

**WHITEFISH 57 LLC
SUBAREA PLAN
WHITEFISH CITY-COUNTY GROWTH POLICY AMENDMENT
STAFF REPORT WGPA 18-01
February 8, 2018**

A report to the Whitefish Planning Board and the Whitefish City Council regarding a request by Whitefish 57 llc, Eagle Enterprises and Marie Hedman for a growth policy amendment/subarea plan. This request has been scheduled before the Whitefish Planning Board for public hearing on Thursday, February 15, 2018. A recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council for a subsequent public hearing on Monday, March 19, 2018.

PROJECT SCOPE

The applicants are proposing to amend the 2007 Whitefish City-County Growth Policy land use designation for five parcels from Suburban and Rural land use designations to Urban and High Density land use designations. The existing General Commercial designation is proposed to expand to the west to align with the future Baker Avenue extension. The purpose of the Growth Policy map amendment is to facilitate future zone change requests and development of the properties through future subdivisions as infill development.

The Plan identifies six different areas within the subarea plan:

Areas 1 and 2 are designated as General Commercial and are bounded by Highway 93 S on the east, a future Baker Avenue Extension on the west, Park Knoll Lane on the north and JP Road on the south. The General Commercial area is proposed to be extended to the west approximately 200-feet to follow the extension of Baker Avenue. The zoning is proposed to be WB-2 (Secondary Business District). Area 1 is approximately 6.6 acres and is located at the northeast corner of the plan area and is undeveloped. Area 2 is approximately 6 acres and is located at the southeast corner of the plan area and is currently developed with Austen's funeral home and associated parking.



Area 2



Areas 3a and 3b are designated as Urban. Area 3a is located to the north of Great Northern Heights, is 4.6 acres and is proposed to be zoned WR-1 (One-Family Residential District). Area 3b is located to the south of the Park Knoll neighborhood, is 4.4 acres and is proposed to be zoned WR-1 (One-Family Residential District).

Area 4 is designated as High Density. This area is between Areas 3a and 3b and west of Baker Avenue Extension. Area 4 is proposed to be zoned WR-4 (High-Density Multi-Family Residential District) and is approximately 16.8 acres.

Areas 3-4



Area 5 is to the west of Areas 3a, 3b and 4, is designated to be zoned WA (Agricultural District) and is approximately 25 acres. This area is identified as Open Space and is the location of a wetland area and a stormwater conveyance.

Area 6 is designated as Urban. It is located on the western boundary of the Subarea Plan, is approximately 9.7 acres and is proposed to be zoned WLR (One-Family Limited Residential District – 15,000 s.f. minimum lot size).

Within the Plan, the applicant has committed to 10% affordable housing units to assist in solving the City's affordable housing problem. The details of the plan are to be worked out at a later date but could include single family residences, apartments and/or townhouses and may involve partnerships with the Whitefish Housing Authority or Habitat for Humanity.

As part of the Subarea Plan, the applicant has shown a very conceptual plan for roads. The primary road in the Subarea Plan is the north-south Baker Avenue extension. An additional north-south route may occur in the vicinity of the western extent of JP Road. East-west connections may be located at the western end of JP Road, as called out in the South Whitefish Transportation Plan and the Great Northern



Heights, Phase 2 subdivision, and at the northwest portion of the project near Lamb Road. The arrows on the plan are still conceptual, as the exact layout of the transportation system will not occur until actual development of the project. The Baker Avenue extension is called out in the South Whitefish Transportation Plan, but again the exact alignment is yet to be determined.

Background on Subareas Plans

A subarea plan is defined in the 2007 City-County Growth Policy as a mechanism for a developer to “plan for the orderly development of primarily undeveloped land.” Whereas, a neighborhood plan is intended for a developed area and is a further refinement of the Growth Policy and may be initiated by the residents of a neighborhood or the City. An example of a neighborhood plan, as defined in our Growth Policy, is the 2006 Big Mountain Neighborhood Plan. The Big Mountain area is mostly developed, but the Plan included additional areas for development and further refined specific areas for different types of development. An example of a subarea plan, as defined in our Growth Policy, is The Lakes neighborhood. This was an undeveloped area where a developer determined the zoning, land use, parks, transportation, etc. It should also be noted that, while state law identifies neighborhood plans as a valid planning document for incorporation into a Growth Policy, the term ‘neighborhood plan’ is not defined in state law. A subarea plan is not a term found in state law, but our Growth Policy indicates it is similar to a neighborhood plan.

Upon approval of a Growth Policy Amendment, the applicant could then apply for zone changes followed by development applications. At that time, the developer will be obligated to meet all city development standards – including zoning, subdivision, engineering standards and the building code. They have not submitted any zone change or development applications or plans for development at this time.

A. Owners:

Marie H Hedman
PO Box 2105
Kalispell, MT 59901

Eagle Enterprises
230 JP Road
Whitefish, MT 59937

Applicant:

Whitefish 57 LLC
401 Baker Ave, suite D
Whitefish, MT 59937

Technical Support:

Eric Mulcahy
Sands Surveying
2 Village Loop
Kalispell, MT 59901

Brett Walcheck
WGM Group
431 1st Ave W
Kalispell, MT 59901

- B. Location and Size of Property:** The properties are addressed as 6204 & 6208 Highway 93 S and can be legally described at Tracts 3B, 3BB, 3BD, 3BCBA & 7A in S1, T30N, R22W P.M.M., Flathead County. The proposed amendment encompasses 70.76 acres.

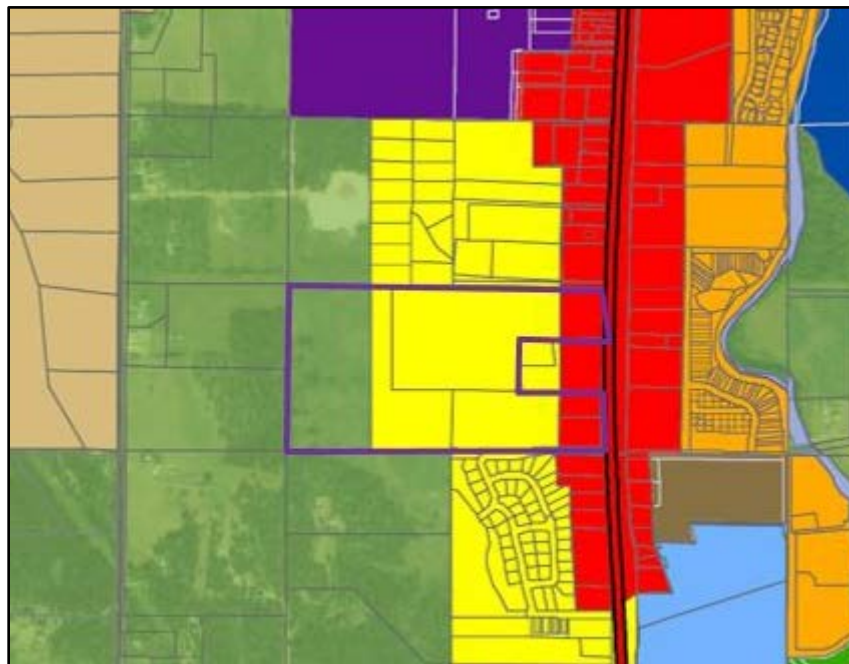


- C. Existing Land Use and Zoning:** The properties are partially developed with a funeral home and two single family homes and accessory structures. The properties have four different zoning designations: WCR (Country Residential District), WER (Estate Residential District), County SAG-5 (Suburban Agriculture) and WB-2 (Secondary Business District).

with WR-3 zoning, and mixed use development may also be appropriate in this area.”

Suburban Residential: “Lower density residential areas at the periphery of the urban service area generally fall under this designation on the Future Land Use Map. The residential product type is predominantly single-family, but cluster homes and low-density town homes that preserve significant open space are also appropriate. Densities range from one unit per 2 ½ acres to 2.5 units per acre, but could be higher through the PUD. Zoning districts include WCR, WER, and WSR. Cluster residential that preserves considerable open space, allows for limited agriculture, maintains wildlife habitat is encouraged.”

Rural Residential: “The rural residential designation is intended primarily for areas that are already divided into lots of 2 ½ to 10 acres in size. Its intent is to preserve rural character while allowing existing large-lot residential areas to continue without becoming non-conforming as to minimum lot size. Applicable zoning districts include WCR and WA-10. Rural residential is not seen as a desirable future development option, and this Growth Policy does not advocate designating additional areas for rural residential beyond what is already depicted on the Future Land Use Map.”



F. Proposed Growth Policy Land Use Designation:

High Density Residential: “Multi-family residential, mostly in the form of apartments, condominiums, and townhomes, are accounted for by this designation. Areas designated for High Density Residential development are mostly near the downtown and along major transportation routes. All multi-family structures are now

subject to architectural review, and the City will be looking for a higher quality of site planning, architecture, and overall development high density projects have exhibited in the past. The applicable zones are WR-3 and WR-4, but WR-2 with a PUD option also allows for high densities.”

Urban: “This is generally a residential designation that defines the traditional neighborhoods near downtown Whitefish, but it has also been applied to a second tier of neighborhoods both east of the river and in the State Park Road area. Residential unit types are mostly one and two-family, but town homes and lower density apartments and condominiums are also acceptable in appropriate locations using the PUD. Densities generally range from 2 to 12 units per acre. Limited neighborhood commercial located along arterial or collector streets are also included in this designation. Zoning includes WLR, WR-1, and WR-2.”

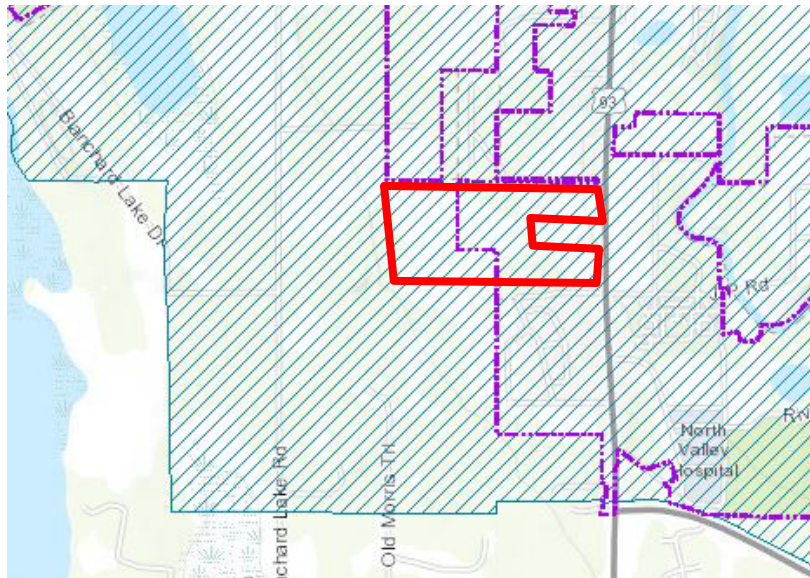
General/Highway Commercial: “Generally applied to the Hwy 93 corridor north of the Highway 40 intersection, this designation is defined by auto-oriented commercial and service uses. Specific land uses include retail, restaurants of all types and quality ranges (including those with drive-up facilities), professional offices, auto sales and services, hotels/motels, supermarkets, shopping centers or clusters, and convenience shopping, including the dispensing of motor fuels. Primary access is by automobile with ample parking provided on site. Development sites are properly landscaped to screen parking and drive areas and to provide a high-quality visual image. Zoning is generally WB-2, but higher density residential with WR-3 zoning, and mixed use development may also be appropriate in this area.”

G. Utilities:

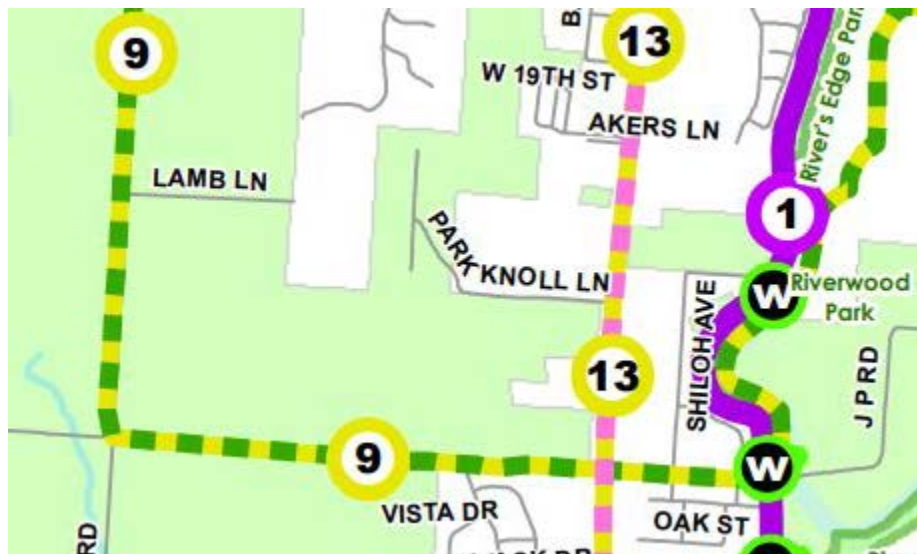
Sewer:	City of Whitefish
Water:	City of Whitefish
Refuse:	North Valley Refuse
Police:	City of Whitefish
Fire:	City of Whitefish
Electric:	Flathead Electric Co-op
Phone:	CenturyLink
Gas:	Northwestern Energy
Schools:	Whitefish School District #44

H. Other Planning Documents:

The Subarea Plan is located wholly within the *2009 Extension of Services (EOS)* plan. The EOS “is intended to be used as a guide for the provision of city services to those areas of the city not served at this time, and for territories to be annexed into the city.” This means areas within the EOS are at some point in the future intended to be within the city of Whitefish and served by municipal public services and facilities.



There is a future possible trail identified within the *2017 Connect Whitefish Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* shown along the south boundary of the Subarea Plan. It is called the Southside Loop – a 6.7 mile recreational loop from downtown along E 2nd Street, south along Cow Creek and Monegan to the Rocksund Bridge and returning on JP road, Karrow Avenue and Highway 93 W.



The *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* identifies the area south of W 7th Street in the Karrow Avenue area as needing a park to accompany future development. In addition, Goal F: “Recognize environmental benefits and design parks as part of a green infrastructure system that promotes conservation, protects water quality and preserves natural areas where appropriate” also supports the protection of stormwater conveyances and wetlands as open space.

- I. **Public Notice:** A notice was mailed to adjacent land owners within 150-feet of the proposed growth policy amendment and advisory agencies on December 29, 2017. A notice was published in the *Whitefish Pilot* on January 3, 2017. As of the writing of this report, staff received comments with concerns about: the change in character and qualities of the neighborhood from rural to residential, loss of wildlife habitat, increase in traffic, extension of JP Road to the west, not enough public notice, use of Park Knoll Lane to access the project and Highway 93 S, urban-scale development adjacent to existing agricultural uses, high groundwater, no nightly rentals should be permitted and overall concerns with the Subarea Plan meeting the review criteria. Finally, we received one letter in support. All comment letters are attached to the packet for Board and Council consideration.

EVALUATION OF THE GROWTH POLICY AMENDMENT REQUEST:

The Whitefish City-County Growth Policy is intended to provide guidance for long-term growth in a general and comprehensive manner. The Whitefish City Council adopted the Whitefish City-County Growth Policy on November 20, 2007. The proposed plan amendment should be considered in the context of the overall goals and policies of the Whitefish City-County Growth Policy. The Whitefish City-County Growth Policy provides some evaluation for amending the plan map.

Whitefish City-County Growth Policy – Implementation Element (Chapter 7): Growth Policy Amendments and Updates

Subarea Plans: The Growth Policy identifies criteria to consider when a developer applies for a Subarea Plan. These criteria are:

- The subarea plan must substantially further the goals and vision of the Growth Policy;
- The Plan must provide substantial community benefit;
- All on- and off-site improvements must be provided for;
- Any and all environmental constraints and natural hazards on-site shall be avoided or effectively mitigated; and
- Any and all adverse impacts upon existing neighborhoods shall be avoided or effectively mitigated.

Substantially Further the Goals and Vision of the Growth Policy: The Subarea Plan has identified specific Goals and Policies their Plan is furthering – including goals to protect water quality, preserve critical areas, provide community facilities – including parks and transportation, and to provide housing opportunities.

The 2007 Growth Policy has a number of Goals and Policies supporting the protection and preservation of critical areas, implementation of transportation plans, providing housing for all members of the community and promoting infill development over expansion into rural areas. Many of the Goals, Policies and Implementation items have been incorporated into development standards that will be reviewed at the time of

development – such as requiring paved driveways to preserve air quality. Other applicable goals are listed below:

- *“Recognizing that water is an essential resource, and that the maintenance of pure, uncontaminated surface and groundwater is paramount to the continued physical and economic well-being, protect and enhance water quality of the Whitefish area’s lakes, rivers, and streams.” (Chapter 1, Water Quality, Goal #1)*

The Subarea Plan proposes to set aside a stormwater conveyance, wetland and a buffer area in a designated 25-acre open space. Preserving these areas and their buffers is an important part of protecting water quality.

Connecting development – both residential and commercial – to public sewer and water is also an important part of protecting water quality. Lower densities and rural land uses are not suitable to connect to public services.

- *“Preserve and protect critical areas that are environmentally significant in terms of resource value and/or defining the community image and character of Whitefish.” (Chapter 1, Critical Areas, Goal #1)*

As described previously, the Subarea Plan is proposing to set aside identified water quality areas – a stormwater conveyance and wetland pursuant to the standards within the Water Quality Protection regulations.

- *“Preserve and enhance the character, qualities, and small town feel and ambience of the Whitefish community through an innovative and comprehensive growth management system.” (Chapter 3, Land Use, Goal #1)*

The Subarea Plan has identified 10,000 square foot ($\frac{1}{4}$ acre) lot sizes adjacent to existing subdivisions (Great Northern Heights to the south and Park Knoll to the north) to provide a buffer from higher density development.

Area 3a, to the north of Great Northern Heights, is identified with a zoning designation of WR-1 (One-Family Residential District). This zoning district requires a minimum of 10,000 square foot lots, which is the same zoning district as Great Northern Heights. In addition, the JP Road right-of-way is located between Area 3a and Great Northern Heights providing additional buffering.

Area 3b, to the south of the Park Knoll neighborhood, is also identified with a zoning designation of WR-1 (One-Family Residential District). Again, this zoning district requires a minimum of 10,000 square foot lots, which is the same zoning district as Park Knoll. The Park Knoll neighborhood was developed in the County through family transfers and occasional sales in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It was not designed to be served by public sewerage; therefore, the lot sizes are more rural in nature (1.25 to 1.5 acres/lot) to accommodate individual septic systems. However, the zoning in Park Knoll is County R-3, One-Family Residential, which requires a 10,000 square foot minimum lot size and the

other development standards are very similar to the WR-1 zoning district. Therefore, the zoning of WR-1 is complimentary to the Park Knoll neighborhood.

The Subarea Plan identifies Area 6 with a zoning designation of WLR (One-Family Limited Residential District). This zoning requires a minimum of 15,000 square feet (1/3 of an acre). The property to the west is zoned County R 2.5, Rural Residential, which requires a 2.5-acre minimum lot size. This neighborhood was recently rezoned to 2.5-acre minimum from County SAG-10 which requires a 10-acre minimum. The property to the south is zoned SAG-5, Suburban Agriculture, which requires a minimum 5-acre lot size. When the areas to the west and south of the western extent of the Subarea Plan were in the Whitefish Planning Jurisdiction, they had a zoning designation of WA (15-acre minimum lot size). WLR is the least dense of the Urban designations, while ensuring it is feasible to extend municipal services.

Staff recommends the land use designation in Area 6 be Suburban instead of Urban. The natural topography, environmentally sensitive areas and open space area is a natural dividing line between Urban and Suburban and it is a logical transition from the Urban/High Density to the Rural areas further to the west. The Suburban land use, as described previously in the report, is for lower residential density consistent with WER (Estate Residential District – 20,000 square foot lots), WSR (Suburban Residential District – 1 acre lots) and WCR (Country Residential – 2.5 acre lots). The Suburban land use will bring the permitted densities closer to the R-2.5 to the west. Staff recommends assigning Area 6 the WER zoning district.

The Growth Policy and the 2016 Housing Needs Assessment note the need for additional multi-family and high density residential. Rather than locating high density areas adjacent to existing detached single family residences, the Subarea Plan identifies High Density buffered from existing neighborhoods by lower density areas. It is also adjacent to the Baker Avenue extension and near Highway 93 S where the possibilities for transit exist and there are nearby services including commercial uses and the hospital. Through the development of the high-density area, the Subarea Plan identifies the possibilities of both apartments and townhouses.

One of the challenges the Ad hoc PUD Rewrite Committee faced was the interplay of an intense commercial zoning district immediately adjacent to low-density residential. This Subarea Plan attempts to resolve this concerns by locating a road between the Commercial land use designation and residential. Also, the plan locates high density residential along the Baker Avenue extension further protecting existing neighborhoods and future lower density residential neighborhoods.

Finally, offering a variety of product-types will help maintain our community character which is decidedly diverse, and the need to provide housing for all community members.

- *“Preserve, enhance, and manage environmentally sensitive areas such as river and stream banks, steep slopes, wetlands, forested areas, and critical wildlife habitat.” (Chapter 3, Land Use, Goal #2)*

The Subarea Plan is proposing to set aside 25 acres of open space that contains a designated stormwater conveyance and wetland area. The applicant had a wetland delineation completed, then added 125-feet to the edge of the wetland for both the buffer (100-feet) and the setback (25-feet). Twenty-five-acres is a significant preservation within a 70-acre Subarea Plan – over a third of the project area.



- *“Protect and preserve the special character, scale, and qualities of existing neighborhoods while supporting and encouraging attractive, well-designed, neighborhood compatible infill development.” (Chapter 3, Land Use, Goal #5)*

As detailed above, the Subarea Plan locates similar densities adjacent to existing neighborhoods to help ensure compatibility. The Subarea Plan indicates they will also include architectural design standards, likely within CC&Rs, to ensure high quality design. Finally, all multi-family development will be required to obtain Architectural Review approval prior to building permits to further ensure neighborhood compatibility.

- *“Land designated Rural or Rural Residential on the Future Land Use Map shall not be redesignated by the City of Whitefish through a Growth Policy amendment, neighborhood plan, or subarea plan, except as set forth in the Implementation/Intergovernmental Element, until at least 50% of the previously entitled dwelling units, as depicted on the Approved Entitlements Map dated September 20, 2007, is actually constructed.” (Chapter 3, Land Use, Policy #9)*

The purpose of this policy was to promote infill development before the City started to expand urban and suburban densities outside the city limits, as the community identified the value of nearby rural areas and wanted to see the efficient use of community facilities. Since the Plan was adopted the City has conducted a review of this policy every two years. In 2007, there were 1,607 entitled dwelling units. Over the years, a number of subdivisions have expired removing 555 units from the entitled dwelling unit count. As of February 1, 2018, the number of entitled dwelling units is 1,052 dwelling units, making the 50% threshold 526. As of February 1, 2018, 493 units remain to be

built; therefore the 50% threshold has been met and the City can now consider applications to change the land use designation from Rural and Rural Residential to more urban land use designations.

- *“Expand the diversity of parks, open spaces, and high-quality recreational opportunities for the growing Whitefish area.” (Chapter 4, Community Facilities, Parks and Recreation, Goal #1)*
- *“Expand the range and quality of open spaces available to Whitefish citizens and visitors.” (Chapter 4, Community Facilities, Open Spaces, Goal #1)*

The Subarea Plan is proposing a large open space that could be developed with public trails as permitted by the Water Quality Protection regulations. The Plan indicates they are interested in the possibility of this park being public, but if the park remains in private ownership, the trails would remain open to the public. This could be a unique park for the community than many of the other more active parks and it is very large.

- *“Ensure an adequate supply and variety of housing product types and densities, at affordable prices, to meet the needs of Whitefish’s existing and future workforce, and for senior citizens.” (Chapter 5, Housing Element, Goal #1)*
- *“Maintain a social and economic diversity of Whitefish through affordable housing programs that keep citizens and members of the workforce from being displaced.” (Chapter 5, Housing Element, Goal #2)*

The Subarea Plan indicates a variety of housing-types are proposed, including detached single family homes, attached single family homes (townhouses) and apartments. They are also committed to providing 10% affordable housing as part of the development of the project. Final details how this might occur remain to be worked out, but they identified both the Whitefish Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity as possible partners.

- *“Provide an efficient and effective transportation system to serve the present and future needs of the Whitefish area.” (Chapter 6, Transportation Element, Goal #1)*
- *“Plan for healthy, efficient, and visually attractive corridors along major transportation routes through the community.” (Chapter 3, Land Use, Goal #7)*

The Subarea Plan shows the extension of Baker Avenue and potential connections to the west. These transportation connections have been part of long-range planning documents for many years and are part of the most recently adopted 2009 Transportation Plan.

- *“Integrate transportation and land use planning so that choices of transportation modes are optimized.” (Chapter 6, Transportation Element, Goal #2)*

The location of the Subarea Plan is well situated to take advantage of future public transportation plans. Future development will certainly involve Eagle Transit and their

long-range planning efforts.

Finding 1: The proposed Subarea Plan will substantially further and promote the goals and vision of the 2007 Growth Policy because the Subarea Plan sets aside environmentally sensitive areas that will also function as a public park and unique open space, the Plan is thoughtfully locating appropriate land uses adjacent to existing neighborhoods, it is committed to 10% affordable housing, will provide a variety of housing types, and it is implementing long-range transportation plans.

Provide Substantial Community Benefit: The definition of the term 'substantial' is significant, considerable, important, real. Therefore, a *substantial* community benefit would be a significant contribution to the community or something that would be implementing or facilitating the City's long-range plans.

The Subarea Plan identifies providing **10% affordable housing**, which, under the current regulations, would only happen with a development that is also requesting a Planned Unit Development with a density bonus. In order to make this provision substantial, staff will recommend that this housing is **permanently** affordable, it is a **variety** of housing types, and is **dispersed** throughout the Subarea Plan.

The Subarea Plan is implementing the Whitefish Transportation Plan by identifying the Baker Avenue extension and other connections toward Karrow Avenue. These transportation connections have long been recommended to help alleviate congestion on Highway 93 S and provide options for local residents.

The Subarea Plan identifies 25-acres of open space that will be permanently set aside at the time of development. This open space will be available to the public whether it ends up being a public park or privately owned. The Subarea Plan identifies possible development of trails within the open space area in conformance with the Water Quality Protection regulations.

Finding 2: The proposed Subarea Plan will provide substantial community benefit because it will provide 10% affordable housing, transportation corridors are being reserved that implements the Transportation Plan and 25-acres of open space that includes environmentally sensitive areas will be preserved.

Provide All On- and Off-Site Improvements: All on and off-site improvements will be installed at the time of development whether that be through a subdivision, conditional use permit or standard development processes and will be paid for by the developer.

Finding 3: The proposed Subarea Plan will provide all on and off-site improvements because infrastructure will be installed at the time of development.

Avoid or Effectively Mitigate Any and All Environmental Constraints and Natural Hazards: As described previously in this staff report, there is a stormwater conveyance on the property and the applicant identified a wetland. A stormwater conveyance

requires a 15-foot setback. A wetland requires a 100-foot buffer plus a 25-foot setback for high-intensity uses such as multi-family with no building encroachments. This area has been set aside as the open space for the Subarea Plan. The City created planning-level maps during the development of the Critical Areas regulations. These maps are planning level meaning field verification and additional work is necessary in order to determine the exact location of environmentally sensitive areas.

NOTE: The identified high groundwater area, the stormwater conveyance and wetland area should nearly be in the same location, but the maps are not topographically aligned.

Stormwater Conveyance Map



High Groundwater Map



Wetland Map



Finding 4: The proposed Subarea Plan will avoid or effectively mitigate any and all environmental constraints and natural hazard because 25 acres of the open space has been set aside that includes a stormwater conveyance and wetland plus the associated buffers and setbacks.

Avoid or Effectively Mitigate Any and All Adverse Impacts upon Existing Neighborhoods:

As described previously in this report, the Subarea Plan locates similar densities adjacent to existing neighborhoods and it is locating the higher residential densities in the center of the project, close to the future Baker Avenue and buffered by the single

family detached neighborhoods. A significant open space is being preserved that will be an additional buffer and an amenity for existing neighborhoods. In addition, the Subarea Plan includes a Traffic Impact Study for the anticipated traffic. The TIS indicates the specific impacts will be influenced by the final design of the road layout. The developer should plan for an intersection light at Highway 93 S and Park Knoll Lane and should look at combining/eliminating accesses onto Highway 93 S where possible.

Once the Subarea Plan is approved, further refinement of the plan will occur through the submission of zone change requests and development application. This will be another time to review the effects of a more refined plan for development on the neighborhoods.

Finding 5: The proposed Subarea Plan will avoid or effectively mitigate any and all adverse impacts upon existing neighborhoods because the Subarea Plan proposes to locate complimentary zoning districts/densities adjacent to existing neighborhoods, preserve 25 acres of open space that will be accessible to the public and implement traffic mitigation recommendations as development occurs.

Compatibility with Existing Neighborhood: See subsection 5 of the Subarea Plan. The Plan describes numerous neighborhood meetings to gain input/feedback on the proposed Plan from the residents of the existing neighborhoods. The Plan locates compatible zoning districts next to the existing subdivision to ensure compatibility and the proposed 25 acre open space will also help to retain the rural feel these neighborhoods have come to enjoy.

Finding 6: This Subarea Plan is compatible with the existing neighborhood because the Subarea Plan proposes to locate complimentary zoning districts/densities adjacent to existing neighborhoods and preserve 25 acres of open space that will be accessible to the public.

Appropriateness of the Proposed Amendment with Respect to its Location: The Subarea Plan is located along Highway 93 S and public services and facilities are readily available to the property. As mentioned in the Subarea Plan, this location has less environmental constraints than some other areas that surround the City where waterways, high groundwater and steep slopes may be located that could make urban development challenging. Development along the corridor has developed in a linear fashion since services were extended and the highway was expanded to five-lanes. Providing development extending out from the highway will create a more compact development pattern consistent with other areas of town versus a strip-type development pattern which is more efficient for public services and facilities.

The proposed land use pattern mirrors the development patterns to the east of Highway 93 S with commercial along the highway, a north-south corridor followed by higher density and lower density.

Finding 7: This Subarea Plan is in an appropriate location because it is near existing transportation facilities, public services and facilities can easily be extended to serve the

Subarea Plan, it is mostly within the city limits and mirrors the development patterns to the east of Highway 93 S.

Inadequacies of the Current Growth Policy/Zoning Necessitating the Subarea Plan: The current Growth Policy designates this area as Suburban and Rural. The densities supporting the Suburban land use designation is one unit per 2.5 acre to 2.5 units per acre. The Rural designation supports land use densities of one unit per ten to twenty acres. These densities are not compatible with urban-style development, urban densities – especially when all public services and facilities are available to the properties.

Finding 8: This Subarea Plan is necessary to address inadequacies of the 2007 Growth Policy because the current Growth Policy has Suburban and Rural land use designations that are served by all public services and facilities.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Finding 9: The Subarea Plan is located within the 2009 Extension of Services Plan; therefore, is an area the City intends to serve and expects to develop at suitable densities for water and sewer extensions.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Whitefish Planning Board **approve** the Growth Policy Amendment and forward this recommendation to the Whitefish City Council subject to:

- 1) The land use designation for Area 5 – the open space – to be Rural.
- 2) The land use designation for Area 6 be Suburban with a proposed zoning district of WER.
- 3) The addition or amendments of the following goals:

Goal 1: Commit 10% of the residential units of all development within the plan as permanently affordable housing or provide cash in lieu payment to the City of Whitefish.

Policy 1b: Provide a variety of housing types within the Subarea Plan and distribute the permanently affordable housing throughout the Subarea Plan.

Policy 3d: Develop frontage roads for future commercial development and eliminate driveways accessing directly onto Highway 93 S.