesthetically attractive areas not suitable for timber and agricultural production.
 - c. Rural residential areas provide large lot, estate, ranchette or resort housing opportunities where limited farming/gardening and raising of animals is common and/or privacy aesthetic considerations and preservation of natural surroundings are paramount.
 - d. Single-family housing and manufactured homes on individual lots would constitute the major uses.
 - e. Such areas typically do not have either community sewer or water. Private individual wells and septic systems are the norm.
- 4.3 Urban Residential
 - a. A medium density residential area allowing 2-8 units/gross acre.

- b. Community water and sewer should serve these areas or be able to be immediately extended to serve such areas.
- c. Customary urban services such as police and fire protection, garbage disposal, access to schools, parks and open space and connection with the major road system should be provided.
- d. Typical uses would include singly-family duplex and manufactured homes on individual lots and attached housing developed under a PUD concept that provided adequate open space.
- e. This district constitutes the heart of the residential community and is the most fragile in its ability to weather negative impacts. Infringements must be avoided including commercial and industrial uses, arterial highways or intensive recreational activities such as lighted ball fields. If above situations do occur, innovative site design, extra setbacks or landscaping/buffering should be incorporated to address impacts.

4.4 High-Density Urban Residential

- a. A residential area allowing densities of 8-40 units per gross acre.
- b. The area must be served by community sewer and water and have immediate access to fire and police protection, ambulance and refuse collection.
- c. Close proximity to schools, parks and shopping areas is desirable.
- d. Areas should be located adjacent to or have immediate access to collector or arterial streets/highways.
- e. Areas are intended to provide for a variety of medium, and high-density developments including apartments, townhouses, condominiums, cluster housing, patio housing and mobile home parks.
- f. High-density residential areas may be used in buffer situations between higher intensity uses such as arterial and collector streets and commercial and industrial uses and lower intensity uses such as urban or suburban residential, parklands, etc. When used as a buffer, additional setbacks, landscaping, fencing or screening should be incorporated.

4.5 Maintain the 100-year floodplain in a natural state, open space, recreational area or as agriculture.

4.6 Development within Big Game Winter Range Riparian Areas should be discouraged.

- 4.7 Development of all non-riparian, big game winter range should not exceed a maximum density of one unit per 20 acres.
- 4.8 Development impacts on wildlife should be considered and mitigated whenever development will affect riparian complexes, forested areas of over five acres, and marsh areas with or without trees.
- 4.9 Identify native fishes habitat. If such areas are proposed for development, incorporate conditions which will protect the habitat.
- 4.10 Lands adjacent to or in existing rural growth centers or lands served by or adjacent to a community sewer system should be encouraged to develop as opposed to areas with no access to community services and facilities.
- 4.11 Areas not conducive to individual on-site sewage disposal systems because of flooding, ponding, seasonal high water table, bedrock conditions, severe slope conditions and no suitable access to a community sewage system should be discouraged from development.
- 4.12 Soil limitations affect road construction. Areas which exhibit four or more of the following limitations should not be developed into roads.
 - a. Less than 20 inches to the water table;
 - b. Five year flood hazard;
 - c. Poor load-bearing capacity;
 - d. High frost heave potential;
 - e. Stony land;
 - f. Less than 20 inches to bedrock; and,
 - g. Plus slope.
- 4.13 Severe soil limitations affect residential construction. Residential development areas which exhibit four or more severe limitations should be discouraged. Limiting factors include:
 - a. High shrink swell behavior;
 - b. Less than 36 inches to seasonal high water table;
 - c. 100-year floodplain;
 - d. More than 15% slope;
 - e. Less than 36 inches to bedrock;
 - f. Extremely stony; and,
 - g. Strong salinity – alkalinity.
- 4.14 New residential subdivisions should provide common or centralized mail pickup sites located outside of existing county road rights-of-way.

- 4.15 All potential residential areas must have access to suitable public roads and basic as emergency services such as fire, ambulance, and sheriff.
- 4.16 New rural subdivisions should contract with a private solid waste hauler.
- 4.17 New residential development should be in a rural fire district.
- 4.18 New residential subdivisions should provide for school bus drop-off/pick-up sites.
- 4.19 New residential construction should incorporate front, side and rear setbacks and height limits to improve fire protection, privacy, and open space and to avoid road encroachments and future neighborhood disputes.
- 4.20 Lands subject to snow avalanches, land slides, slopes in excess of 24% grade, subsidence, polluted water supply, high voltage lines, high pressure gas lines, air traffic hazards, or which would burden the general public through excessive expenditures of public funds or environmental degradation should not be developed unless these constraints can be adequately mitigated.
- 4.21 As residential areas develop, require a storm water management plan be submitted to address both on and off site management practices.
- 4.22 Protect and preserve natural drainage ways when possible.
- 4.23 Flathead County should consider establishing a master permit policy, which may include adoption and enforcement of the Uniform Building Code.

5. Commercial/Industrial Development

ISSUES

- a. *The vast majority of commercial and industrial activity in Flathead County is located in or directly adjacent to the three cities of Kalispell, Whitefish, and Columbia Falls.*
- b. *Viable commercial locations are found in the rural communities of West Glacier, Coram, Martin City, Hungry Horse, Bigfork, Somers, and Lakeside.*
- c. *Limited commercial resort activity is located around the County's many lakeshores, the most popular being Flathead. Business is extremely seasonal.*
- d. *Unplanned strip commercial development is occurring on Highway 93 between Whitefish and Kalispell and south of Kalispell, on Highway 2 between Columbia Falls and Glacier Park, Columbia Falls and Kalispell, west of Kalispell, and on Highway 35 north of Bigfork.*
- e. *In the County Planning Jurisdiction, industrial activity is limited to a series of public and private gravel pits, several small lumber mills, the Somers tie plant and a concentration of uses at the Rocky Cliff-Highway 93 intersection south of Kalispell.*
- f. *An industrial park has been proposed adjacent to Glacier Park International Airport on airport land.*

GOALS

- 5A VIABLE, COMPACT, RURAL, COMMERCIAL SERVICE CENTERS LOCATED IN THE EXISTING RURAL COMMUNITITES WHICH WILL PROVIDE ESSENTIAL AND CONVENIENCE TRADE AND SERVICES TO THE SURROUNDING POPULATION.
- 5B WELL PLANNED INDUSTRIAL CENTERS LOCATED ADJACENT TO EXISTING SERVICES AND POPULATION CENTERS.
- 5C ROADS AND HIGHWAYS IN THE COUNTY UNCLUTTERED AND UNCONGESTED BY THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF STRIP DEVELOPMENT.
- 5D A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMIC BASE THROUGH THE ATTRACTION AND LOCATION OF THE NEW BINESS AND INDUSTRY INTO THE COUNTY.

POLICIES

- 5.1 Commercial uses should be concentrated in the three incorporated cities or in or adjacent to the rural communities.
- 5.2 Strip commercial development or the indiscriminate location of commercial uses along major traffic routes should be discouraged.
- 5.3 Additional commercial development in the Planning Jurisdiction along Highway 2, 93, 35, and the Somers-Bigfork cutoff should be discouraged.
- 5.4 Off-street parking lots as a primary use or accessory to a commercial activity which are adjacent to a public right-of-way should be landscaped and screened.
- 5.5 The provision of adequate fire protection should be a primary consideration in location and site design of commercial uses.
- 5.6 Provision should be made for pedestrian and bicycle access to commercial areas and individual commercial uses where appropriate.
- 5.7 Multiple separate accesses onto major traffic routes from commercial uses should be discouraged. Shared access, limited access or frontage roads instead should be utilized.
- 5.8 Enactment of a sign ordinance throughout the Planning Jurisdiction which ensures the safe, aesthetically compatible use of identification and advertising, avoids traffic hazards and preserves views should be considered.
- 5.9 Allow for the selective location of neighborhood commercial sites in the Planning Jurisdiction where the following criteria are met:
 - a. Should be located in or adjacent to a residential neighborhood.
 - b. Designed to service a neighborhood encompassing approximately one-half (1/2) to one (1) mile radius.
 - c. A substantial population exists in the service area to support the commercial venture.
 - d. The commercial uses would not routinely draw customers from beyond the neighborhood.
 - e. Uses allowed would cater to the daily needs/services of the surrounding area.

- f. Uses/sites should be strategically located along a major road (arterial-collector).
 - g. Sites should be compactly developed as opposed to lineally sprawled along a street or highway.
- 5.10 Resort commercial areas should be provided which cater to the tourist, convention goer or traveler.
- 5.11 Typical resort commercial uses would include hotels/motels, resorts, marinas, incidental commercial activity serving those people using the facility and the immediate area, restaurants, lounges, and recreational facilities.
- 5.12 Resort commercial areas would be expected to occur in close proximity or adjacent to lakes, streams, public open space and recreational areas. Preference should be directed towards the existing rural communities.
- 5.13 Resort commercial uses should incorporate substantial setbacks from lakes, streams, and public open space to protect the integrity of these features.
- 5.14 Resort commercial uses should not be located inside residential neighborhoods due to their hours of operation, traffic generation and associated activities.
- 5.15 When resort commercial areas do border existing or proposed residential areas, additional setbacks and site obscuring buffering including landscaping should be directed.
- 5.16 Resort commercial areas should be encouraged to locate in the County rural service centers.
- 5.17 New industrial development which is not related to site-specific resource extraction (gravel, minerals, etc.) should be encouraged to locate in the three cities or in or adjacent to the rural communities where services and an employment base is available.
- 5.18 A light industrial park should be planned and developed adjacent to the airport on airport land.
- 5.19 An airport industrial park should cater only to business and light industry which:
- a. Is directly related to the operations of the airport.
 - b. Is dependant upon the services of the airport/air traffic for its operation.
 - c. Will comply with maximum height restrictions.

- d. Does not cause emissions of smoke, gas or dust.
 - e. Will not interfere with local electronic communications.
- 5.20 Industrial sites in the Planning Jurisdiction should have immediate access to air, rail, major streets and community sewer and water.
- 5.21 Industrial uses should be grouped together to concentrate negative impacts and to aid in the provision of services as opposed to being indiscriminately scattered throughout the County.
- 5.22 Industrial uses should not be located adjacent to present and future residential areas. In the event this does occur, extensive buffering including landscaping, screening, fencing, and additional setbacks should be incorporated.
- 5.23 Storage yards, equipment parking areas and open air processing and assembly sites associated with industrial activity should be screened from view from adjacent public right-of-way.
- 5.24 Direct access from an industrial property into residential neighborhoods should be avoided.
- 5.25 The establishment of new industrial sites in the County should be based on the following criteria:
- a. An adequate amount of suitable land exists and is available for use.
 - b. Adequate utilities are available including water, sewer, electrical, and natural gas.
 - c. Adequate fire and police protection are available.
 - d. There is protection from encroachments of residential or other incompatible land uses.
 - e. The location will help minimize adjacent negative impacts such as noise, smoke, dust, vibration, and heavy traffic.
 - f. The site is free of drainage problems, located outside the floodplain, has good load-bearing capacities and is fairly level.
 - g. There is immediate rail access and major arterial, collector or highway access. Air access is also beneficial.
 - h. The site should be located reasonable close to the labor supply to avoid excessive traffic and energy consumption commuting.

III. TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

6. Transportation

ISSUES

- a. *Construction and maintenance of roads in Flathead County is expensive because of the difficult terrain, short construction season, winter conditions and numerous water crossings.*
- b. *Of the 230 miles of roadway on the Primary Aid System, the Highway Department has rated 160 miles at or below the 61% sufficiency level. (Any road rated below 61% should be scheduled for improvement/replacement in the next five years).*
- c. *The County Commissioners are responsible for establishing priorities for improvement/replacement of the 125-mile Secondary Aid Road System.*
- d. *There are 2,053 miles of local roads in Flathead County of which 1,200 miles are County roads and the remainder are Forest Service, Park Service, and various State agency responsibility.*
- e. *Between 1975-1985, the County Road Budget increased 135%. During the same time, the local share increased 204% reflecting an increasing burden on local taxpayers.*
- f. *Six high-hazard areas on the County Road System within the County Planning Jurisdiction have been identified. They include:*
 - *Airforce Road, Lakeside*
 - *Intersection of Montana 35, Holt Road and Electric Avenue, Bigfork*
 - *Boon Road, Somers*
 - *Foys Canyon Road (Included portions inside Kalispell City-County Plan)*
 - *Intersection of Kila Road and Spring Hill Road*
 - *Whitefish Stage Road one-half (1/2) mile south of Hodgeson Road.*
- g. *Four high-hazard areas are identified on the Primary Aid System in the County Planning Jurisdiction. They include:*

- *Highway 2 from Columbia Heights to Hungry Horse*
 - *Somers-Bigfork Highway (“S” job midway between Highways 35 & 93)*
 - *Highway 2 from one-half (1/2) mile south to one (1) mile north of the Rose Crossing intersection.*
 - *US Highway 2 at the West Spring Creek Road intersection.*
- h. Flathead County has a policy of not accepting the dedication of streets inside rural subdivisions. Roads are built to County standards and all future maintenance becomes the responsibility of the future owners. This policy raises issues:*
- *In future years as new roads wear and maintenance costs increase, will future residents be able and willing to pay for maintenance?*
 - *What happens if the subdivision only partially sells and the few real residents cannot afford the cost of upkeep?*
 - *What happens if the original owner/developer who may or may not be in financial trouble, walks away leaving properties unsold?*
 - *Who is responsible when the next parcel of land is developed and the private road serving the first subdivision is the only feasible or most likely access serving the new site?*
- i. There are properties in the County which have no access or whose legitimate access is impossible, unsafe or excessively costly to develop. Occasional sale and family transfer practices have circumvented public review and the enforcement of legitimate access standards.*
- j. The development of frontage properties along highways and the front portions of excessively deep lots on an individual basis has resulted in the creation of man-made barriers to the logical extension of public or private access to the properties beyond.*
- k. Strip commercial development occurring along highways and roads in Flathead County result in a maze of individual access points with each one being a potential conflict point. Reduced-speed traffic exiting a business or leaving the highway to enter a business create severe traffic hazards on high-speed roads, reduces the average traffic speed of the road, reduces the general flow of traffic, accident potentials skyrocket, demands increase for traffic modification and improvements and ultimately, if anything is done, it is paid by the general taxpayer.*

- l. Neither the Flathead County Commission nor the Road Department have established a County Road designation system establishing arterials (major traffic movers), collectors (feeder streets which collect and funnel traffic locally or to arterials), local streets (which provide local access to properties), for the purpose of maintenance, construction, or extensions.*
- m. Snow removal on public roads is becoming a greater issue as the number of rural residents increase, particularly the non-farm population who commute daily to the nearby community for employment.*
- n. Glacier Park International Airport exists in a rural setting midway between the County's three cities. There is no zoning or similar land use regulations to control development in or adjacent to the airport facility. Height restrictions have been adopted.*
- o. Flathead County is one hundred (100) miles north of the nearest Interstate (I-90).*
- p. Freight costs are high due to the small population, which in turn reflects a small demand for goods. Also, there is a lack of outbound freight to regularly compliment the freight loads brought in creating expensive dead-hauls. Finally, the above-mentioned distance from Interstate Highway and general distribution points adds to the dilemma.*

GOALS

- 6A SAFE AND DEPENDABLE ACCESS TO ALL DEVELOPED LAND IN THE COUNTY.**
- 6B A COMPREHENSIVE CIRCULATION SYSTEM WHICH SERVES TO EFFICIENTLY INTERCONNECT ALL AREAS OF THE COUNTY WITH THE REGION BEYOND.**
- 6C AN AWARENESS THAT ROADS AND HIGHWAYS PROVIDE THE WINDOW THAT MANY PEOPLE VIEW THE COUNTY FROM AND, THEREFORE, SINAGE, LANDSCAPING, ROAD LOCATION, ROAD DESIGN, BLDING SETBACKS, AND PARKING SHOULD BE COORDINATED AND TEMPERED TO PROVIDE THE MOST OPTIMUM RESULTS.**
- 6D THE CONTINUED ENHANCEMENT OF GLACIER PARK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AS A REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT FACILITY.**

POLICIES

- 6.1 As areas develop, roads should be designed to permit their continuations into adjacent land ownerships/ or existing or future developments.
- 6.2 Local streets should be designed to discourage through traffic.
- 6.3 Half streets should be prohibited.
- 6.4 Dead-end streets should not be allowed. A temporary or permanent cul-de-sac of adequate width should be provided.
- 6.5 Every lot should abut and have usable access to an accessible public or private road.
- 6.6 No more than two streets should intersect at one time at a given point.
- 6.7 Special design considerations should be incorporated where a street intersection occurs in hilly or rolling terrain.
- 6.8 When property abuts a public right-of-way of substandard width, prior to the subdividing or developing of this land or construction of a primary building, the owner should be required to dedicate one-half (1/2) of deficient amount of right-of-way along the length of the affected property.
- 6.9 In naming roads and streets in the County, proposed names should not duplicate or cause confusion with existing street names.
- 6.10 As areas develop, the developer-lot owner should have primary responsibility for the installation and maintenance of all culverts on County right-of-way resulting from private or subdivision access roads intersecting a county road.
- 6.11 Snow from private property should not be deposited on County roads.
- 6.12 Mailboxes can serve as a traffic and road maintenance hazard and thus placement standards should be enforced.
- 6.13 No outdoor advertising including billboards, lighted displays, reader boards, posters, etc. should be located in the public right-of-way.
- 6.14 Speed limits on public roads should be regulated by traffic signs. The use of speed bumps, ditches and other similar devices impede the safe flow of traffic and should not be allowed for any reason.

- 6.15 All proposed approaches or access points on to public roads should be reviewed and approved by the public agency responsible for road maintenance and operation. Criteria for review should include:
- a. Maintenance of clear site distance to allow safe viewing of entering traffic.
 - b. Adequate width of access to provide for safe traffic movement but not excessively wide so as to create multiple access areas, undifferentiated movement and general confusion.
 - c. Maintenance of adequate surface water drainage.
 - d. Spacing techniques to encourage properties to utilize common accesses, to encourage frontage road development where densities or volumes are high and to avoid the hazards and traffic disruptions of multiple access points along major public roads.
 - e. Proper surfacing of the approach access to be compatible with the travel surface of the public road.
- 6.16 All land parcels as a prerequisite for development should offer adequate, safe access for emergency vehicles (sheriff, fire department, ambulance) and other services such as school bus, mail delivery, etc.
- 6.17 Placement of all underground utilities in a public right-of-way should be reviewed and approved by the public agency responsible for the right-of-way. The applicant installing such utility should be responsible for all costs of bringing the right-of-way, road bed and travel surface to its original condition and the applicant should guarantee the work.
- 6.18 Private irrigators should not allow irrigation water to touch road beds or travel surfaces of public roads.
- 6.19 Clear vision areas should be required and maintained at the intersections of all streets, alleys, rail crossings, etc.
- 6.20 Carefully review all proposed commercial and industrial development adjacent to the County airport facility to ensure that only necessary or airport related commercial and light industrial uses are approved to insure airport compatibility, to protect current and potential airport expansion and to ensure optimum utilization of the airport facility.
- 6.21 Explore aviation easements and conservation easements as methods of guiding, limiting and protecting development around the County airport.

- 6.22 Consider instituting zoning or similar restrictions around Glacier Park International Airport to regulate the development of adjacent land to protect future expansion of the airport facility, to avoid negative impacts such as noise and vibration experience by neighboring properties, to ensure safety of adjacent landowners from air traffic emergencies and to avoid a situation where surrounding urbanized development begins to dictate or limit airport operations.
- 6.23 Pedestrian and bicycle trail standards should be considered for adoption by the County Commission as part of the “County Road Policy Handbook.”
- 6.24 The design and construction of all arterial and collector streets should take into account pedestrian access and use. This should include at a minimum bike trails or sidewalks.
- 6.25 Residential and commercial developments including subdivisions, mobile home parks, recreational vehicle parks, etc. should incorporate in their design pedestrian and bicycle access, especially when a major street intersects or borders the site.

IV. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES ELEMENT

7. Law Enforcement

ISSUES

- a. *The Sheriff's Department jurisdiction covers all of the unincorporated area of Flathead County (excluding Glacier National Park) and included civil matters such as issuing papers, warrants, etc. and as backup in enforcement matters in the three cities.*
- b. *The Sheriff's Department is presently staffed by 62 employees, 36 are sworn officers (26 are patrolmen). As the population of the area increases, there will be a need for additional staffing.*
- c. *Flathead County is patrolled around the clock by a maximum of four patrolmen.*
- d. *A new criminal justice center opened in 1987 and should be adequate through the year 2000. It provides new facilities for the judiciary, county attorneys and civil defense as well as providing a new jail facility.*
- e. *The Sheriff's Posse, numbering 66 with a maximum membership of 80, is a voluntary, backup and support organization for large operations, emergencies, etc. They are involved in on-going education and when called in for assistance are sworn in as official peace officers.*
- f. *The North Fork Homeowner's Association is one of the first rural areas in the County to organize a neighborhood watch program.*

GOALS

- 7A A RESPONSIVE, WELL-TRAINED AND MAINTAINED LAW ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT.
- 7B A CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAM THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY MEETING THE NEEDS AND PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE SEASONAL VISITOR AND YEAR-ROUND RESIDENT ALIKE.

POLICIES

- 7.1 The County should increase the actual number of patrolmen in the field at a given time as tax dollars allow.
- 7.2 The Sheriff's Department should review all subdivision proposals as well as site plans for multi-family, commercial and industrial developments in the County so as to comment on the appropriateness or adequacy of law enforcement access and the safety/crime prevention aspects.
- 7.3 The Sheriff's Posse should continue to be supported and utilized as viable backup and support force for the Sheriff's Department.
- 7.4 Continued training/education should be supported for members of the Sheriff's Posse.
- 7.5 Neighborhood Watch Programs should be instituted throughout the rural area and particularly be encouraged as a development standard or condition of new rural subdivisions.
- 7.6 The County Sheriff's Department and the three municipal police departments should continue to strive to work together, coordinating activities, consolidating programs, and helping to eliminate duplication while improving service.

8. Fire Protection

ISSUES

- a. *Fire protection in rural Flathead County is provided by sixteen (16) rural fire districts and the City of Whitefish.*
- b. *Vast areas of the County are not organized into rural fire districts and have no means of fire suppression. Special areas of concern include the Ashley Lake Areas, Polebridge, and the North Fork area, up river from West Glacier and the areas west of Whitefish beyond the reach of the Whitefish Fire Department.*
- c. *No organized rural fire district exists outside the city limits of Whitefish for several miles to the east and south and all the way to the western county line except for Olney. The Whitefish Fire Department does provide contract services to 1,750 properties within a reasonable distance of the City.*
- d. *Many of the rural fire districts have aged equipment.*
- e. *Response times due to distance, terrain, road conditions and volunteer nature of the firefighters is in many cases slow.*
- f. *There is a general lack of sophisticated firefighting equipment in the rural areas.*
- g. *Some properties are inaccessible during periods of the year because of snow, ice or mud.*
- h. *A considerable number of houses and entire subdivisions are located in heavily wooded areas and contain only one access road. The threat of forest fire and the possibility of severe damage and/or the loss of life is very real.*

GOAL

- 8A A COORDINATED FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM THAT SERVES THE NEEDS OF THE ENTIRE COUNTY EMPHASIZING ACCESS, RESPONSE TIME AND TRAINED, EQUIPPED DEPARTMENTS AND PERSONNEL.

POLICIES

- 8.1 All structures built in the County should incorporate adequate setbacks to promote safety and to deter the spread of fire.

- 8.2 All subdivisions should be planned, designed, constructed and maintained so as to minimize the risk of fire and to permit efficient suppression of fire.
- 8.3 In fire hazard areas (timber areas) secondary access out of all subdivisions and developments should be mandatory.
- 8.4 Site plans for individual commercial, industrial and multi-family buildings should be reviewed to ensure that adequate fire protection measures have been considered and that adequate fire equipment access has been provided for.
- 8.5 Subdivisions of five or more lots should incorporate or have immediate access to a tanker recharge facility.
- 8.6 All lots created for present or future development should be required to show suitable access by fire equipment.
- 8.7 Existing rural fire districts should be encouraged to expand their boundaries and correspondingly to upgrade their facilities/equipment, if necessary, to bring in areas of the County not presently in an organized fire district.
- 8.8 New rural fire districts should be encouraged to organize in those populated areas where no district currently exists.
- 8.9 When economically advantageous, rural fire districts should be encouraged to consolidate so as to ease administration, pool resources, and finance improved equipment.
- 8.10 When and where possible, rural fire districts should enforce the State Fire Codes. In lieu of this a fire Marshall should be appointed with countywide (rural) responsibility for professionally enforcing the State Fire Code for new construction and existing buildings.

9. Water Facilities

ISSUES

- a. *There are six major community water systems in the County Planning Jurisdiction including Lakeside, Somers, Bigfork, Martin City, Hungry Horse, and Coram.*
- b. *Martin City's water system has been completely replaced as of the spring of 1986. This being a result of a May 1984 permanent boil order issued by the State Department of Health and Environmental Sciences Department.*
- c. *Hungry Horse is undertaking major revisions to its distribution system to bring it up to acceptable levels and within health standards.*
- d. *Somers Water District is undertaking studies to acquire the Community Water System and make major improvements.*
- e. *Lakeside, Coram and Bigfork water systems are all in good condition.*
- f. *The primary water supply in rural Flathead County is private wells (typically shallow) or, if adjacent to a water body, then directly from that river or lake.*
- g. *Suitable water for individual domestic consumption is readily available on the Valley Floor.*
- h. *Surface water supplies (streams, rivers, lakes) will increasingly be in jeopardy if surface water quality is allowed to decline due to septic effluent, agriculture and timber practices and general development in the individual water sheds, all of which increase erosion, run-off and contamination.*

GOAL

- 9A A CLEAN, SAFE AND SANITARY WATER SUPPLY FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF THE PLANNING JURISDICTION FREE FROM THE THREATS OF DEGRADATION AND DEPLETION.

POLICIES

- 9.1 Support rural water districts as a financing and administrative tool for developing, upgrading or expanding community water systems.
- 9.2 The County Health Department should monitor areas of increasing density which utilize septic systems as the primary sewage treatment method to ensure that the

private water systems continue to be safe. In areas where degradation is apparent, alternative solutions should be offered.

- 9.3 Water quality from lakes and streams used for domestic consumption should be monitored and where a decline in water is apparent, alternative water sources and systems should be explored.
- 9.4 Higher density developments (one acre or smaller acreage lot size) should be encouraged to utilize community water systems to ensure adequate water supply, quality and fire prevention capabilities.
- 9.5 New individual uses or development adjacent to an existing community water system should be required to hook into the water system either through contract or annexation (assuming capacity and supply are adequate).

10. Sewer Facilities

ISSUES

- a. *Bigfork and Lakeside Sewer Districts are the only operating sewer districts in the Planning Jurisdiction.*
- b. *The Bigfork Sewer District is undertaking an updating and expansion of the processing plant which will take it easily to the year 2005.*
- c. *Lakeside, presently unsewered, has begun installation of a new sewer system with processing facilities located near Somers.*
- d. *The vast majority of the County, 60% of all residents including cities, utilize private individual systems, primarily a septic tank and drainfield.*
- e. *The Flathead City-County Health Department issues sanitation permits for all new and replacement private sewage disposal systems.*
- f. *Several rural service centers in the County including West Glacier, Coram, Martin City, Hungry Horse, Somers, and Kila contain small lot development and no community sewer system.*
- g. *There are areas in Flathead County, particularly around Flathead, Echo, Ashley, Bitterroot Lakes and Lake Blaine where densities are increasing, soils are not ideally suited for on-site sewage disposal and presently no community systems are available.*

GOALS

- 10A SAFE, EFFICIENT, ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND SEWAGE DISPOSAL THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY.
- 10B SURFACE AND GROUD WATER RESOURCES FREE FROM CONTAMINATION OR THE THREAT OF CONTAMINATION BY SEWAGE EFFLUENT.

POLICIES

- 10.1 Support the creation of Rural Sewer Districts as a financing and administrative tool for developing public or community sewer systems.
- 10.2 The City-County Health Department should monitor areas of increasing density, areas of known septic tank failures and areas of severe soil limitations to avoid

health related problems and ground and surface water contamination from on-site sewage disposal systems.

- 10.3 In critical or sensitive locations or areas of failing septic systems, efforts should be made to utilize alternative disposal methods including community sewer to safeguard the existing human and natural environment.
- 10.4 Sewage disposal practices around lakes and adjacent to streams should be approached with extreme precaution to safeguard water quality.
- 10.5 Where unsewered areas of high or increasing density presently exist adjacent to water bodies, water quality should be monitored to safeguard against potential contamination.

11. Solid Waste

ISSUES

- a. *Flathead County is organized into a single Refuse District.*
- b. *Flathead County operates a single sanitary landfill midway between Whitefish and Kalispell on the west side of Highway 93.*
- c. *The 80-acre landfill site is approximately 25% full and has a life expectancy beyond 30 years.*
- d. *The Columbia Falls Aluminum Plant operates a licensed private landfill for their own specific waste by-products.*
- e. *There is a licensed tire dump on McMannamy Draw as the County Landfill does not accept tires.*
- f. *The County Solid Waste Department also works with several clean-fill dumpsites in the County for rock, asphalt, dirt, etc.*
- g. *There are satellite container dumpsites in the County, the number and location being set by the Refuse District's By-Laws in 1970. Two of these sites, Boisverts and Martin City, were closed in 1985.*
- h. *Flathead County does not provide individual or private refuse pickup. It does service the satellite container sites on a regular basis.*
- i. *Rural residents may choose between contracting with a private hauler or hauling their own refuse to a satellite container or the landfill.*
- j. *All County property owners pay a flat fee via their tax statement to finance operation of the landfill. No other user fees are assessed for normal use.*
- k. *The County landfill has a Class II license and will not accept hazardous waste. While volume is small there is no adequate long-term procedure for disposal.*
- l. *Unscreened refuse is a concern. Refuse deposited in fourteen (14) satellite sites may contain tires, hazardous waste, etc. There is no economical means of controlling/monitoring this many sites.*
- m. *Uncompacted refuse shortens the life span of the landfill and is a major concern.*
- n. *Summer peak use at the Landfill is now at 500 tons/day. Equipment capacity in late 1985 stood at 600 tons/day.*

- o. An ultimate or final use needs to be determined for the landfill site.*

GOAL

- 11A A REFUSE COLLECTION DISPOSAL SYSTEM THAT IS DEPENDABLE, COST EFFICIENT, EASILY ACCESSIBLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND.

POLICIES

- 11.1 All subdivision and all site plans for multi-family, commercial and industrial developments should be reviewed to ensure suitable access by refuse collection vehicles and to establish refuse pickup sites.
- 11.2 New subdivisions should have as a condition of approval a statement that future homeowners/homeowner's association will maintain a contract with a local licensed refuse hauler in order to assure the timely disposal of refuse, to reduce the burden on the satellite sites, to lesson congestion and traffic at the County Landfill site and to further aid in the compaction of refuse.
- 11.3 Joint container/central collection sites are encouraged in subdivisions.
- 11.4 The Refuse District board should prepare a re-use plan for the Landfill site now so that cost savings could be experience in site preparation.
- 11.5 Hazardous waste should be disposed of following State and Federal Statues and such procedures should be well publicized.
- 11.6 Only licensed landfills should operate in the County. The private, or community dumping of solid waste elsewhere should be prohibited.
- 11.7 Public clean fill (rock, concrete, dirt, etc.) areas are encouraged.
- 11.8 Alternative methods of disposal of solid waste are encouraged but air and water quality should not be compromised.
- 11.9 Recycling of specific materials such as paper, aluminum, glass, etc. should be greatly encouraged both in terms of conservation and to aid in reduction of solid waste disposal.
- 11.10 Satellite refuse collection sites should be aesthetically screened to reduce the spread of litter and mitigate objectionable views.

- 11.11 The satellite green box system should be continued to provide reasonable disposal options for rural residents, especially for those in isolated areas where private hauling contracts are not feasible.
- 11.12 The storage of any abandoned, discarded or junk vehicles on public property (except County Refuse District Property) should be prohibited.
- 11.13 The storage of four or more abandoned, discarded or junk vehicles on private property should be conducted only on licensed sites.
- 11.14 Licensed junk vehicle sites should be aesthetically screened.

V. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

12. Parks and Recreation

ISSUES

- a. *Guidelines need to be established for the creation of new parks.*
- b. *An accounting system should be established that relates cash-in-lieu of land payments paid as part of the subdivision parklands dedication requirement to the park region in which they were paid.*
- c. *Almost all subdivisions platted from 1974-1981 dedicated land as part of the parklands dedication clause in the County Subdivision Regulations. The lack of a parks department and little public concern at the time resulted in a large number of small, undeveloped, unusable sites.*
- d. *Many existing county parklands have little or no recreational potential. Some of these do possess value as residential properties.*
- e. *A park foundation is needed to accept donations for future development.*
- f. *The County Parks Department needs long-term, stable financing.*
- g. *The County Refuse Board should consider a recreational use as a viable long-rang re-use proposal for the County Landfill.*
- h. *Equestrian trails are needed in the Somers/Lakeside and Bigfork areas.*
- i. *There is a strong need for additional public access on Flathead Lake from Somers south past Lakeside to the Lake County line.*
- j. *There is a need to develop a community park in Somers.*
- k. *Athletic field space is deficient in the Bigfork area.*
- l. *Additional public access is needed on Lake Blaine and Echo Lake.*
- m. *Canyon residents need a community center/gymnasium and athletic fields, a Columbia Falls – West Glacier bike trail and cross-country ski areas.*

- n. *There is need for additional lake access on Bitterroot and Ashley Lakes and for continued maintenance of the school facilities in the southwest part of the County as they serve as the only recreational facilities.*
- o. *The West Valley has no community park site.*
- p. *There is a need for a public rifle range in Flathead County.*
- q. *Historical buildings need to be inventoried and preserved.*
- r. *At least ten public agencies now provide various recreational facilities and activities in Flathead County. Continued coordination is needed.*

GOALS

- 12A PROVIDE PARKLANDS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES THAT WILL MEET THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF PRESENT AND FUTURE PERMANENT AND PART-TIME RESIDENTS OF THE COUNTY.
- 12B DEVELOP AN OPEN SPACE SYSTEM THAT WILL PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECT SENSITIVE LANDS OR CRITICAL AREAS OF THE COUNTY.
- 12C DEVELOP A HIERARCHY OF PARK SYSTEM TO MEET RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF ALL SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY AND TO FURTHER PROMOTE TOURISM.
- 12D PROVIDE COMMERCIAL RECREATION TO ENHANCE THE ECONOMIC BASE OF THE COUNTY.

POLICIES

- 12.1 As opportunities and funds arise priority should be given to purchasing/developing facilities and activities in Flathead County from the following list:
 - a. Public access on Flathead Lake from Somers south past Lakeside to the Lake County line.
 - b. Equestrian trails in the Somers/Lakeside and Bigfork areas.
 - c. A community park in Somers.
 - d. Athletic field space in Bigfork.

- e. Additional public access on Lake Blaine and Echo Lake.
 - f. Community center/gymnasium and athletic fields in the Canyon area.
 - g. Cross-country ski areas in the canyon.
 - h. Bicycle trail from Columbia Falls to West Glacier.
 - i. Additional lake access on Bitterroot and Ashley Lakes.
 - j. A community park in the west valley area.
 - k. A public rifle range somewhere in Flathead County,
- 12.2 When cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication is received, this money should be accounted for and expended as a first priority on park and open space acquisition/development projects within the respective park regions of Flathead County as defined by the County Parks Department and as a second priority on countywide priority facilities listed above.
- 12.3 Selection of public park sites should be dependant on public attitudes and opinions, legal and convenient access to the site, closeness to population centers, close proximity to major traffic routes, proximity to adjacent recreational sites, scenic quality, topography appropriate for the use in mind, vegetation and presence of streams or lakes.
- 12.4 Accept cash-in-lieu of land dedication as park of the subdivision process unless proposed land dedication is adjacent to an existing viable parkland or compatible school land, meets the above site criteria and addresses one of the site needs listed above.
- 12.5 New developments of three or more units per gross acre should incorporate privately owned and maintained playgrounds or tot-lots into the site design if no other parklands are to be developed or dedicated.
- 12.6 There should be public access to all public parks.
- 12.7 There should be public access to all waterways in the County.
- 12.8 Preserve and utilize critical, sensitive or scenic areas and especially riparian areas as open space.
- 12.9 Floodplains and floodways should be maintained in permanent open space being used for recreation, agriculture and wildlife habitat.

- 12.10 A greenbelt should be maintained along all streams and rivers in the County to protect the quality of water (reduce erosion; surface runoff containing pesticides, fertilizers, etc.; stream bank depredation/defoliation; etc.) and maintain the natural aesthetics of the waterway.
- 12.11 The County Parks Department should continue to maintain on-going communications with and coordinate programs and facilities among the various State and Federal agencies, school districts, and cities.
- 12.12 Whenever possible, County parks should be developed in conjunction with public or private schools. A further example of sharing could involve the public use of school lands and school facilities (after hours) in exchange for County maintenance.
- 12.13 Promote such methods as conservation easements, life estates, and land grants as methods of preserving open space or scenic/critical areas.
- 12.14 Work with such groups as the Flathead Land Trust to protect scenic or critical areas of the County.
- 12.15 Flathead County should maintain a self-supporting, self-sustaining, year-round recreation program.
- 12.16 Recognize that Flathead County is a tourist-oriented community and develop parks which offer recreational access to tourists and residents alike in the County.
- 12.17 Historic buildings and sites in the County should be identified and inventoried.
- 12.18 Historic buildings and sites in Flathead County should be maintained and preserved for future generations. Benefits of placement on the National Register of Historic Places and tax incentives for private rehabilitation should be emphasized and publicized.

STANDARDS

Recreation and recreational access starts with the immediate neighborhood and builds outwards. Ideally a hierarchy of parks which start at the neighborhood level building upward to community and regional parks best serves the residents of an area. Below is a list of Park definitions and standards used to define or differentiate parklands in the County.

FLATHEAD COUNTY PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

1. Subdivision Park – Size: 1 Acre to 10 Acres

Subdivision parks are designed and built to the specifications of the people in the immediate area. Park and recreation guidelines are used in the park plan; however, local input is important.

2. Community Parks – Size: .05 Acres to 10 Acres

In many parts of Flathead County, people live in unincorporated communities. Community parks are planned with community wishes in mind but built under county park guidelines. They may have the characteristics of other County park types, but differ because they are planned with community wishes in mind.

3. Regional Park – Size: 20 Acres to 150 Acres

Regional planned and developed parks are designed to be recreational centers and to serve a large number of County residents as well as a large geographic area of the county.

4. Natural Areas – Size: 1 Acre to Several Hundred Acres.

The purpose of a natural area is to set aside a given area to remain in its natural state. No physical improvements should be made in a natural area. Strict regulations must govern park visitation and access points. Natural areas must not allow vehicle traffic. The natural area provides a totally natural setting to be observed and enjoyed by the visitor.

5. Aquatic Park – Size: .05 Acres to 10 Acres.

Aquatic parks are planned to meet public need for recreational facilities associated with water recreation. Aquatic parks usually contain one or more of the following:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| a) Boat Ramps | c) Swimming Areas |
| b) Fishing access | d) Picnic Areas |

6. Athletic Park – Size: 2 Acres to 20 Acres

The purpose of an athletic park is to provide outdoor sports facilities. Athletic parks are large, and are built to athletic standards.

7. Special Parks – Size: Any Size.

Special parks are built to meet unique situations. Flathead County Parks and Recreation guidelines will be followed in park construction; however, special parks call for different approaches to meet park needs.

VI. Planning Unit Community Plans

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B. BATAVIA DISTRICT PLANNING UNIT

GOALS:

The Batavia Planning District shall elect a five-member Board of Directors to be elected at the next school election. The Directors shall be landowners of this district.

The Board of Directors shall act as a liaison between the property owners of the district and the County Planning Board, County Commissioners and the Fish and Wildlife Department, on all matters pertaining to land use, to protect the rights of the landowners within the district.

OBJECTIVES:

Productive soil should be preserved for agricultural purposes.

Where private dwellings adjoin farmlands, the existing agriculture use shall have priority.

All water shall be protected from pollution from human waste and residue.

Appraisal of land should be based on current use and not on potential use with the tax base to encourage agriculture and timber use.

Open space and park requirements shall be governed by the density of the population of the area and shall be planned by the directors and the planning district.

Bus, mail and fire routes shall be given first priority for improvements.

Small business and industry should be allowed in acceptable areas. Existing small business and industry is hereby acknowledged as acceptable.

As we realize that all the land in the Batavia District is not prime agriculture land, development should be allowed in this area.

As a Comprehensive Plan for the County will affect the personal rights of all the private landowners – the adoption or rejection of any proposed plan should be decided by the vote of the County landowners and not left to the decision of the three County Commissioners and their appointed planning board.

E. BISSELL COMMUNITY PLANNING UNIT

GOALS:

Land Preservation: Class 1, 2, 3, and 4 land will be preserved for agricultural use, thus maintaining the economic base and social structure of the area.

Priority: Where private dwellings or parcels adjoin agricultural lands, the existing agricultural activities shall have priority in all instances.

Tax Base: Taxes on land shall be as to what the land is actually being used for, not its potential use. 1. Timber on farms and ranches shall not be taxed as a commercial item while it is growing, where the landowners are using such timber in a conservation of soil erosion, watershed, windbreaks, or as animal shelter. 2. Small landowners should not be penalized by having their land classified as subdivision or suburban property, unless said land was purchased in a legally registered subdivision.

Multiple Residence: More than one single-family dwelling may be on a piece of land one-half acre or more. The dwelling must be used for employee, personnel and members of the immediate family. Trailer homes may be used for this purpose.

Commercial growth: Encourage businesses that are in keeping (compatible) with an agricultural community. 1. In order to protect our farmlands, forested lands, and wildlife winter ranges, communes, additional subdivisions, trailer courts and businesses will furnish the Bissell Land Use Committee with impact information. A public hearing will be held for its approval. 2. If any of the above should be started, it shall be the responsibility of the developers and owners to furnish the school district and/or school board in with such a development may take place with an impact statement thirty (30) days before any public hearings. Also, be willing to satisfy the school district monetarily, in the even of a shortage of funds or the inability of the district to issue bonds, for needed buildings, books, or other items needed for additional students such a project may bring into the area.

Reclassification: Scheduled reclassification of any land should be made public. Public hearings concerning such reclassification should be held in the area affected.

Water Ways: Dwellings built near lakes, rivers, and other streams should be held to a minimum so as to preserve their waters from pollution and preserve their natural beauty.

Roads: Bus, fire, and mail routes should be given top priority for improvements.

Private Land Sales: Farmers and ranchers owning small parcels of land cut-off from the main part of the farm or ranch by a public road or a non-crossable stream, lake or river, or other obstacle that are small enough to cause the cost of fencing, obtaining water and crossings uneconomical to the farm or ranch operation, should be allowed to sell these small parcels without being considered as subdividing or be taxed as such as long as the sale is made as a single dwelling sale.

Sanitation and Waste Disposal: All sewage disposals shall follow and meet all county and state requirements. 1. All animal wastes to be stockpiled and stored or disposed of in such a manner so as not to create a pollution problem. 2. Dead animals should be disposed of as quickly as possible, either by burial or at the County refuse sites. If by burial, holes should be deep enough to afford a minimum of thirty-six (36) inches of dirt cover, so as not to attract rodents or predatory animals. Burial will not take place so seepage would pollute or contaminate water systems both above and below ground.

Wildlife: Real estate developments in wildlife winter range areas should be held to the lowest possible minimum.

F. BOORMAN PLANNING UNIT

GOALS:

The Boorman Planning Unit shall elect a Board of five directors. The Board of Directors shall have staggered terms. One to be elected each year at local school election, the first Tuesday of April. The Directors shall be landowners within the planning unit to serve for five years.

The Boorman Planning Unit shall be organized to insure planning growth in an orderly manner and protection of the agricultural community.

OBJECTIVES:

Preserve Class 1-4 agricultural soils and environmental qualities.

Limit development ratio to one (1) dwelling unit per 20 acres.

Existing land use will not be altered because of newer subdivision or business. If circumstances not acceptable to newly established residences or business, existing land use shall be protected.

Physical location of mills, wrecking yards and other enterprises that may be of interest to the community shall be approved by the Boorman Planning Unit.

No mobile home parks, subdivision or congregations. Mobile homes may be acceptable for temporary use while construction of residence or if mobile home is surrounded by 20 acres of continuous land, not occupied by other residences. (Mobile home park is defined as two or more.)

Appraisal of the land should be based on its current use and not upon potential use with the tax base to encourage agriculture and timber use.

All subdivisions shall be required to supply the local school board and the Boorman Planning Unit with specified information concerning said subdivision at least sixty (60) days prior to public hearing.

The Planning Unit shall appear at any public hearing affecting land within the Planning Unit's Jurisdiction. The Unit shall review all subdivision and direct Planning Board on the community's best interest.

Permanent restriction on bars and gambling establishments.

Bus, mail, and school routes shall be given #1 priority for improvement.

Home occupations acceptable.

Protect existing activity that may be in conflict with community goals.

H. CAYUSE PRAIRIE – LAKE BLAINE COMMUNITY PLANNING UNIT

GOALS:

The landowners in the Cayuse Prairie – Lake Blaine Area, whose land is located in the area designated in the Preliminary Flathead County Comprehensive Plan as “Rural Residential – one and two dwelling units per acre”, and all interested landowners in the Cayuse Prairie School District, hereby form the Cayuse Prairie – Lake Blaine Community Planning Group.

Said Planning Group has been formed for the purpose of maintaining and protecting the environmental qualities of life in the area, preventing adverse impact on our school system, and preventing pollution of Lake Blaine and other surface waters, due to over-population.

In general, the majority of the landowners in this area would like to see the area remain a rural agricultural community with large open areas and low population density.

It is proposed that future development would be generally limited to occasional sales and free splits (not more than once a year, or as provided by law) as opposed to subdivisions.

The Planning Group shall represent landowners and try to control changes in uses within its area which may tend to change the characteristics of the area or have an adverse effect upon the Cayuse Prairie School.

The Planning Group is not primarily a decision-making group, but rather its main function shall be to act as a liaison between various County and State Planning Organizations and landowners of the District, and to ensure planning and growth in an orderly manner, maintaining protection for landowners and our basically agricultural-rural-oriented community, and to prevent the impact of overpopulation on our rural school system.

A Board of Directors and Officers of such Community Planning Group, who shall be landowners in the Cayuse Prairie School District, shall be elected at a public meeting, to serve for a term of one-year from the date of such election until their successors shall be duly elected. Only those owning land in School District 10 shall be eligible to vote. Said Board of Directors shall consist of five (5) property owners, and one non-voting Secretary, or Clerk, and shall be comprised of two (2) owners of agricultural or forest land, one (1) commercial property owner, one (1) owner of recreational or lake frontage property, and one (1) suburban tract or orchard tract property owner. A chairman and vice chairman shall be chosen from such Board at its first organizational meeting. The Board of Directors of said Community Planning Group shall function solely as an advisory board and shall make recommendations, and its actions shall be subject to review by the members of the Community Planning Group as a whole. The Board of Directors shall work closely with the Cayuse Prairie School Board and keep it advised of any proposed or projected development which would adversely affect the School System.

OBJECTIVES:

Development of the area to be restricted in order to minimize adverse impact on environmental qualities, recreational, public health and general welfare of the area.

General rural lands to remain in large parcels to permit efficient management for farming, forestry, open space and other rural uses. Good agricultural land to be preserved for agricultural purposes.

Water and Water Sources Protected: Free-flowing streams not to be obstructed, no pollution of water and air. Restriction on sewage disposal – protecting the watershed – no diverting of water for industrial uses. No sewage facilities to be built within 100 feet, horizontally, and 6 feet, vertically, from the high water mark of any body of water.

Commercial enterprises restricted to those already existing the area, or approved by the Community Planning Group. Additional Cottage Industries would be acceptable. Permanent restrictions on bar and gambling establishments.

Low Density: Present state law allows “Immediate family” dwelling to be added without restriction. No high impact developments, such as communes, tenements, condominiums, shopping centers, trailer courts, etc., allowed, except as approved by the Community Planning Group. Adequate notice (minimum of 30 days) concerning high impact developments shall be given the Community Planning Group and the School Board of Cayuse Prairies School District, and hearings shall be held within the areas of the Planning Group.

Appraisal of land to be on its current use and not upon potential or projected use. Land use shall not be classified and assessed relative to its best long-range use as determined by any special appraisal groups or County Planning Boards, but such classification or assessment shall be on the actual use of the land involved.

Rural atmosphere of the community to be maintained and school protected from becoming overcrowded, and causing unwarranted tax burdens on landowners which would surely result from the proposed one and two dwellings per acre classification, as proposed by the Preliminary Plan. This area will not support this type of development and the landowners in the area will resist any attempt to promote it.

I. DEER PARK COMMUNITY PLANNING UNIT

The Deer Park Community Planning Unit is comprised of landowners within the Deer Park School District, as well as landowners north thereof to Bad Rock Drive, and south thereof to Blackmer Lane.

The Planning Unit has been formed for the purpose of conserving the agricultural identity of the area within the Unit, as well as its high environmental quality of life; preventing pollution of surface and ground waters; to protect air quality; and to protect the rural school system within the Unit from overpopulation and overcrowding; all of which would be damaged or destroyed by overpopulation or adverse land use.

GOALS:

Landowners shall elect, annually, a Board of Directors, five in number, who shall act solely in an advisory capacity, making recommendations regarding land use planning within the Unit. Its actions are subject to review by all landowners within the Unit. The Board shall work closely with the Deer Park School Board on all matters which would affect the School.

Board members shall be landowners within the Unit. Until elections are held, the five persons who volunteered to initially work on land use planning objectives at a public meeting on April 7, 1976 shall serve as the Board of Directors.

The Unit shall represent landowners as a liaison between them and the various governmental agencies involved in land use planning in the Unit which may tend to alter the agricultural characteristics of the Unit.

OBJECTIVES:

To maintain our rural agricultural community as it presently exists, containing large open areas and low population density. High population or impact development, such as apartment projects, shopping centers, trailers or mobile home parks or courts, shall not be permitted.

To maintain the rural community atmosphere of the Unit, and protect our rural school system from the adverse effects of over-population and overcrowding which would cause an additional tax burden to landowners to finance new school facilities. Therefore, any type of proposed land use within the unit which will cause such overcrowding of our school will be resisted by the Unit.

To prevent further commercial development or usage except that already existing. The land area along Highway No. 2 in the Unit is the area of commercial concentration, and is in danger of becoming a commercial "strip" area.

- 1) Additional cottage industries are acceptable.
- 2) No additional bars or licensed liquor establishments are desired in the Unit, as well as no gambling establishments.

To protect and maintain the extensive and important big game wintering range within the Unit. Therefore, and proposed land use or development will be closely examined from this standpoint, and, if found to be damaging to this wintering range, will be opposed.

To ensure that land within the Unit is assessed for tax purposes according to its present use, and not on the highest or best use possible as projected by Flathead County or other appraisal groups.

To protect the surface and sub-surface waters from pollution. Due to the high water table in the Unit, sewage disposal caused by additional residential, commercial or industrial development will tend to pollute ground waters, and will be resisted.

No water shall be diverted for industrial usage.

To ensure that the land area within the Unit is designated for “Agriculture” on the final Flathead County Comprehensive Development Plan, as it is on the Preliminary Plan, with the provision therein that one of the purposes in that Agriculture area is “to exclude the scattered intrusion of uses not compatible with an agricultural environment.”

K. KILA-BATTLEBUTTE PLANNING UNIT

The landowners of this planning unit have resolved to organize the Kila-Battlebutte Planning Unit in order to maintain and protect the environmental qualities of life in our area.

GOALS:

The Kila-Battlebutte Planning Unit shall elect a five-member planning board of directors, who are landowners, in April when the school board members are elected and shall represent various interests within the community.

The Kila-Battlebutte Planning Unit shall be organized to plan land use, review plans and control changed in land use within its area, and further, to represent the landowners of the Kila-Battlebutte Planning Unit in these matters.

OBJECTIVES:

Productive soils may be preserved for agricultural uses, thus maintaining the economic base and social structure of the area.

Where private dwelling or parcel adjoins farm lands, the existing agricultural oriented use shall have priority.

We encourage the development of Federal Waterfowl Production. Hay land inside the waterfowl production area boundaries owned by the Fish and Wildlife Service Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife be managed with good farming practices such as haying and grazing to minimize the potential fire hazard which will exist if left unharvested.

Water sources protected – free-flowing streams not obstructed – no polluting water and air. Restrictions on sewage disposal – protecting the water shed – no diverting of water for industrial uses.

All subdivisions will be required to supply the local school board and the Kila-Battlebutte Planning Unit with specified information concerning said subdivision at least thirty days prior to public hearing.

Appraisal of the land should be based on its current use and not upon its potential use with the tax base to encourage agriculture and timber use.

Scheduled reclassification of land should be made public and hearings concerning the same should be held in the areas affected.

All subdivision on productive timber land must provide a clause for selective cutting.

Open space and park requirements will relate to needs created by higher intensity land use and planned by the Kila-Battlebutte Planning Unit.

Bus, mail and fire routes shall be given No. 1 priority for improvements.

Small industry and shopping centers shall be recognized in acceptable locations.

Existing economic base is related to a stable population growth. This stability should be maintained and can be maintained through local planning control.

Commercial enterprises such as gambling establishments, bars and wrecking areas shall be restricted to locations acceptable to the Kila-Battlebutte Planning Unit.

In general, the majority of landowners of this area would like to see it remain much as it is with large open areas and a low population density.

The Planning Unit should appear at any public hearing affecting land within the Planning Unit's jurisdiction. The Planning Unit shall review all subdivisions.

P. MARION PLANNING UNIT

The landowners of this planning unit have resolved to organize the Marion Planning Unit in order to maintain and protect the environmental qualities of life in our area.

GOALS:

The Marion Planning Unit shall elect a five-member planning board of directors, who are landowners, in April when the school board members are elected and shall represent various interests within the community.

The Marion Planning unit shall be organized to plan land use, review plans and control changes in land use within its area, and further, to represent the landowners of the Marion Planning Unit in these matters.

The Board's main function will be to act as a liaison between the landowners of this district and various County and State Planning Organizations.

OBJECTIVES:

At the present time lakes in this area are fresh water, which we all enjoy. Since the water is used by some for domestic purposes, it is our desire to keep them pollution free.

All State and County health and sanitation laws shall apply to all new construction.

All future lots within 500 feet of the lakes be zoned for single residential property only, with the exception of the present commercial enterprises.

All subdivision will be required to supply the local School Board and the Marion Planning Unit with specified information concerning said subdivision at least thirty days prior to the public hearings.

Appraisal of the land should be based on its current use and not upon its potential use with the tax base to encourage agriculture and timber use.

Scheduled reclassification of land should be made public and hearings concerning the same should be held in the areas affected.

School bus, mail and fire routes shall be given No. 1 priority for improvements and maintenance.

Commercial enterprises such as gambling establishments, bars and wrecking areas shall be screened from public view and restricted to locations acceptable to the Marion Planning Unit.

Small industry and shopping centers shall be recognized in acceptable locations.

In general, the landowners of this area would like to see it remain much as it is with large open areas and a low population density.

The Planning Unit should appear at any public hearing affecting land within the planning unit's jurisdiction. The planning unit shall review all subdivisions.

We oppose prohibitive taxation which deliberately discourages the ownership of agricultural and timber lands. Small landowners who derive a considerable portion of their income from their land should not be penalized by having their lands classified as suburban tracts, etc.

Any new or expansion of state, federal or private recreational facilities shall come before the Marion Planning Unit.

Q. MOUNTAIN BROOK PLANNING UNIT

GOALS:

The Mountain Brook Planning Unit should be composed of School District #62 landowners.

Elected officers of the above planning organization shall serve for one year with a beginning date of September 1, 1974. This group shall be composed of a President, Vice-President and a Secretary.

The Mountain Brook Planning Unit will represent the landowners in such matters as land use in the area and will review and try to control any plans which may change the characteristics of the area.

The Mountain Brook Planning Unit officers are not a decision-making organization. Their main function will be to act as a liaison between the various county and state planning organizations and the landowners of this district.

OBJECTIVES:

Development within the planning area will be restricted in order to minimize adverse impact on the environmental qualities, public health and general welfare of this area.

Water sources protected—free-flowing streams not obstructed—no pollution of water and air. Restrictions on sewage disposal—protecting the water shed—no diverting of water for industrial uses.

Good agricultural soils will be preserved for agricultural uses, thus maintaining the economic base and social structure of the area.

Small industry shall be recognized in acceptable locations.

Our economic base is tied to a stable population base. The stability can be maintained by being selective as to what small industry and commercial venues are allowed in the area.

Low Density. Present state law allows immediate family dwelling to be added without restriction. Existing parcels with single-family dwellings are acceptable.

Where private dwelling or parcel adjoins farm lands, the existing agricultural use shall have priority.

Bus, Mail and fire routes shall be given No. 1 priority for improvements.

U. STAR MEADOWS-SHORTS MEADOWS PLANNING UNIT

GOAL:

The landowners of this planning district have resolved to organize the Star Meadows-Shorts Meadows Planning District in order to maintain and protect the environmental qualities of life in our area.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Land Preservation:
 - A. Development within the planning area will be restricted in order to minimize adverse impact on the environmental qualities, public health and general welfare of the area, development density should be approximately 1 DU/80 acres. However, recreational environment would be compatible.
 - B. Land should be classified relative to its best long-range use as determined by the majority of the people within this planning district. Land categories being:
 - 1) Agricultural
 - 2) Recreational
 - 3) Commercial
 - 4) Residential or Suburban

2. Priority:

Where private dwelling or parcel adjoins farm lands, the existing agricultural use shall have priority.

3. Tax Base:

- A. Taxes on land shall be as to what the land is actually being used for, not for its potential use.
- B. Timber on farms and ranches shall not be taxed as a commercial item while in the process of growing when the land owners are using such timber in a conservation of soil erosion, watershed, windbreak, or as an animal shelter.
- C. Taxes should be levied only when such timber is harvested and sold commercially.
- D. Small land owners should not be penalized for having their land classified as a subdivision or suburban property unless said land was purchased in a legally registered subdivision.

4. Multiple Residence:

More than one single-family dwelling may be on a piece of land one-half acre or more. The dwelling must be used for employee personnel or members of the immediate family. Trailer houses may be used for this purpose with a maximum limit of three additional units.

Immediate family to be considered as:

Father.....Mother
Son.....In-Law
Daughter.....In-Law
Grandparents

5. Reclassification:

Scheduled reclassification of any land should be made public. Public hearings concerning such reclassification should be held in the area affected.

6. Water Ways:

Dwelling build on lakes, rivers and streams should be held to a minimum so as to preserve their waters from pollution and to secure their natural beauty.

7. Private Land Sales:

Farmers and ranchers owning small parcels of land that are cut-off from the main part of the farm or ranch by a public road, non-crossable stream, lake or other obstacle which would increase the cost of fencing, that is uneconomical farm or ranch operation, should be allowed to sell these small parcels of land without being considered a subdivision, or to be taxed as such, as long as the sale is made as a single dwelling sale.

8. Wildlife:

Development in wildlife winter range areas should be held to the lowest possible minimum.

9. Small Industry:

Small industry shall be recognized in acceptable locations.

10. Electricity:

We recommend that new construction of residential dwellings in our Planning District join the Lincoln Electric Co-op line if such line is made available.

V. THOMPSON RIVER PLANNING UNIT

The landowners of this planning unit have resolved to organize the Thompson River Planning Unit in order to maintain and protect the environmental qualities of life in our area.

GOALS:

One hundred percent of the “in resident” landowners of this area would like to see it remain as an agriculture area.

The Thompson River Planning Unit plans to review land use and control changes in land use within its area.

OBJECTIVES:

We wish to preserve agriculture including timber use.

Water resources will be protected from pollution and exploitation.

Discouragement of industrial and residential development.

No land sales less than 80 acre parcels.

Where private dwelling or parcel adjoins farm lands the existing agriculture oriented use shall have priority.

Appraisal of land should be based on its current and not its potential use with the tax base to encourage agriculture and timber use.