

APPENDIX C:
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:
MONTARISE VILLAGE SUBDIVISION

SECTION 1: Resource Assessment and Impact Criteria Report:

a. Surface Water:

Minimal surface water occurs within the 155-acre subdivision property, consisting of a small wetland approximately 3900 sq.ft. or 0.09 acres in size, located entirely within one of the larger residential lots. The property is not within the 100-year floodplain.

b. Ground Water:

The Well Log for the one existing well on the subject property shows a static water level of 250 ft., with a total well depth of 458 ft. Septic permits for adjacent residences show ground water depth as greater than 84". Please refer to the attached Water & Sanitation Report for additional details.

c. Geology/Soils:

The subdivision property, described in the Web Soil Survey as "Upland Cool Woodland," is located on a varied, hilly terrain in the valley, and contains no geologic hazards such as rock falls or slides from mud or snow accumulations; there is no occurrence of surface subsidence (settling or sinking), and a low risk of seismic activity.

The majority (80%) of the site contains "Whitefish Cobbly Silt Loam" and has overall slopes between 7% and 12%. Flatter portions exist throughout, containing suitable building sites on each lot. The steeper portions are confined to smaller areas, and incorporated into the development plan, for specific separations of development areas, and for preservation of native vegetation. The subdivision roads follow existing roadbeds and site contours, also influencing the best development layout.

The "Whitefish cobbly silt loam" soil types defined within the Soil Map are designated as "farmland of statewide importance," with Class 4e (and up to 6e) capability rating, due to varied terrain with steep slopes. These soils are better suited to the original natural forest, not cultivation.

All soils classifications within the site map are "well-drained," and the depth to any restrictive feature, or to the water table is listed as "greater than 80 inches".

Please refer to the Custom Soils Report.

d. Vegetation:

The prior "agricultural" land use was silviculture, where old access roads following natural contours divide the 155-acre property into smaller quadrants, with the perimeters remaining undisturbed. Beginning with the Montarise Village PUD plan which organizes sub-neighborhoods within the development, the owner is using these existing logging roadbeds which follow the existing contours to develop the network of subdivision roads.

These “sub-set neighborhoods” are accessed by smaller secondary loops, and centralized short cul-de-sac roads, minimize cuts and fills, creating less site disturbance.

The owner’s objective is to preserve the natural perimeter vegetation buffers, along with stands of trees outside of each specific development pad. This objective also includes preserving the varied terrain of the site, which creates privacy on a smaller scale, between individual neighbors. Where “cuts and fills three or more feet in depth” occur in conjunction with individual foundation work, topsoil will be stockpiled and replaced after re-grading of homesite, with landscaping to re-vegetate (as addressed within the subdivision CCRs).

The surrounding properties contain vegetation types ranging from a continuation of the conifer forest (Douglas fir/snowberry) to open, cleared ground with natural grasses. There are few “old growth,” larger trees present. Please refer to the attached aerial map for areas of dense tree cover, and the topo map for

Any noxious weeds will be treated during development and site disturbance of road building and utility installation; all disturbed soils will be compacted and reseeded.

e. Wildlife:

The subdivision property contains native trees and shrubs which is typical habitat for deer, wild turkeys, small mammals, and a variety of birds. But, since it is adjacent to the highway, adjoining rural residential development, and the landfill property beyond, there are no “key wildlife areas” such as dense grasses or an expanse of forest land.

Using the Montana Natural Heritage Program heading of “Conifer Forest,” the possible Species of Concern listed in Flathead County includes Northern Goshawk, Clark’s Nutcracker, Flammulated Owl and Little Brown Myotis Bat. The proposed subdivision may have acceptable habitat for the above listed species.

f. Wildlife Habitat:

There are typical Conifer Forest vegetation features, as described in section “d,” but no “critical habitat” associated with this location, as explained above in section “e.”

The “surface water” within or near the boundaries of the subdivision property consists of a seasonal wetland, approximately 0.09 acres in size, isolated to the proposed Lot 7, at the furthest northeast corner. This same location (after seasonal stormwater runoff) may provide surface water or habitat for some bird species.

On May 24th (see attached photos) there was no water at this location, just a concentration of dense native shrubs. The Stillwater River, a more reliable water source, is within 1.25 miles of the subdivision property. Public lands are located 1330’ to the west of the proposed subdivision property.

The designated vegetated buffer retained at the perimeters of the subdivision and the efficient PUD layout, preserve both open space and cover for occasional wildlife presence.

The proposed Montarise Village Subdivision is in proximity to a very busy highway and other urbanized features at the highway edge, yet still preserves a transitional habitat buffer. With these provisions designed into the PUD layout, saving trees where possible, and revegetation/landscaping during the development phases, the proposed subdivision can be assumed to have a minimal impact on wildlife habitat.

g. Agriculture & Timber Production:

Although located in proximity to larger tract “agricultural” lands, and the site’s history of silviculture, the current condition of this property is not prime timberland. The conifer forest types are typically smaller, 6” diameter western larch, 6” to 8” diameter Douglas fir, and a small percentage with 10” diameter. These larger trees are “character trees,” the remainders, culled from timber harvest.

The owner proposes a “best land use” where density is configured into smaller residential “neighborhood” subsets, which are introduced into the preserved native tree, shrub, and grasses vegetation and existing landforms.

There are no anticipated impacts from agricultural fertilizers or dust at this location. The Montarise Village Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions provide standards for preservation and restoration of native vegetation, and for weed management within the subdivision.

h. Agricultural Water User Facilities:

The proposed subdivision has no agricultural water user facilities. There are no irrigation ditches within the property, therefore no users of irrigation water surrounding the subdivision will be impacted.

The owner proposes landscaping design that “will blend with existing grades and native plants,” to minimize site disturbance, and for low maintenance and reduced landscaping irrigation requirements.

i. Historical Features:

The property has been historically used for silviculture (tree farm).

There are no known historical, archaeological, or cultural features associated with the land.

The Montana Historical Society’s records indicate that there have been no previously recorded sites within the subject property. (See attached letter). Should any historical archaeological or cultural features be discovered during construction, work in that area will be suspended temporarily allowing preservation of such features.

j. Visual Impact:

The developer has located the internal, looped roads away from the perimeter, to preserve existing trees at the subdivision perimeters, and to reduce visual impact from the highway and the neighboring properties.

The same vegetative buffer is planned for the interior of the planned unit development, with stands of trees and existing terrain preserved as open space between higher density units.

The hilly, uneven landform of the site provides natural separation and privacy within the development, and determines that the building pads and development areas are located more interior on the site.

The development layout fits within the natural terrain where the overall site plan is divided into portions, preserving smaller pockets (5-acre average) of open space within areas of higher residential density.

These factors, along with a designated 60’ vegetated buffer at the west perimeter and the additional setback of the 15’ wide trail easement along the east (highway) perimeter, will serve to minimize the visual impact of the subdivision.

k. Air Quality:

Any site disturbance activity will include BMPs to control any dust created. The attached Dust Control Plan and the Montarise Village Subdivision CCRs specify the requirements for dust control during construction. The off-site subdivision access roads, KM Ranch Road and US Highway 93 are both paved, and the owner will be paving the seven proposed internal subdivision roads.

l. Area Hazards:

The 155-acre project site is within the Wildland Urban Interface map area, with native conifer trees and shrubs throughout the property. While preserving select stands of timber, the proposed subdivision development activity will open up significant areas of the forested land within the interior of the property. With this forest fuels reduction, the 250,000 gallon proposed water supply/storage and subdivision network of fire hydrants, minimal impact from wildfires is anticipated.

There are no hazardous materials onsite, such as high pressure gas lines, high voltage transmission lines, superfund sites, abandoned landfills, or mines, or sewage treatment plants. None of these features exist on or near this proposed subdivision site.

Flathead County's Solid Waste operation, an active landfill site, is located to the south of neighboring rural residential tracts, and southwest of the Montarise Village Subdivision property. The varied subdivision terrain, the substantial tree buffer, and the several hundred feet distance create ample separation from this neighboring land use.

SECTION 2: Community Impact Report:**a. Water Supply:**

The proposed subdivision is miles away from the nearest municipal water supply and an extension is not feasible. (City of Kalispell is located 2.3 miles away at Church Drive; It is 4.0 miles to the City of Whitefish).

The owner proposes a public water system, utilizing an existing large volume well and developing two new wells, to serve the new subdivision.

Three phases are proposed for Montarise Village Subdivision, with the first phase served by the existing well onsite.

The owner has consulted with Water & Environmental Technologies (WET) for well testing for this existing well. Water quality is sufficient, and the flow rate was found to be above the previous determination (as recorded on well log).

An additional WET study for "predicted drawdown in neighboring wells" determined that "the available water column for each well is anticipated to be relatively unimpacted by the proposed development."

For the specific system proposal, please refer to the enclosed Water & Sanitation Report. The system extensions will be constructed and certified prior to final plat approval for each phase. Please refer to the attached Phasing Plan.

b. Sewage Disposal:

The proposed subdivision is miles away from the nearest municipal sewer service and an extension is not feasible. (City of Kalispell is located 2.3 miles away at Church Drive; It is 4.0 miles to the City of Whitefish).

The owner proposes a new public subsurface wastewater treatment system, utilizing the 26.11-acre vegetative buffer at the south border for the community sewer system drainfield. Each lot will have a septic tank and pump to the community drainfield, as approved by MT DEQ. For the specific system proposal, please refer to the enclosed Water & Sanitation Report. The system extensions will be constructed and certified prior to final plat approval for each phase. Please refer to the attached Phasing Plan.

c. Storm Water Drainage:

The subdivision road configuration follows the natural site contour, and therefore the natural drainage. The stormwater collection and drainage system will be comprised of roadside ditches and onsite retention ponds.

This system is designed in accordance with DEQ and Flathead County Subdivision Regulations. The HOA will own and operate the stormwater facilities in conjunction with the private subdivision road system.

Preliminary runoff calculations and the stormwater drainage plan are provided within the enclosed Water & Sanitation Report.

d. Solid Waste Disposal:

Republic Services is available to provide weekly collection and transfer services for the proposed subdivision. Each home will have a 90-gallon container, and the multi-family structures and commercial entities will have larger storage containers which will be serviced by Republic Services weekly. A “Will Serve” letter is included in the application materials.

e. Roads:

Three primary access routes serve the subdivision, two entrances utilize the proposed Montarise Drive, a looped road which intersects with county-owned KM Ranch Road (from US Highway 93), and directly with US Highway 93. Montaview Trail is the third entry, functioning as a frontage road between KM Ranch Road and upper Montarise Drive.

The two access locations from U.S. Highway 93 include two designated left turn lanes, one at KM Ranch Road and the one at Montarise Drive (north end) aligning with the intersection of Bowdish Road at the east side of US Highway 93.

The Average Daily Trips generated by this subdivision’s **268** dwelling units (92 single family and 176 multi-family dwelling units) plus the **3** commercial-use lots (church/school, the business park, and the 73-unit RV park) is estimated at **3066 trips per day**.

The current Traffic Impact Study states, *“Phase 1 of the project will produce 788 daily vehicle trips. As proposed, the Montarise Village Subdivision will create capacity issues at the two planned approach locations on to Highway 93 (Bowdish Road and KM Ranch Road). The project maybe developed through Phase 1, but may need to create intersection improvements to further develop the property depending on the ongoing growth patterns in the area. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) corridor plan will likely establish which of these approaches should be improved to provide access to the greater areas around the Highway 93 corridor.”*

The Level of Service analysis shows an acceptable LOS currently for most of the intersections in this area, *“but have have limited capacity for future traffic volume increases. It is likely that these intersections currently function at LOS D during peak summer traffic conditions when overall*

traffic volumes can increase by 20-30%, but there is not currently sufficient traffic to warrant the installation of a traffic signal at these locations at this time.”

The owner has anticipated these needed safety improvements, in proposing the two divided entries on to KM Ranch Road, and the separated right and left/thru lanes at the Bowdish Road and Highway 93 intersection.

As MDT makes their determination for maintaining an acceptable LOS, the owner also anticipates the installation of a traffic signal at either Bowdish Road or KM Ranch Road for the future phases beyond Phase 1, of Montarise Village.

This Traffic Impact Study is included in the application, with more detail and description. An updated MDT approach permit is *in process* to address the proposed “change in use” of the existing approach at the north, the intersection of US Highway 93 with Bowdish Road, in response to the Level of Service analysis of both highway intersections.

KM Ranch Road (a local road) is county-owned and maintained, with a 60’ right-of-way width and 24’ wide paved surface.

A Flathead County approach permit for the two approach locations on KM Ranch Road (Montarise Drive and Montaview Trail) is included in the application.

The complete network of looped subdivision roads and short cul-de sac roads total 7 distinct roads. All proposed subdivision roads are designed to Flathead County Standards (for “local road”), with 60’ right-of way width, 22’ wide paved driving surface; the cul-de-sac roads have 60’ radius right-of-way with a 50’ outside travel surface radius, and 22’ wide paved driving surface.

Please also refer to the Whitefish Fire Chief’s evaluation of this subdivision proposal for sufficiency in the event of an emergency.

All road maintenance is specifically addressed within the Montarise Subdivision CCRs, included with the Open Areas in terms of “Common Space” ownership and upkeep.

Montarise Drive, a 60’ wide right-of -way, is the primary subdivision road serving the subdivision, providing two primary access points. No lots will have access directly to U.S. 93 or KM Ranch Road. All internal roads will be designed and built to Flathead County Road Standards with varied slopes but less than 8% maximum slope.

The proposed subdivision entries have pull-outs for community postal delivery and for a school bus stop. This also allow for unobstructed access and egress in the event of an emergency.

The owner will provide for construction and maintenance of all seven private subdivision roads, and a future HOA will take over these maintenance responsibilities (please refer to the Montarise Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions).

f. Utilities:

Utilities service lines and cables already exist underground, onsite, from the previous surrounding development. All new services to each lot will also be placed underground. Flathead Electric Co-op will provide electrical service, and Charter Spectrum/Interbel will provide phone and fiber optic

internet service. Natural gas service from Northwestern Energy is available within the highway right-of-way and has been consulted for future expansion of service. Preliminary plans have been provided to the above utilities for review.

g. Emergency Services:

Joe Page, Whitefish Fire Chief, has reviewed the preliminary plat showing the proposed looped roadways (designed to Flathead County specifications) and central location of the 250,000 gallon community water storage tank, and locations of the 33 fire hydrants. In addition to the existing high-capacity water well on site, the proposed community water supply system will develop 2 more wells (one each at future phases 2 & 3) for redundancy, for a total of 3 wells at full build-out. Mr. Page was primarily concerned with access and water supply, and have determined that the Montarise Village Subdivision plan is sufficient for structural fire protection and for EMS response.

Please refer to the Whitefish Fire Chief's letter within the application.

The proposed Montarise Village Subdivision is in the process of annexation (with other adjacent landowners) into the Whitefish Fire Service Area, which is served by both Station #22 on the east side of US Highway 93, and the Whitefish Fire Department, Station #21. The closest is Station 22, at 3.4 miles, and Station #21 is 5.5 miles from the subdivision entrance.

The owner will install a 250,000 gallon community water storage tank, and two additional wells will be developed during future phases.

The Montarise Village Subdivision Design Review Guide will further define fire-safe architectural and landscaping materials.

Emergency responses will access the proposed subdivision using U.S. Highway 93 to KM Ranch Road or the north entry at the highway intersection with Montarise Drive.

The Whitefish Fire District personnel are also emergency first responders, with two ambulance vehicles. Logan Health Whitefish is within a 4.5 mile or an 8 minute drive.

In a conversation with Wayne Dubois, Flathead County Undersheriff, he described "the primary issue the department is facing is the ability to provide more than basic law enforcement services to our community because of growth," recognizing that any growth will increase demand on their current staff. Due to the impact of recent growth in Flathead County, he acknowledged that their department may be requesting additional staff and resources.

All internal streets will be built to Flathead County Standards for "Local Roads" with adequate 22' wide paving plus a gravel shoulder measuring 1' wide, each side. There will be temporary cul-de-sac turnarounds during all phases of construction to ensure access and egress of emergency vehicles to all lots within the subdivision.

h. Schools:

Dave Means, Superintendent of Whitefish School District #44, responded that at this time, they could accommodate 83 new students across their district. (The "83 new students" derived from the current Planning & Zoning multiplier of "0.31 children per household," based upon 266 total new households). He mentioned that they are always evaluating enrollment and discussing potential future expansion. He said that this number of students would impact their bussing, and that they are prepared to add additional routes as necessary. The approximate distance to Whitefish Schools is 6.5 miles.

i. Land Use:

This property is located within Flathead County zoning jurisdiction, 4.0 miles outside the limits of Whitefish and 2.3 miles outside the limits of Kalispell. The parcel is currently zoned SAG-5 and proposes a zone change to **R-1**, with a **residential mixed-use PUD** overlay to allow for higher density residential with neighborhood commercial development.

The surrounding land uses are rural residential and an R-2 residential neighborhood to the east (Happy Valley with 293 lots); “agricultural” and rural residential to the north and to the west; rural residential, with the county landfill beyond, to the south.

Two SAG-5 PUD subdivisions are located north of the proposed Montarise Village PUD subdivision: Whitefish Hills Village (0.76 miles) and Timbers at Whitefish (0.32 miles).

Silverbrook Estates R-2 Residential PUD, with higher density R-4, RA-1 and commercial B-1 PUDs are located 3.2 miles south of the Montarise subdivision property.

Two smaller blocks of public lands are located beyond the immediate neighbors, roughly 1.6 miles away from the proposed subdivision. One is located to the northwest of the subject property in section 35, T30N, R22W, while the other is located to the northeast in Section 32, T30N, R21W. Access to either of those public lands does not occur through the subject property, and therefore will not be affected by development. (See attached Vicinity Map).

There are no high voltage power lines, high pressure gas lines, dilapidated structures, proposed or existing mining developments or irrigation ditches within the immediate area of the proposed subdivision.

The uses within the proposed subdivision are to be single-family residential lots, multi-family lots, and neighborhood commercial use compatible with the surrounding residential community. All uses will conform to the proposed restrictive conditions and covenants.

This development will have minimal effect on the adjacent land uses. Residential subdivisions already exist to the south and west of the property, while the remaining adjacent land is agricultural with rural residential uses. There will be no known off-site or planned on-site activities that create or will create a nuisance, such as unpleasant odors, unusual noises, dust or smoke.

j. Housing:

The uses planned within the Montarise Village PUD Subdivision: There are **92** single family residential lots, ranging between 0.4 acres to 3.4 acres. Also planned are 3 multi-family lots, ranging from 4.61 acres to 5.22 acres in size, with a total of **176** units. In addition, 3 commercial lots are proposed, ranging from 3.22 acres to 12.47 acres in size, with the largest commercial lot containing a **73** unit RV Park adjacent to the highway.

All uses propose off-street parking, where all single family lots have a combined garage with driveway parking. The multi-family Pod layouts on Alt-A and Alt-C lots have attached garages and driveway parking, as do the 8-plex units on Alt-C lot. The 8-plex units on Alt-B lot have open parking areas adjoining the dwelling units. All three commercial lots propose open parking areas onsite, as determined by use and occupancy.

Please see Preliminary Plat and PUD application, and the Montarise Subdivision Phasing Plan for specific numbers and details.

k. Parks and Recreational Facilities:

The PUD does not require parkland dedication, but provides for a larger amount of open space, as the proposed arrangement and sizes of lots within the PUD allows for greater efficiency of land use. The Montarise Village PUD Subdivision has **37.99** acres, or **24%** of the overall property in Open Space. Wooded areas, trails, and grassy sports fields comprise the Open Space located within the higher density neighborhoods.

Other recreation opportunities exist in this area, such and hiking, horseback riding, biking, skiing and watersports. There is a nearby public golf course, Northern Pines Golf Course (3.6 miles away) as well as several others throughout the Flathead Valley.

Public Health and Safety:

We do not anticipate impacts that would negatively affect public health and safety resulting from this subdivision. The subdivision is located in an area that can be effectively served by emergency responders and is not located in an area that is prone to natural or man-made hazards. Roads will be built to Flathead County standards and adequate water storage and distribution (community water storage; also hydrants) will be available within the subdivision for firefighting.

Montarise Village Subdivision, Lot 7 : 05-24-2022 Photos



Lot 7: concentrated dense native shrubs in low area; Native grasses surrounding low area.



Detail: native shrubs in low area

MAY 31 2022



Detail: Center of low area (currently dry)



Lot 7: surrounding vegetation of native grasses