



## **Environmental Assessment**

**for**

## **Craftsman Village of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows**

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**Prepared for:**  
Mountain View Meadows  
431 South Alice Street  
Helena, MT 59601

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The proposed Craftsman Village Subdivision will create approximately 200 new lots for single family residential development consistent with the active, existing development at the site. The proposed project is generally located east of Alice Steet, north of Runkle Parkway, west of Highway 282 and the corporate limits of the City of East Helena. The parent tract of the lands being proposed for development is the remainder tract of the Craftsman Village Phase 7 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows, which is in active platting.

The existing site is vacant and is currently utilized for aggregate crushing and processing. The lands are proposed to be annexed into the City of Helena and zoned R-U, being residential urban zoning. Lot sizes will range from approximately 3,300-6,600 square feet.

This Environmental Assessment includes, according to MCA 76-3-603 and MCA 76-3-608: "a description of every body or stream of surface water that may be affected by the proposed subdivision, together with available ground water information, and a description of the topography, vegetation, and wildlife use within the area of the proposed subdivision; a summary of the probable impacts of the proposed subdivision based on the criteria described in 76-3-608 (Montana Code Annotated); and a community impact report containing a statement of anticipated needs of the proposed subdivision for local services, including education and busing; roads and maintenance; water, sewage, storm water, and solid waste facilities; and fire and police protection."

## **2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION**

### **2.1 SURFACE WATER**

There is no surface water on or near the site of the proposed subdivision.

### **2.2 GROUNDWATER**

A review of well logs in the vicinity of the subdivision, obtained from the Montana Bureau of Mining and Geology Groundwater Information Center database, indicate that static water levels are greater than 32 feet below the ground surface. Groundwater has not been encountered during recent underground construction activities for infrastructure installations. All proposed water, wastewater, and storm water systems will be designed in accordance with City of Helena and Montana DEQ requirement for non-degradation of state waters.

### **2.3 GEOLOGY, SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY**

There are no known geologic hazard affecting the subdivision. No known falls, slides, or slumps are present or have been identified. The topography slopes from the southwest to the northeast at an average rate of 3%.

Although several faults surround the Helena Valley, due to the lack of proximity, none are expected to present a serious risk of geologic instability to the subdivision. Future structures will be constructed in accordance with the buildings codes adopted by the City (Chapter 3-1 of the City Code), meeting earthquake requirements.

NRCS soil survey lists the following soils as present on the site:

Musselshell-Crago complex, 2 to 8 percent slopes, 67.8% of area  
Crago-Musselshell gravelly loams, 4 to 35 percent slopes, 32.2% of area

Information for the Musselshell-Crago Complex indicates slight limitations to development which would be overcome with proper design and excavation. Development would be above groundwater elevation. Foundations would be excavated to a depth providing necessary stability. Foundations may require the importation of coarse materials to place over properly compacted subgrade.

## 2.4 VEGETATION

The existing site is currently used for aggregate processing and crushing activities with the existing vegetation consisting of native grass where the site has not been stripped. Any noxious weeds are controlled by mowing and chemical spot treatment. Reviewing the US Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory, there are no wetlands present at the site.

New site development will require the inclusion of additional landscaping in accordance with the City of Helena zoning regulations.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) was contacted and identified four (4) plant species of concern. The species include; Wedge-leaf Saltbrush (*Atriplex truncata*), Lesser Rushy Milkvetch (*Astragalus convallaris*), Small Yellow Lady's-Slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum*), and Pale-yellow Jewel-weed (*Impatiens aurea*).

Due to the current use of the property and nearby urbanization, prime habitat does not exist to support these species and no impacts are expected.

All areas disturbed during construction will be restored, topsoil replaced and re-seeded to establish a protective vegetative cover. Any occurrences of noxious weeds that develop after construction will be spot treated using appropriate methods.

## 2.5 WILDLIFE

Wildlife in the area is limited to miscellaneous smaller mammals, usually in transition. This limitation is due to the present use of the property and the close proximity of urbanized development.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) was contacted and identified ten (10) animal species of concern. The six (6) avian species include: Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*), Veery (*Catharus Fuscescens*), Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes Lewis*), Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*), Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo Chlorurus*); the three (3) mammal species include: Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*), Spotted Bat (*Euderma maculatum*), Grizzly Bear (*Ursus Arctos*).

Any species occurrences at the proposed project site would be transitory due to the property's present use, lack of habitat, and existing development.

## 2.6 HAZARDS

Hazard Maps from the City of Helena Growth Policy and the Lewis and Clark County Disaster and Emergency Services, included in the Appendix, were reviewed to determine the potential impacts from identified hazards. The proposed project is located within an area of known gravel operations. These operations will cease to facilitate continued residential development. The site is not located in a floodplain or near any geologic faults. Further, there are no high voltage power or high-pressure natural gas lines in the area, no waterways, ditches or canals and no known history of any mining activity or any other activities that may have caused any soil contamination, or toxic or hazardous waste disposal. According to hazard maps, the proposed project is not located in an area with a high to severe fuel hazard rating and thus not at risk for wildfires.

## 3.0 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

### 3.1 WATER SUPPLY

In accordance with City of Helena development requirements, water supply for domestic use and fire protection will be provided to the proposed subdivision by connection and extension of existing City of Helena water distribution mains and providing new service connections to the residences.

### 3.2 WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

In accordance with City of Helena development requirements wastewater will be collected from the proposed subdivision by connection and extension of existing City of Helena sanitary sewer collection mains and providing new service connections to the residences. The sanitary sewer main extensions will provide

conveyance to the City of Helena wastewater treatment facility for processing and disposal.

### **3.3 SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL**

Solid waste collection and disposal will be provided by the City of Helena. Each new lot will have a solid waste receptacle that will be collected weekly as part of the City's normal trash collection service.

### **3.4 STORM WATER**

Storm drainage for the proposed project will be analyzed in accordance with the City of Helena requirements. Runoff from streets, lawns, and homes will first be collected in street curb and gutters. Curb inlets will be located based on hydraulic analysis of street capacity and drainage area in addition to the City of Helena spacing requirements. Runoff captured from the inlets will be conveyed through a storm sewer to runoff control basin(s). Typical storm drainage structures and pipes are designed to carry the flow generated by the 25-year event. Runoff rates to individual structures within the drainage basins will be obtained in proportion to their collection area compared to the total drainage basin area. No other specific water quality treatment measures will be needed since runoff from this subdivision is not anticipated to contain containments or harmful substances.

### **3.5 TRANSPORTATION**

Access to the proposed subdivision will be provided by the existing streets, being Adam Run Avenue, Travis Avenue, Jeannette Rankin Drive, Alexis Avenue, Stacia Avenue, and Alpine View Avenue. According to the Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan 2014 Update, the functional classification of Jeannette Rankin Drive and Alpine View Avenue are minor collectors, all other streets are a local classification.

Non-motorized transportation will be provided with boulevard sidewalks on both sides of all streets. Alpine View Drive is proposed to include a bike/pedestrian path on one side, consistent with the existing development and City development standards.

According to the Traffic Impact Study (TIS) conducted by Abelin Traffic Services for the project, anticipated future traffic volumes from the proposed were analyzed using the trip generation rates as established by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). A vehicle "trip" is defined as any trip that either begins or ends at the proposed development site. According to the trip generation rates, upon final completion, the project would produce the additional trips as tabulated below.

**Trip Generation**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Total AM Peak Hour Trip Ends</b>	<b>Total PM Peak Hour Trip Ends</b>	<b>Total Weekday Trip Ends</b>
Single-Family Residential ITE #210	161	216	2,169

The TIS applies the generated traffic from the proposed project to the existing street network with a trip assignment and determines the efficiency of major intersections, known as Level of Service (LOS). For this analysis, the LOS calculations also considered the trip generations from the nearby condominium development currently under construction. The projected level of service summary is summarized below.

**Projected Level of Service Summary**

<b>Intersection</b>	<b>AM Peak Hour</b>		<b>PM Peak Hour</b>	
	<b>Existing LOS</b>	<b>Proposed LOS</b>	<b>Existing LOS</b>	<b>Proposed LOS</b>
Highway 282 & Runkle Parkway*	B	B	A	A
Runkle Parkway & Alpine View*	A	A	A	A
Alice Street & Jeannette Rankin*	A	A	A	A

\*Northbound/Southbound LOS and Delay or  
Eastbound/Westbound Side Street LOS and Delay.

Based on the projected level of service, the proposed project will not affect the roadway operations in the area. All nearby intersections will continue to function at acceptable levels of service and no mitigation measures are needed.

**3.6 UTILITIES**

Northwestern Energy has infrastructure in the immediate area and will provide electrical power and natural gas supply to the proposed project. Communication and data service will be provided by Lumen and Spectrum, which have existing utilities in the immediate area to serve the project and are typically coordinated with Northwestern Energy’s installations.

### 3.7 EMERGENCY SERVICES

The project will be within the City of Helena's fire protection jurisdiction. The nearest station is Helena Fire Station #2, located at 650 N Hannaford Street, approximately 4 miles away from the proposed project. Response times are expected to be approximately five (5) minutes.

Police protection will be primarily provided by the City of Helena's Police Department. The main station on Breckenridge Street is approximately 6 miles away. For mutual aid assistance, the Lewis & Clark County Sheriff's Office, located at the Helena Regional Airport is located approximately 5 miles away and the City of East Helena Police Department is located approximately 3 miles away. Response times are expected to be less than 10 minutes.

St. Peter's Hospital Ambulance Service, located about 4 miles away would serve the proposed subdivision. St. Peter's Hospital is the most readily available medical service for individuals within the subdivision. Additional medical services are also available within the Helena community.

### 3.8 SCHOOLS

This proposed subdivision is within the East Helena School District. The East Helena School District has several different locations depending on the age of the student. Distances to each of the schools is shown in the following table:

**School Access Summary**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Distance to Development</b>
High School	East Helena High School	3.0 miles
6-8	East Helena Middle School	2.7 miles
3-5	Radley Elementary School	2.4 miles
1-2	Prickly Pear Elementary	3.0 miles
PK-K	Eastgate Elementary	3.6 miles

According to enrollment data provided by the East Helena School District, Mountain View Meadows currently contributes 0.18 students per household. The current demographics at Mountain View Meadows is the prevalence of retiree residences, thus the limited occurrence of school aged children.

Based on a factor of 0.18 students per household, the proposed project may contribute approximately 40 additional students.



The East Helena School District has indicated available capacity to absorb additional students. The East Helena School District has been very proactive in addressing current issues of crowding and capacity within the school system with the very recent construction of Prickly Pear Elementary and East Helena High.

Based on district wide needs, the possible need for an addition elementary school has been identified and will be subject to planning studies for functionality and siting considerations. Mountain View Meadows has previously dedicated lands to the East Helena School District, however the size of the land and location may not be suitable for the district wide needs in addition to the low student population that resides in Mountain View Meadows. As Mountain View Meadow continues in active development, additional taxpayers will be added to the tax base to offset the additional educational costs.

### **3.9 PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

In accordance with the City of Helena Subdivision Regulations, the subdivision park land dedication requirement will be fulfilled with land dedicated from previously platted nearby subdivisions. According to 76-3-621(1)(a) MCA, the relevant park land dedication requirements are 11% of the area of the land proposed to be subdivided into parcels of one-half acre or smaller. For this phase, the total area of lots is approximately 23.2 acres and the park land requirement is 2.6 acres. The nearby Lot 1 of the Aspen Park Block 9 Subdivision is proposed to fulfill this requirement with an excess of 0.72 acres.

### **3.10 LAND USE**

The subject property currently zoned Urban Residential Mixed Use in Lewis and Clark County. Upon annexation into the City of Helena, the project will apply for a zone assignment of R-U, being residential urban, which is consistent with adjacent zoning and land use surrounding the site.

The existing site for the proposed subdivision is vacant with aggregate and processing and crushing operations currently taking place. All processing related activities will cease prior to development.

### **3.11 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL FEATURES**

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was contacted and did not identify any cultural properties within the subdivision. There are no known historic, archeological or cultural sites that may be affected by the proposed project.

## **4.0 SUMMARY OF PROBABLE IMPACTS**

### **4.1 AGRICULTURE**

The proposed subdivision site consists of a vacant property that is currently zoned Urban Residential Mixed Use in Lewis and Clark County. It is surrounded by residential zoning in the City of Helena and Rural Residential Mixed Use in Lewis and Clark County. There is no known history of any recent agricultural use on the property.

#### **4.2 AGRICULTURAL WATER USER FACILITIES**

There are no surface water, irrigation or stock-water facilities are present on the site and there is no known history of any agricultural water use on the property.

#### **4.3 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

The proposed subdivision site consists of a vacant property that is currently used for aggregate mining and crushing operations. No water features (streams, ponds, wetlands, irrigation ditches) are present. When fully developed the site will contain paved streets, sidewalks, landscape features, and residential structures.

There are no known historic, archaeological, or cultural sites that may be affected by the proposed subdivision.

#### **4.4 WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT**

Wildlife in the area is limited miscellaneous small mammals and birds, usually in transition. This limitation is due to the lack of significant cover (i.e. shrubs and trees) to provide habitat and the existence of urbanization.

#### **4.5 LOCAL SERVICES**

Local services including water supply, wastewater treatment, streets, police, and fire will be provided by the City of Helena. Other local service providers are available for medical and utilities.

#### **4.6 PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Public health and safety will be provided by conformance to all applicable regulations, including but not limited to subdivision regulations, zoning ordinance, building codes and growth policies. Water and wastewater services will be provided by the City of Helena, other utilities for electrical power, natural gas, communication and data are available with local service providers. Police and fire protection will be provided by the City of Helena and emergency medical services will be provided by St. Peter's Hospital. The streets in the proximity of the project have available capacity to serve the proposed project.