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1.0 OVERVIEW

The proposed West Side Woods Subdivision located in Section 23, Township 10 N, Range 04 West, is a privately funded project that aims to develop 92 single-family residential lots, 4 multi-family lots with 80 condo units, and 4 open space lots within a 58.85-acre vacant rural lot south of Highway 12, west of Park Drive and Hauser Boulevard. The subdivision will include 4 open space lots that will incorporate natural or landscaped features. Storm water conveyance and treatment will be provided on the northern open space lots to control storm runoff from the site. This proposal calls for the City of Helena to annex all proposed lots and associated rights-of-way. The residential lots will tie into the City of Helena's water and sewer system along with their local services including police, school, fire, and emergency services. Several adjacent roads leading to the subdivision will also need to be annexed into the City of Helena and include Hauser Boulevard and Park Drive.

No dwellings, other buildings, improvements, or commercial buildings exist within the subject parcel. There are several recreational trails that border and cross through the project that are part of the Mt. Helena trail system. The applicant is proposing an extensive trail system throughout the proposed open space lots and include sidewalks adjacent to proposed streets. The applicant is in discussions with Prickly Pear Land Trust in development, construction, and maintenance of the proposed trail system.

Access to the subdivision will be through the eastern boundary on Park Drive and Hauser Boulevard. There will be three access points that will provide adequate traffic flow for residents and emergency services; see the preliminary plat drawing provided in Appendix A. Roads will be constructed to meet all requirements of the City of Helena Engineering Standards with only minor deviations requested due to topographic constraints.

One seasonal wetland, classified as R4SBC, runs through the eastern portion of the project site. The seasonal wetland is planned to be incorporated into one of the open areas of the subdivision, therefore impacts are expected to be minimal. Impacts and mitigation measures of this wetland are discussed further in Section 3.2 Surface Water and Section 3.5 Wetlands.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This Environmental Assessment for the West Side Woods Subdivision is organized to address the application topics in the MDEQ Subdivision Review Joint Application Form, Montana Code Annotated 76-3-603 and 76-3-608, and the requirements of the City of Helena. The appendices and figures provide supplemental information pertinent to the West Side Woods Subdivision.

2.2 LEGAL DESCRIPTION

The West Side Woods Subdivision is located in Lewis and Clark County south of Highway 12 (Euclid Avenue) and west of Park Drive and Hauser Boulevard in the northeast corner of Section

26 and the southwest corner of Section 23, Township 10 North, Range 04 West. The proposed development is approximately 58.85 acres and consists of rural vacant land bordered by residential areas, Highway 12, and the Mt. Helena open space. The full legal description for the property is as follows:

Parcel 1: The SW1/4 of the SW1/4 of Section 23, Township 10 North, Range 4 West, P.M.M., Lewis and Clark County, Montana. Together with a tract of land being Portion A, located in Block 307 of the Bellevue Addition as shown on the Amended Plat filed under Doc. No. 3310725. Excepting therefrom Certificate of Survey filed under Doc. No. 462306-T, and Deed of Highway Right of Way recorded in Book 241 of Deeds, page 177.

Parcel 2: Blocks 4, 5, 6, and 9 of Highland Park in Section 26, Township 10 North, Range 4 West, P.M.M. in Lewis and Clark County as shown on the Retracement file under Doc. No. 3339312.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

3.1 GEOLOGY, SOILS, AND SLOPES

3.1.1 Geology

Geology of the West Side Woods Subdivision consists mainly of gravelly colluvium and alluvium derived from limestone, marly siltstone, and other limey sedimentary rock. Landforms include alluvial fans, fan remnants, stream terraces, structural benches, escarpments, ridges, divides, hills, and mountains. The project site mainly consists of a heterogeneous mixture of sand, gravel, clay, silt, and loam. Bedrock is typically more than 60 inches deep but is shallower in some areas.

There are no identified areas of slope instability, landslides, or any geological hazards such as slumps, slides, or falls. The West Side Woods Subdivision resides in Seismic Zone 3, which is typical for the City of Helena and the surrounding area. No faults were identified within the project; however, Seismic Zone 3 still presents a moderate hazard for damage due to an earthquake. Proper precautions will be taken before, during, and after construction to mitigate any major damage from an earthquake.

3.1.2 Soils

Information presented on the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) shows that there are three different types of soil located at the site. A full description of each soil and a map showing the approximate boundaries of the soils is included in Appendix B.

The main soil that makes up approximately 73% of the site is a Windham-Lap channery loam (164E) that has slopes that vary from 8% to 45%. Windham-Whitecow-Lap cannery loams (664E) makes up approximately 18% of the site; it has slopes that range from 15% to 45%. The last major soil of the site is Cargo-Musselshell gravelly loams (433E); it has slopes of 4% to 35% and is present in about 9% of the site. The rest of the site is comprised of Musselshell-Cargo complex (137B); it has slopes of 2 to 8% and makes up less than 1% of the site.

The main soils on site are rated as a severe erosion hazard for roads and trails with a slope/erodibility rating of 0.95. All soils on site are also ranked as “moderately susceptible” for fire damage and “low” for soil puddling since all three soils are well-drained. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be submitted to MDEQ prior to construction to mitigate any potential erosion of the site or other hazards that will occur.

Overall, the three main soils of the site are poorly suited for both deep mechanical site preparation and shallow mechanical site preparation. However, proper precautions will be taken to ensure the soil is adequately prepared to meet the requirements of the project prior to construction.

3.1.3 Slopes

The topography of the site slopes moderately downward from the south to the north. The most dramatic inclines are located on the northern and western boundary as well as within the natural drainage in the eastern portion of the site. These areas have slopes ranging from 30% to 35% while the rest of the site has slopes within the 0% to 20% range. The site drops in elevation from 4225 feet to 4000 feet from south to north; two small ridges run north to south in parallel through the center of the site. Slope stability is not expected to pose an issue for the site; any cut and fill values for grading will be outlined in later design reports for the project.

3.1.4 Liquefaction

Liquefaction is the process of transforming water-saturated granular material from a solid state to a liquid state through motion. This most commonly occurs in fine grained silts and sand that have become saturated above their liquid limit and then vibrated by mechanical activity such as construction, heavy traffic, or earthquakes. The vibrations separate the sediment into solid grains and water, which reduces the bearing capacity of the soil and can cause catastrophic damage to a facility if not properly accounted for prior to construction. The Lewis and Clark County Growth Policy contains a Liquefaction Susceptibility Map that identifies a small, moderate hazard encroaching into the northern boundary of the site; see Figure 1 below. Prior to construction, geotechnical tests will be performed by the developer to determine the density, grain size sorting, liquid limit, and saturation of the soils to determine a more accurate liquefaction potential for the area if it is deemed necessary.

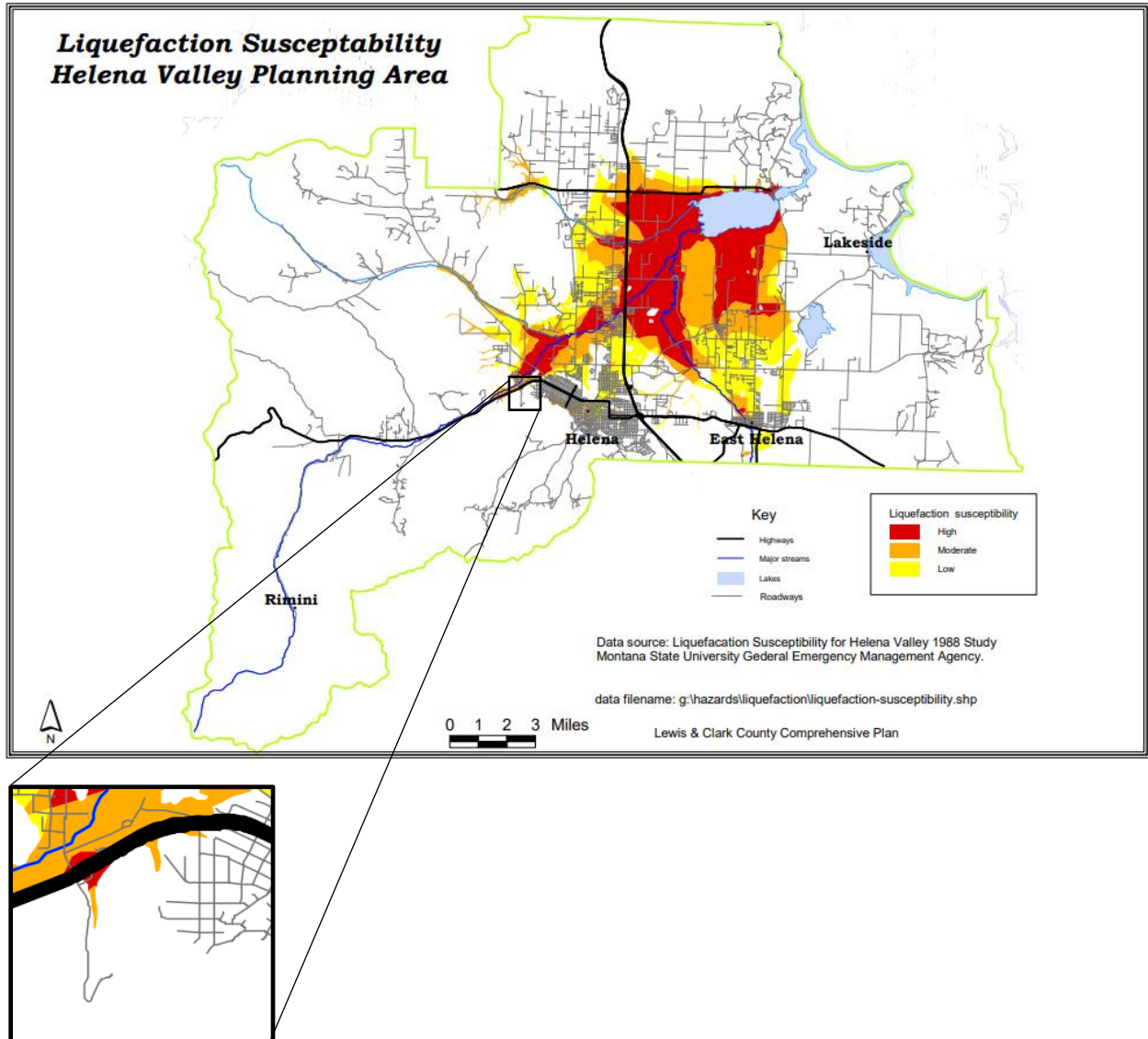


Figure 1 - Liquefaction Susceptibility Helena Valley Planning Area

3.2 SURFACE WATER

Based on the information from the National Wetland Inventory (NWI), there is one riverine habitat running through the site that is classified as R4SBC. This riverine is a channel that has flowing water for only part of the year. The drainage would be classified as an intermittent ephemeral drainage as it does not contain water most of the year and only during large storm water runoff events. The wetland inventory map is included in Appendix C. The closest large stream to the project boundary is Ten Mile Creek located northwest of the site; it is classified as a R3UBF. Figure 2 shows that both the 100-year and 500-year floodplain of Ten Mile Creek are outside the project boundary and do not pass over Highway 12 into the project area.

There are two ephemeral drainage channels that run through the subject property. The drainages that flow through the subdivision only flow water directly after a rainfall or snowmelt

event and are therefore classified as ephemeral drainages. The drainages have been classified as such due to the size, topography, vegetation, and soil characteristics of the drainage areas. A series of site inspections confirmed the drainages are not a stream or intermittent stream due to a consistently dry flow path and non-erosive vegetation along the flow path. Therefore, per City Code 12-4-11.B setbacks are not required from an ephemeral drainage. Setbacks are only required from perennial or intermittent streams per City Code.

Annexation of this project site into city limits will assist in coordinating storm water routing for this area. A storm water drainage plan that meets City of Helena regulations will assure that off-site surface water quality is protected and that runoff rates from the parcel do not exceed historic levels. Surface drainage from the property will likely flow north based on surface topography.

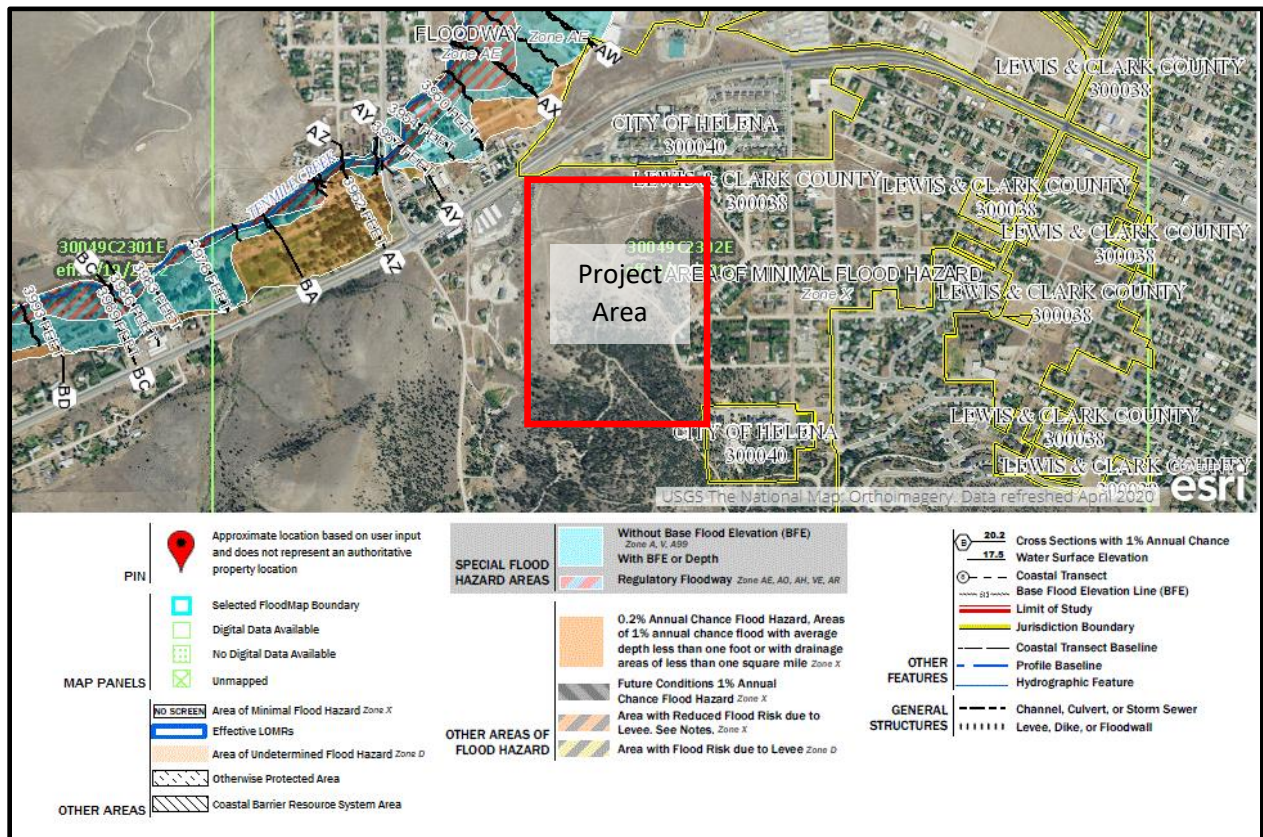


Figure 2 - Floodplain Map

3.3 GROUNDWATER

On site depth-to-groundwater is anticipated to be greater than 12 feet. Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG) and the Ground Water Information Center (GWIC) identify 8 different wells in the area around the subdivision. The data provided on the MBMG website indicates that the static water level within these 8 wells ranges from 40 feet to 128 feet, with an average of 98 feet. Copies of the well logs are included in Appendix D. On-site disposal of domestic wastewater is not proposed. The project will collect wastewater from all lots via underground

gravity sewer mains that will be buried 4-ft to 8-ft deep. Groundwater is not a concern in the area that sewer mains will be constructed. Sewer mains will be constructed to MDEQ and City of Helena standards and will be watertight to ensure that leakage will not occur. Further, the subdivision will be served by City of Helena water. Individual wells will not be permitted within the subdivision. Therefore, direct drawdown of the groundwater from the subdivision is not anticipated due to water consumption from the subdivision. It is anticipated the subdivision will have no impact of groundwater resources.

3.4 VEGETATION

An aerial map showing the vegetative cover is provided below in Figure 3 - Site Aerial. The main vegetation on site includes grass, shrubs, and pine trees located on the south and east side of the project. The project site has been historically vacant land with a few trails belonging to the Mt. Helena trail system running through the southern portion of the site. Construction will include development of 94 single-family residential lots, 4 multi-family lots with 76 condo units, and 4 open space lots. Disturbed areas during construction will be landscaped and reseeded with native vegetation.

Information from the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) website illuminates two species of concern that lie within the Section 23 and 26, Township 10 North, Range 04 West. These two species include the Lesser Rushy Milkvetch (*Astragalus convallarius*) and the Wedge-leaf Saltbrush (*Atriplex truncata*). MTNHP indicates that the Lesser Rushy Milkvetch was listed as a species of concern due to invasion of noxious weeds and poor development within the Helena Valley. For the Wedge-leaf Saltbrush, it is listed as a species of concern due to its rare occurrence within the area. MTNHP also indicates two species of potential concern that may lie within the project site. These include the Small Yellow Lady's-Slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum*) and the Slender Wedgegrass (*Sepnopholis intermedia*). MTNHP information is provide in Appendix E.

The proposed subdivision has a strong likelihood of encountering these four species due to its vicinity to the current open space of Mt. Helena. Prior to construction, proper precautions will be taken to identify potential areas that may contain the species of concern. The developer will be cognizant of areas where these plant species may exist and will try to minimize disturbance of these areas to the best of their ability.

A preliminary site inspection will be conducted to identify any noxious weeds within the area that may be present. Noxious weeds that are identified will be removed prior to construction. Once the project is complete, all lot owners will be responsible for controlling noxious weeds within their respective lot.



Figure 3 - Site Aerial

3.5 WETLANDS

EO 11990, Protection of Wetlands, requires federal agencies to take action to avoid wherever possible adverse impacts to wetlands, minimize wetlands destruction, and preserve the values of wetlands. The USACE and EPA define wetlands as (USACE n.d.):

“Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.”

The NWI database shows wetlands in the area are generally found within the floodplain of Ten Mile Creek, which is classified as a R3UBF and is the closest large stream to the project

boundary. According to the NWI, there is one seasonal wetland, classification R4SBC, running through the project area. This riverine is a channel that only holds flowing water for part of the year and is not suitable for aquatic life. When the water is not flowing, it may remain in isolated pools although it is typically completely dewatered most of the year.

Annexation of this project site into city limits will assist in coordinating storm water routing for this area. A storm water drainage plan that meets City of Helena, EPA, and MDEQ regulations will assure that off-site surface water quality is protected and that runoff rates from the parcel do not exceed historic levels. Surface drainage from the property will likely flow north based on surface topography.

Potential wetland impacts would be associated with the construction of utilities, road crossings, and grading. This construction may impact the natural landscape of the area by slightly redirecting flow and creating a less permeable surface which will marginally increase water load into the drainage. The impact on the seasonal wetland within the defined channel will be minimal. However, during construction, temporary disturbance to the channel will be mitigated by installing appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce sediment loading into the channel and reduce the potential for erosion. Construction will also be planned during low water to further reduce impacts to the wetland feature.

3.6 WILDLIFE

The database of the MTNHP website was reviewed to determine whether any animal endangered species or species of concern were located within Section 23 and 26, Township 10 North, Range 04 West (a more expansive search than just the project area). MTNHP information is provided in Appendix E.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) oversees the MTNHP and together they maintain a repository of species data online at the Montana Field Guide. This data shows fourteen animal species of concern and one special status animal species. The species of concern include the Black-tailed Prairie Dog, Spotted Bat, Hoary Bat, Little Brown Myotis, Grizzly Bear, Great Blue Heron, Evening Grosbeak, Pinyon Jay, Cassin's Finch, Clark's Nutcracker, Long-billed Curlew, Sage Thrasher, Green-tailed Towhee, and Brewer's Sparrow. The one special status species is the Bald Eagle. The bald eagle was listed as a special status species because although population numbers have steadily increased since the 1980s and breeding pairs now occupy a high percentage of suitable habitat across the state, the Bald Eagle is still protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940. If any of these species of concern were to occur within the project area, it is likely they would occur outside of the area of disturbance and would not be impacted by activities specific to this project. Regardless of whether the species of concern are located directly within the project site, proper construction BMPs will be implemented to reduce impact. These mainly include sediment control, dust mitigation, reseeding of disturbed areas, and avoiding nest disturbance.

In response to Senate Bill 261 and Executive Orders 10-2014 and 12-2015, all proposed construction projects in the state of Montana must include a letter of comment from the DNRC

Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program. Using the DNRC sage grouse area mapping program located at <http://sagegrouse.mt.gov/projects/>, it was determined that the project location is not located in a sage grouse EO habitat area. The nearest sage grouse habitat is located approximately 45 miles away near White Sulfur Springs.

Mitigation of the proposed action would be taken by developing a reclamation plan that includes revegetation of disturbed areas near the project site, as well as weed prevention and control measures. Sediment control BMPs will be implemented to maintain water quality in the drainage running through the project site.

3.7 HISTORICAL FEATURES

The project will not adversely affect any historical features. According to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), any structure over fifty (50) years old is considered historical. Construction of underground utilities, such as water and sewer, usually occur within rights-of-way or easements, which are in place or will be in place prior to construction. No structures are proposed to be altered as part of this project. Should any structures need to be altered, SHPO shall be contacted to evaluate the significance of the structure. Correspondence from SHPO is included in Appendix F that indicates not historical features are present within the project area.

3.8 FLOOD HAZARD EVALUATION

The closest large stream to the project boundary is Ten Mile Creek located northwest of the site; it is classified as a R3UBF. Figure 2 - Floodplain Map in Section 3.2 shows that both the 100-year and 500-year floodplain are outside the project boundary. The potential for flooding in the area is minimal due to the natural topography of the site, soil conditions, and proximity to Ten Mile Creek. The grading and drainage of the project site will be discussed later in the design reports.

4.0 COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESMENT

4.1 WATER SUPPLY

Water will be supplied to the West Side Woods Subdivision through a water distribution system that is connected to the City of Helena distribution system. The water will be supplied for domestic, commercial, and fire protection uses. The water distribution system will be designed to meet the City of Helena Design Standards as well as the standards set forth in DEQ Circular 1. Water will be supplied through a looped network with minimal dead-end lines tied into existing water mains. The distribution system will be designed to meet the needs of the entire proposed subdivision at full buildout. A thorough description of the water distribution system as well as capacity of the existing City of Helena system to provide service to the subdivision is provided in the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) included in the subdivision application package.

4.2 WASTEWATER SYSTEM

The wastewater system for the West Side Woods Subdivision will consist of gravity sanitary sewer main laterals that coincide with the proposed new roadways within the subdivision. These laterals and mains will feed into the collection system of the City of Helena. The system will be designed to meet all the City of Helena standards as well as the MDEQ standards. A thorough description of the wastewater distribution system as well as capacity of the existing City of Helena system to provide service to the subdivision is provided in the PER included in the subdivision application package.

4.3 SOLID WASTE

Solid waste disposal and collection will be provided by the City of Helena. The proposed subdivision will increase the amount of solid waste collected by the City of Helena. Solid waste pickup for individual lots will be provided in front of the proposed single-family residential lots within the proposed street rights-of-way. Solid waste for the multi-family lots will be provided within in each lot at designated container sites within in each lot. These locations will be accessible for the City of Helena garbage collection. The applicant will work with the City of Helena Solid Waste to appropriately design garbage collection locations for each multi-family lot.

4.4 ROADS

4.4.1 Description

Streets within the West Side Woods Subdivision will be designed to meet the City of Helena Design Standards. There are two existing adjacent roads, Park Drive and Hauser Boulevard, that run north to south and will provide three access points to the subdivision on the east side of the project site. These roads will act as the main collector roads for the subdivision. There are currently five new proposed roads for the subdivision; a layout of these roads is included on the preliminary plat provided in Appendix A. The proposed roads within the West Side Woods Subdivision will adequately and safely accommodate the increase in traffic all year round. The interconnectivity of the three access points to Park Drive and Hauser Drive will allow for traffic to move smoothly throughout the subdivision along with emergency service vehicles. No variances are being proposed for the proposed subdivision. An exception to the block lengths is being requested due to topographic constraints. A PER is provided with the subdivision application that provides additional information and design for the proposed road network.

4.4.2 Traffic Study

A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) has been prepared for this subdivision and is provided with the subdivision application. The TIS indicates the proposed subdivision will add up to 1,407 trips per day to the area road network at full build-out of the subdivision. Hauser Boulevard and Park Drive adjacent to the proposed subdivision will be improved to City of Helena standards. It is anticipated that the majority of traffic will utilize Hauser Boulevard, 80%, and the remaining traffic will utilize Knight Street, 20%, to access Granite Street and ultimately Euclid Avenue (Highway 12). It is proposed that Hauser Boulevard and Park Drive be paved to Granite Street

and that Hauser Boulevard between Park Drive and Granite Street be widened to minor collector width. Hauser Boulevard and Park Drive will need to be annexed into the City of Helena as part of the annexation process.

4.4.3 Lighting

Lighting within the West Side Woods Subdivision will be in accordance with all city ordinances, codes, and regulations. The applicant will work with Northwestern Energy to develop a lighting plan for the subdivision. Each phase will be provided with street lighting. Each phase will petition the expansion or creation of a lighting district to install and maintain the street lighting. This will be completed as part of the final plat for each phase.

4.5 DRAINAGE CONTROL AND SURFACE RUNOFF

All storm water that is generated from the proposed development will be routed to several storm water ponds throughout the subdivision located in the open areas of the project site. All storm water will be transferred through a network of storm water inlets, piping infrastructure, and natural channels. Storm water conveyance and treatment will be designed per the City of Helena Engineering Standards. A detailed description of the storm water conveyance and treatment system is provided in the PER included with the subdivision application.

4.6 UTILITIES

There are several existing utilities that run through the project site. There is an existing City of Helena water transmission main that runs through the northern portion of the property. This existing transmission main will be located within the proposed Livezey Avenue right-of-way for most of the project. Where it is not located within a street right-of-way a 20-ft utility easement will be provided and dedicated to the City of Helena for operation and maintenance of the transmission main. There is also an existing underground gas main that runs through the northern part of the property that is operated and maintained by Northwestern Energy. We have discussed the gas main with Northwestern Energy, and they have indicated that they will relocate the gas main to follow proposed street rights-of-way and this main will provide gas service to the proposed subdivision. No additional easements should be necessary for the gas main. Finally, there is an existing overhead telecommunications line operated and maintained by CenturyLink. This overhead line will be relocated to be underground and will be placed into the proposed street right-of-way to provide service to the proposed subdivision. The applicant will work with CenturyLink to relocate the overhead line prior to final plat of Phase 3. All existing utilities are shown on the preliminary plat provided in Appendix A. All proposed City and private utilities will be located within the proposed street rights-of-way and where necessary a 20-ft utility easement will be provided and dedicated for operation and maintenance of any proposed utilities.

4.7 EMERGENCY SERVICES

St. Peter's Hospital Ambulance Service will serve the proposed subdivision. There are no indications that they cannot provide emergency services. The subdivision is located

approximately 5.5 miles from St. Peter's Hospital. The response time for ambulance service would be between 14 and 16 minutes and in urban areas response time depends on traffic loading at the time of the call.

The Helena Police Department will provide law enforcement services. As growth of the city continues and the distance for service is increased, response times will vary and are subject to unit availability and road conditions in the areas they must serve. A letter was sent to the Helena Police Department on April 7, 2021 to provide feedback on service and response times. No response has been received to date; the information will be provided when received.

The Helena Fire Department will provide fire suppression for the subdivision. The Neil Avenue fire station is located approximately 2 miles from the proposed subdivision. Response times will be between 8 and 10 minutes and in urban areas response time depends on traffic loading at the time of the call. A letter was sent to the Helena Fire Department on April 7, 2021 to provide feedback on service and response times. No response has been received to date; the information will be provided when received.

All streets will be constructed to meet City of Helena Engineering Standards. This will ensure that emergency services can access the site to provide service. Further, the private access roads for the proposed multi-family lots will be designed in order to provide emergency services access including adequate width, allowance for turning movements, and on-street parking limitations or provide room for on-street parking and access. The applicant will consult with the City of Helena during the design process to ensure adequate access to the subdivision is provided. Further, water service will be provided by the City of Helena. Water distribution will be designed to meet City of Helena Engineering Standards with adequate fire flows and pressures and adequate storage as required by the City and MDEQ.

4.8 SCHOOLS

Local public-school enrollment will increase slightly with the addition of the West Side Woods Subdivision to the City of Helena. The subdivision will feed into Kessler Elementary School, Hawthorne Elementary School, CR Anderson Middle School and Capital High School. There is a minimal chance that the subdivision causes the capacity of the schools to be exceeded. Based on census data for Helena, Montana, there are 2.14 people per household within the City of Helena. The census also indicates that 19% of household are under 18 years old. Based on this we can calculate that 0.40 people per household are school age. The subdivision proposes 92 single family residential lots with 80 condo units for a total of 172 proposed households. It is anticipated that 70 school age children will be generated at full build-out of the subdivision. The subdivision is planned with 4 phases, Phase 1 in 2023, Phase 2 in 2025, Phase 3 in 2027, and Phase 4 in 2029. The proposed 70 students would be phased in over 6 years. The City of Helena Growth Policy indicates that the projected total enrollment for all schools within the Helena School District will be 9,310 students by 2025. The anticipated increase from the proposed subdivision accounts for 0.8% of total enrollment in year 2025. It is anticipated that the existing school system can absorb the anticipated students from the proposed subdivision.

A letter was sent to the Helena School District on April 7, 2021 to provide feedback on service and response times. No response has been received to date; the information will be provided when received.

4.9 HOUSING AND POPULATION

Based on the 2019 population density estimates for the City of Helena, there are approximately 2.14 people per household within the City of Helena. The subdivision proposes 92 single family residential lots with 80 condo units for a total of 172 proposed households. The proposed subdivision would potentially increase the population of the City of Helena by 368 people at full build-out of the subdivision.

4.10 LAND USE

The current land use for project site is vacant rural land. It is bordered to the north, east, and west by improved urban property used for residential units and one apartment complex located directly north of the project site boundary. To the south, it is bordered by exempt property that is owned by the City of Helena that contains several trails that link into the Mt. Helena trail system. The project site is bordered to the North by Highway 12 (Euclid Avenue) and Knight Street, to the east by Hauser Boulevard and Park Drive, to the south by La Grande Cannon Trail (continuing from La Grande Cannon Boulevard), and to the west by Park Drive.

The West Side Woods Subdivision proposes residential and open space land uses on the property. This will consist of 92 single-family residential lots and 4 multi-family lots with 80 condo units. R2 and R3 zoning is proposed for the subdivision to accommodate the proposed land uses. There are also 4 open space lots proposed with the subdivision and an extensive network of trails.

4.11 EASEMENTS AND ENCUMBRANCES

There are several easements that cross the property. There is an existing easement for the City of Helena water transmission main, an easement for the Northwestern Energy gas main, and an easement for the overhead telecommunications line. These easements will be abandoned with the final plats for each phase and all utilities will be located within proposed street rights-of-way or be provided dedicated 20-ft utility easements, as necessary. There is an existing utility easement created per Certificate of Survey #391636 for a private well in the northeast corner of the property. There is a private well and service to the adjacent private lot located within this easement. The existing well has been abandoned and is no longer utilized but the easement is expected to remain in place. There are also several existing platted rights-of-way located within the project area. These proposed rights-of-way do not fit into the overall project layout and therefore are proposed to be abandoned. The applicant is currently working with Lewis and Clark County to abandon the existing rights-of-way and the existing rights-of-way will be abandoned prior to final plat of Phase 1.

4.12 PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The project site is bordered to the south by the Mt. Helena trail system. The *Seven Sisters* trail runs east to west through the project site before hooking up to the ridge and traversing south toward Mt. Helena. The *Le Grande Cannon Trail* also borders the project site to the south; however, it will not be affected by the development of the subdivision. The subdivision will cause the *Seven Sisters Trail* to be rerouted slightly; however, since this trail is located in the southern portion of the project, there will be ample time to coordinate with the City of Helena about rerouting measures. The trails encompassed within the project site as well as the Mt. Helena trail system will also see a slight increase in traffic due to the population growth of the area.

Within the project site itself, several landscaped areas will be designated open spaces for the subdivision. They will include walking paths, benches, and storm water ponds. The preliminary plat is provided in Appendix A.

4.13 PROJECT PHASING

The project will be phased out into four different phases that will be implemented over 6 years. The breakdown of each phase is outlined below:

Phase 1:

- Phase 1 includes 28 single-family residential lots, 2 multi-family lots with 28 condo units, and 2 open space lot on the northeast side of the subject property. One of the open spaces lots is located on the south side of the subject property. This portion of the project is directly adjacent to Hauser Boulevard.
- The phase will construct three roads Crowley Court, Livezey Avenue, and Lee Court. Livezey Avenue and Crowley Court will both have direct access from Hauser Boulevard.
- Water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure will be constructed per the City of Helena Engineering Standards to serve all lots within the phase.
- Phase 1 will be final platted by December 2023.

Phase 2:

- Phase 2 includes 10 single-family residential lots, 1 multi-family lot with 20 condo units, and 1 open space lot. This phase is located on the northwest side of the subject property and has access from Livezey Avenue that will be constructed as part of Phase 1.
- One road will be constructed with Phase 2, Livezey Court, both a local city street and private road section.
- Water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure will be constructed per the City of Helena Engineering Standards to serve all lots within the phase.
- Phase 2 will be final platted by December 2025.

Phase 3:

- Phase 3 includes 43 single-family residential lots and 1 open spaces lot. Phase 3 is located on the south side of the subject property and will be accessed directly from Park Drive and by an internal road created with Phase 1, Livezey Avenue.
- Two roads will be constructed/extended with Phase 2, Lee Drive and Brakeman Avenue, and Brakeman Court.
- Water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure will be constructed per the City of Helena Engineering Standards to serve all lots within the phase.
- Phase 3 will be final platted by December 2027.

Phase 4:

- Phase 4 includes 11 single-family residential lots, and 1 multi-family lot with 32 condo units. Phase 4 is located on the south side of the subject property and will have direct access from Park Drive.
- 1 public road will be constructed with Phase 4, Flowerree Court, and one private road to access the multi-family lot will be constructed, Flowerree Court.
- Water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure will be constructed per the City of Helena Engineering Standards to serve all lots within the phase.
- Phase 4 will be final platted by December 2029.

4.14 COVENANTS

The applicant is proposing covenants and the creation of a Homeowners Association (HOA) for the West Side Woods Subdivision. The proposed covenants and HOA documents are provided with the subdivision application submittal.

5.0 SUMMARY OF PROBABLE IMPACTS & PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

5.1 EFFECTS ON AGRICULTURE

The West Side Woods Subdivision is not located on or near any prime farmland. A small portion of the site (<1%) contains farmland of local importance and is located at the northern boundary of the site; this soil is classified as the Musselshell-Cargo complex (137B). The surrounding area is mostly comprised of residential areas or open spaces that are used for recreation. The subject property is currently used as vacant open space and has not been used for agriculture recently. Further, there are no agricultural lands adjacent to or near the subject property. Implementation of this subdivision is not expected to have an impact on agriculture. Due to the lack of prime farmland within the project and the surrounding area, no immediate effects on agriculture are expected, therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed for this project.

5.2 EFFECTS ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Impacts to the natural environment are expected any time there is a change in land-use. The current rural-vacant land on the property will be changed to residential lots. Changing the land will modify the eco-system in the immediate area but will have little effect on the larger scale. Easing the effects of the residential area will be aided by plans to incorporate open spaces within the subdivision with space for trails, storm water detention ponds, and natural landscape. During design and construction of this subdivision, all state and local regulations will be followed to protect water quality, prevent runoff rates from exceeding historic levels, and provide protection from noxious weeds.

Groundwater quality will see minimal impact from the implementation of the subdivision due to the use of City of Helena water and sewer facilities. The proximity of this parcel to municipal services while allowing open space corridors along existing watercourses attempts to serve as a balance between growth and preservation.

No geological or natural hazards have been identified on the property. Possible environmental contamination from nearby superfund sites or on-site pollution is also not likely.

One intermittent, seasonal drainage running through the eastern portion of the project site will be directly impacted by the implementation of the subdivision. During construction, care will be taken to minimize the impacts of the drainage. All codes set forth by the MDEQ and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be followed. Setbacks from lots, BMPs for sediment loading, and construction during low flow will be used to mitigate impacts to potential wetland features.

The effect on the natural environment will be mitigated by dedication of parkland, open space, reseeded procedures, and wetland preservation practices. All infrastructure will be constructed to meet City of Helena and MDEQ design standards. Meeting these design standards will mitigate impacts to the natural environment. All applicable growth plans, regulations, and other planning documents have been consulted in the evaluation and conceptual design of this project. Based on these documents and resources, there are no unmitigated environmental issues identified in this report.

5.3 EFFECT ON LOCAL SERVICES

The subject property will be annexed into the City of Helena. Streets and utilities will be extended to service the property; they will be designed to meet all regulations set forth by the City of Helena and MDEQ. Schools, infrastructure maintenance, and fire and police protections will be funded through property taxes generated from the lots.

The subdivision will impact existing City of Helena water and sewer systems by increasing usage on those systems. The existing water and wastewater systems were evaluated as part of the PER provided with the subdivision application. The PER identified some off-site storm water improvements that may be necessary to accommodate the proposed subdivision. The analysis and recommendations for these systems are provided in the PER included with the subdivision

application. There will be impacts to adjacent local streets that access the project site. The project is estimated to generate 1,453 trips per day to the area road network at full build-out of the subdivision. A TIS was prepared for the project to analyze the impacts of the subdivision on the adjacent street network. Some off-site improvements are recommended in the TIS to address impacts of the proposed subdivision. The TIS is provided with the subdivision application submittal.

5.4 EFFECT ON WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

Within the proposed project site, there are no wildlife areas such as big game wintering ranges, migration routes, or important habitat for rare or endangered species. The plant and animal species of concern are listed above in Section 3.4 Vegetation and Section 3.6 Wildlife respectively. Proper precautions will be taken prior to construction to ensure that impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat are minimal. The seasonal drainage running through the project site may provide wildlife a corridor and security areas from the subdivision development as well as other adjacent residential uses. Minor modifications to this drainage may reduce wildlife travel into this area, causing them to migrate elsewhere. Natural landscape is essential for the continuing existence of wildlife; subdivisions pose a large threat to wildlife due to the amount of natural landscape that is removed. However, due to the size of the West Side Woods Subdivision, incorporation of open areas, and proper mitigation practices, impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat will be marginal. Wildlife will be able to move through the open areas of the subdivision and any landscape damaged from construction will be adequately reseeded with natural vegetation.

5.5 EFFECT ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

There are several existing utilities located within the subject property. An existing City of Helena water transmission main, a Northwestern Energy gas main, and an overhead telecommunications line. The existing City of Helena water transmission main will not be disturbed as part of the project. The existing main will be maintained and follows the proposed Livezey Avenue right-of-way. Where it is not in the right-of-way a 20-ft utility easement dedicated to the City of Helena will be provided. The gas main and telecommunications line will be relocated to proposed street rights-of-way. The applicant is currently working with each utility on the relocation of these utilities.

The subdivision will increase traffic on the adjacent road network. A TIS was prepared for this subdivision that outlines the anticipated impacts and recommendations for mitigation of traffic impacts. The TIS recommends some off-site road improvements to mitigate traffic impacts associated with the subdivision. The TIS is provided with the subdivision application submittal. The applicant will work with the City of Helena to mitigate traffic increases during each phase of the subdivision.

There will be an increase in storm water run-off associated with the subdivision. The PER outlines storm water conveyance and treatment recommendations to address on-site and off-site storm water impacts. The applicant will work with the City of Helena to design and

construct storm water infrastructure that protects on-site and off-site properties from storm water impacts associated with the subdivision. The PER is included in the subdivision application submittal.

The subdivision will impact existing City of Helena water and sewer systems by increasing usage on those systems. The existing water and wastewater systems were evaluated as part of the PER provided with the subdivision application. No off-site improvements for water and wastewater were identified in the PER. The analysis and recommendations for these systems are provided in the PER included with the subdivision application.

During construction, there will be the potential of dust that may affect air quality. Adequate dust control measures will be implemented to reduce impacts to the local community. Construction will also be scheduled only to occur during daylight hours to avoid disturbance to wildlife and the nearby residents. The West Side Woods Subdivision will conform to all City of Helena and MDEQ Regulations to ensure that public health and safety concerns are mitigated.