

**2021 PRAIRIE COUNTY**

**SUBDIVISION**

**REGULATIONS**

**As Amended and Adopted by the  
Prairie County Board of County Commissioners  
on March 15, 2021**

**Prepared to comply with the  
Montana Subdivision and Platting Act**

*The Prairie County Subdivision Regulations Resolution of Adoption is kept on file at the Office of Prairie County Commissioner.*

*Copies of the Resolutions will be provided upon request.*

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## DEFINITIONS

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Whenever the following words or phrases appear in these regulations, they shall have the meaning assigned to them by this section. When not inconsistent with the context, words used in the present tense include the future; the singular, unless otherwise specifically defined in a particular section, includes the plural, and the plural the singular; the word “shall” is always mandatory, and the word “may” indicates use of discretion in making decisions.

1. **ACCESS (LEGAL AND PHYSICAL):**

**a. Legal access** means that each lot in a subdivision either abuts a public (city, county, state, or federal) street or road, or that the subdivider has obtained adequate and appropriate easements across all necessary properties, from a public road to each lot in the subdivision, whether or not a road has been constructed on that property, and has dedicated the easement or private road for public use or for the use of the subdivision.

**b. Physical access** means that a street or road conforming to the subdivision design standards provides vehicular access to each lot in the subdivision, either from a public street or road, from a road constructed to local road standards in the obtained easements which is dedicated to public use, or from a private road improved to local road standards which has been dedicated to public use or for the use of the subdivision.

2. **ADJOINING LANDOWNER (ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNER):** The owner of record of a parcel of land that is contiguous, at any point, or land that is separated from the parcel by a road, watercourse, or deeded right-of-way.

3. **AGRICULTURE:** Farming or ranching include the cultivation or tilling of the soil, the production, cultivation growing, harvesting of agricultural or horticultural commodities that are on site, such as food, feed, and fiber, the raising of livestock and poultry, bees, biological control insects, fruits and vegetables, and sod, ornamental, nursery, and horticultural crops, and including timberlands and forest lands.

4. **AGRICULTURAL COVENANT:** A covenant running with the land approved by the governing body which restricts the land to agricultural uses only [Section 76-3-207(1)(c), MCA] and can only be removed pursuant to Section 76-3-207 (2)(b), MCA].

5. **AGRICULTURAL WATER USER FACILITIES:** Those facilities which provide water for irrigation or stock watering to agricultural lands for the production of agricultural products. Any part of an irrigation system historically used to produce an agricultural product on property used for agricultural purposes. These facilities

include, but are not limited to, ditches, head gates, pipes, and other water conveying facilities.

6. **BASE FLOOD ELEVATION:** The computed elevation to which floodwater is anticipated to rise during a flood having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year.
7. **CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY:** A drawing of a field survey prepared by a professional land surveyor for the purpose of disclosing facts pertaining to boundary locations.
8. **CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT:** A subdivision with lots clustered in a group of five or more lots that is designed to concentrate building sites on smaller lots while allowing other lands to remain undeveloped. [Section 76-3-103 (2), MCA].
9. **COMMERCIAL USE:** The purchase, sale, or transaction involving the disposition or storage of any article, substance, commodity, or service, maintenance or conduct of offices, professionals, or recreational or amusement enterprises conducted for profit and also including renting of rooms, business offices, and sale display rooms, and premises; which includes mobile home and recreational vehicle parks.
10. **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, MASTER PLAN, OR GROWTH POLICY:** means a comprehensive development plan, master plan, or comprehensive plan that was adopted pursuant to Title 76, Chapter 1, MCA, before October 1, 1999, or a policy that was adopted pursuant to Title 76, Chapter 1, MCA, on or after October 1, 1999.
11. **CONDOMINIUM:** A form of individual ownership with unrestricted right of disposal of one or more units in a multiple unit project, with the land and other parts of the project held in common ownership or use with owners of the other units, pursuant to Title 70, Chapter 23, MCA.
12. **COVENANT (RESTRICTIVE COVENANT):** A limitation contained in a deed or other document that restricts or regulates the use of the real property.
13. **DEDICATION:** The deliberate appropriation of land by an owner for any general and public use, reserving to the landowner no rights that are incompatible with the full exercise and enjoyment of the public use to which the property has been devoted. [Section 76-3-103 (3), MCA].
14. **DEQ:** The Montana Department of Environmental Quality.
15. **DIVISION OF LAND:** The segregation of one or more parcels of land from a larger tract held in single or undivided ownership by transferring or contracting to transfer title to or possession of a portion of the tract or properly filing a certificate of survey

or subdivision plat establishing the identity of the segregated parcels pursuant to the MSPA. The conveyance of a tract of record or an entire parcel of land that was created by a previous division of land is not a division of land. [Section 76-3-103 (4), MCA].

16. **DWELLING UNIT:** Any structure or portion thereof providing complete, independent, and permanent living facilities for one household.
17. **EASEMENT:** Authorization by a property owner for another to use, or restriction on the right of the owner to use, all or a portion of the owner's property for a specified purpose.
18. **ENGINEER (PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER):** A person licensed and registered in conformance with the Montana Engineers' and Land Surveyors' Act [Title 37, Chapter 67, MCA] to practice engineering in the State of Montana.
19. **Environmental Assessment:** A component of a subdivision application for major subdivisions that provides information needed for the assessment of impacts from subdivision on agriculture, agricultural water users' facilities, local services, national environment, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and public health and safety. The contents of an environmental assessment shall be pursuant to Section 76-3-603, MCA.
20. **FIRST MINOR SUBDIVISION:** A proposed subdivision of a tract of record that:
  - a. has not been subdivided or created by a subdivision,
  - b. or has not resulted from a tract of record that has had more than five parcels created from that tract of record under Section 76-3-201 or 76-3-207, MCA since July 1, 1973,
21. **FLOOD:** The water of any watercourse or drainway that is above the bank or outside the channel and banks of such watercourse or drainway [Section 76-5-103 (8), MCA].
22. **FLOOD HAZARD AREA:** The area at and below the base flood elevation.
23. **FLOOD OF 100 YEAR FREQUENCY:** A flood magnitude expected to recur on the average of once every 100 years or a flood magnitude that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year. [Section 76-5-103 (9), MCA].
24. **FLOODPLAIN:** The area adjoining the watercourse or drainway that would be covered by the floodwater of a flood of 100-year frequency [Section 76-5-103 (10), MCA].
25. **FLOODWAY:** The channel of a watercourse or drainway and those portions of the floodplain adjoining the channels that are reasonably required to carry and discharge the floodwater of any watercourse or drainway [Section 76-5-103 (11), MCA].

26. **GOVERNING BODY:** The Prairie County Board of County Commissioners organized pursuant to law [Section 76-3-103 (7), MCA].
27. **IMPROVEMENT AGREEMENT:** A contractual agreement that may be required by the governing body to ensure the construction of such improvements as required by local subdivision regulations. The improvement agreement may require collateral to secure the construction of such improvements, such as the deposit of certified funds, irrevocable letters of credit, performance, or property bonds, private or public escrow agreements, or similar financial guarantees.
28. **INDUSTRIAL USE:** The manufacture, fabrication, processing or reduction of any article, substance, or commodity or any other treatment thereof in such a manner to change the form character or appearance thereof. It shall include trucking facilities, rail facilities, mining, warehousing, and product, materials or equipment storage, and businesses serving primarily industry and similar enterprises.
29. **LANDOWNER:** All individuals, groups, or parties with a title interest in the property. For purposes of Section 76-3-207, MCA, when a parcel of land for which an exemption from subdivision review is claimed is being conveyed under a contract-for-deed, the terms “property owner,” “landowner,” and “owner” mean the seller of the parcel under the contract-for-deed (24.183.1104 ARM). For all other purposes of these regulations, the terms “property owner,” “landowner,” and “owner” mean both the seller and the purchaser under a contract for deed.
30. **LOCAL SERVICES:** Any and all services or facilities local government is authorized to provide that benefit their citizens, such as water supply, sewage disposal, law enforcement, fire protection, emergency services, transportation system, educational system, noxious weed control, as well as services that local government does not provide such as power, telephone, state highways, etc.
31. **LOT:** A parcel, plot, or other land area created by subdivision.
32. **MAJOR SUBDIVISION:** A subdivision that creates six or more lots.
33. **MCA:** Montana Code Annotated
34. **MOBILE (MANUFACTURED) HOME:** A detached residential dwelling unit, which may consist of two or more sections, designed to be towed on its own chassis to a building site for occupation as a dwelling with or without a permanent foundation, which in the traveling mode is eight body feet or more in width or forty body feet or more in length, or, when erected on-site is 320 or more square feet in size. Mobile homes are designed to be used as a dwelling for human occupancy upon connection to required utilities, including plumbing, heating, and electrical systems. The term includes, but is not limited to, “trailer homes,” “house trailers,” and “manufactured homes” whether or not the unit has been constructed after July 1,

1976, in conformance with Federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards. The term does not include “modular” or “factory-built buildings” that are fabricated at a factory in accordance with the Uniform Building Code Standards applicable to site-built homes and are transported to the site for final assembly on a permanent foundation.

35. **MOBILE (MANUFACTURED) HOME SPACE:** A designated portion of a parcel of land designed for the accommodation of one mobile home and its accessory buildings or structures for the exclusive use of the occupants.
36. **MOBILE (MANUFACTURED) HOME PARK:** A tract of land that provides or will provide two or more spaces for rent or lease in which a mobile home will be placed.
37. **MOBILE (MANUFACTURED) HOME PAD:** That area of a mobile home space which has been prepared for the placement of a mobile home.
38. **MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY MINIMUM STANDARDS:** Minimum standards promulgated by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, pursuant to Title 76, Chapter 4, Part 1, MCA.
39. **MONUMENT (PERMANENT MONUMENT):** Any structure of masonry, metal, or other permanent, durable material placed in the ground, which is exclusively identifiable as a monument to a survey point, expressly placed for surveying reference.
40. **MSPA:** Montana Subdivision and Platting Act, Title 76, Chapter 3, MCA.
41. **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:** The natural environment is defined as the physical conditions which exist within a given area, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, sound, light, and objects of historic and aesthetic significance.
42. **NO BUILD ZONE:** An area in which no building or structure may be constructed or otherwise placed. A No Build Zone is generally intended to mitigate potentially adverse impacts.
43. **OPEN SPACE:** Land or water areas retained for use as active or passive recreation areas or for resource protection in an essentially undeveloped state.
44. **ORDINARY HIGH-WATER MARK:** The line that water impresses on land by covering it for sufficient periods to cause physical characteristics that distinguish the area below the line from the area above it. Characteristics of the area below the line include, when appropriate, but are not limited to deprivation of the soil of substantially all terrestrial vegetation and destruction of its agricultural vegetative value.

45. **PHASED DEVELOPMENT:** A subdivision application and preliminary plat that at the time of submission consists of independently platted development phases that are scheduled for review on a schedule proposed by the subdivider.
46. **PHASING PLAN:** The plan of a subdivision design proposed to be subdivided in stages.
47. **PLANNING BOARD:** A planning board formed pursuant to Title 76, Chapter 1, MCA.
48. **PLAT:** A graphical representation of a subdivision showing the division of land into lots, parcels, blocks, streets, alleys, and other divisions and dedications.
- a. **Preliminary Plat:** A neat and scaled drawing of a proposed subdivision showing the layout of streets, alleys, lots, blocks, and other elements of a subdivision that furnish a basis for review by a governing body as more specifically set forth in these regulations and the MSPA.
  - b. **Final Plat:** The final drawing of the subdivision and dedication required to be prepared for filing for record with the county clerk and recorder containing all elements and requirements set forth in these regulations and the MSPA. (Title 76, Chapter 3, MCA).
  - c. **Amended Plat:** The final drawing of any change to a filed platted subdivision, or any lots within a filed platted subdivision.
  - d. **Vacated Plat:** A plat which has been voided under the provisions of MCA Sections 76-3-305, 7-5-2501, 7-5-2502, 7-14-2616 (1) and/or (2), 7-14-2617, 7-14-4114 (1) and/or (2), and 7-14-3115.
49. **PRE-APPLICATION SKETCH (OR DRAWING):** A legible drawing showing approximate boundaries, dimensions, areas, distances, and other pertinent information of a proposed subdivision, all as more particularly set forth in Subsection II-A-4 (b) of these regulations.
50. **PRIVATE IMPROVEMENT:** Private improvements are the same types of improvements as defined under PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS, except the structure or facility has not been dedicated to the public or otherwise acquired by a government entity for public use.
51. **PRIVATE ROAD:** A road is private if its right-of-way has neither been dedicated nor acquired for public use. A private road may be open to use by the general public or public access may be restricted.
52. **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY:** The prevailing healthful, sanitary condition of well-being for the community at large. Conditions that relate to public health and safety include but are not limited to: disease control and prevention; emergency services; environmental health; flooding, fire or wildfire hazards, rock falls or

landslides, unstable soils, steep slopes, and other natural hazards; high voltage lines or high pressure gas lines; and air or vehicular traffic safety hazards.

53. **PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT:** Any structure or facility constructed to serve more than one lot in a subdivision which is dedicated to the public, for the use of the subdivision, or otherwise acquired by a government entity for public use. Examples of typical public improvements include parks, streets or roads, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and street lighting, utilities, and systems for water supply, sewage disposal, drainage, or fire protection.
54. **PUBLIC ROAD OR STREET:** A road or street is public if its right-of-way has been dedicated or acquired for public use.
55. **RECREATIONAL CAMPING VEHICLE:** A vehicular type unit primarily designed as temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, or travel use that either has its own motor power or is mounted on or drawn by another vehicle. The basic types of RVs are camping trailer, fifth wheel trailer, motor home, park trailer, travel trailer, and truck camper. Recreational Camping Vehicles are designed to be used as a temporary living quarter for human occupancy without connection to required utilities, including plumbing, heating, and electrical systems.
56. **RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PAD:** A designated location in a Recreational Vehicle Space that identifies where recreational vehicles must park during occupation, and where all other uses unless specifically authorized are prohibited.
57. **RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARK:** A tract of land where two or more spaces for rent or lease in which a recreational vehicle will be placed, that is available to and principally used by the public for camping.
58. **RECREATIONAL VEHICLE SPACE:** A designated portion of a recreational vehicle park designed for the placement of a single recreational vehicle, the exclusive use of its occupants and their personal belongings including automobiles, outdoor storage etc.
59. **RESIDENTIAL USE:** A dwelling unit designed for permanent occupancy by a single-family, two-family, or multifamily containing facilities for cooking, living, and sleeping. These units include boarding or rooming houses. Residential use does not include transient accommodations, such as: hotels, motels, dormitories, fraternity or sorority houses, or tourist cabins.
60. **REVIEWING AUTHORITY:** The DEQ or local Board of Health or Sanitarian as authorized under Title 76, Chapter 4, MCA.
61. **RIGHTS-OF-WAY:** A linear public way established or dedicated for public purposes by a duly recorded plat, deed, easement, grant, prescription, condemnation, governmental authority or by operation of law, intended to be occupied by a street,

non-motorized vehicle path, railroad, electric transmission lines, water line, sanitary sewer line, storm sewer line, or other similar uses.

62. **STATE:** The State of Montana.

63. **STREET TYPES:** For purposes of these regulations, street types are defined as follows:

- a. **Alley:** A public or private way reserved as a secondary means of access to the rear or side of lots which abut on and are served by public roads.
- b. **Arterial:** Arterial roads are designed to move vehicles through an area. The roads have limited access, higher speeds and may have traffic signals near populated areas. Arterials should ideally have a wider shoulder than other roads. Wider shoulders allow more room for people to pull over if they have vehicle trouble, plus they provide additional room for wide loads or recovery associated with loss of vehicle control. A six-foot shoulder is consistent with Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) standards for rural roads with more than 550 vehicles per day. The MDT standard for a bike lane varies from four to five feet and the six-foot shoulder allows for cyclists to use the shoulder. Secondary arterials typically have lower volumes and narrower shoulders than primary arterials. The only roads designated as arterial roads within Prairie County are the Primary State Highways.
- c. **Major Collector:** Major collectors are designed to serve both traffic movement and access. The roads typically are paved and have crossroad access but limited private driveway access and medium to high speeds. Within incorporated areas, no distinction is made between major and minor collectors. In unincorporated areas, the distinction is made mostly from the standpoint of placing greater priority on those designated as major collectors. State Secondary Highways in Prairie County are designated as major collectors.
- d. **Minor Collector:** Minor collectors are similar to major collectors except they may carry a greater level of localized traffic, and their condition may not be as high a priority as major collectors. The roads typically have limitations to road or driveway access and medium speeds similar to those on major collectors.
- e. **Local Streets:** A street or road having the primary function of serving abutting properties, and the secondary function of moving traffic. Local streets have two moving lanes of traffic, up to two parking lanes, and provide access to abutting properties.
- f. **Emergency Access:** Vehicular access designed and intended to provide a second access for emergency service providers.

- g. **Half-Street:** A portion of the width of a street, usually located along the perimeter of a subdivision, the remaining portion of which street must be located on adjacent property if the street is to be fully constructed.
  - h. **Cul-de-sac:** A street having only one outlet for vehicular traffic and terminating in a turn-around area.
  - i. **Loop:** A local street which begins and ends on the same street, generally used for access to properties.
  - j. **Frontage Access (Service Road):** A local or collector street, usually parallel and adjacent to an arterial or major collector, which provides access to abutting properties and controls traffic access to arterials or collectors.
64. **SUBDIVIDER:** Any person, firm or corporation, or other entity which causes land to be subdivided or which proposes a subdivision of land [Section 76-3-103 (15), MCA]. When used in these regulations, the term "subdivider" may also include the property purchaser on a contract for deed or its agent, or the landowner's agent, if the landowner has provided the subdivision administrator written notification that the landowner's agent is authorized to act on the landowner's behalf and to receive notices regarding local government decisions concerning the subdivision.
65. **SUBDIVISION:** A division of land or land so divided which creates one or more parcels containing less than 160 acres that cannot be described as a one-quarter aliquot part of a United States government section, exclusive of public roadways, in order that the title to or possession of the parcels may be sold, rented, leased, or otherwise conveyed and includes any re-subdivision and further includes a condominium or area, regardless of its size, that provides or will provide multiple space for recreational camping vehicles or mobile homes [Section 76-3-103 (16), MCA].
66. **SUBDIVISION ADMINISTRATOR:** The person or persons authorized by the governing body to perform the duties of review and administration set forth in these regulations.
67. **SUBSEQUENT MINOR SUBDIVISION:** A proposed subdivision which is the second or subsequent minor subdivision that does not result in a total of more than five parcels created by subdivision and any combination of exemptions under Section 76-3-201 or 76-3-207, MCA from a tract of record since July 1, 1973. Prairie County will review all subsequent minor subdivisions in a manner identical to first minor subdivisions, with exception that a public hearing is required for subsequent minors.
68. **SURVEYOR (PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR):** A person licensed in conformance with the Montana Engineers' and Land Surveyors' Act (Title 37, Chapter 67, MCA) to practice surveying in the State of Montana.

69. **SURVEYOR (EXAMINING LAND SURVEYOR):** A professional land surveyor duly appointed by the governing body to review surveys and plats submitted for filing.
70. **SWALE:** A drainage channel or depression designed to direct surface water flow.
71. **TITLE REPORT (ABSTRACT OF TITLE, SUBDIVISION GUARANTEE, OR PLATTING REPORT):** A report from a title service company on the condition of title to the property proposed for subdivision, which identifies the owners of record of the property, lien holders, encumbrances, easements and restrictions of record, and all other conditions of title of public record, and accompanied by a guarantee of the accuracy of the report from the title insurance agent or its underwriter.
72. **TOPOGRAPHY:** General term to include characteristics of the ground surface such as plains, hills, mountains, slopes, and other physiographic features.
73. **TOWNHOME or TOWNHOUSE:** Property that is owned subject to an arrangement under which persons own their own units and hold separate title to the land beneath their units, but under which they may jointly own the common areas and facilities.
74. **TRACT OF RECORD:** An individual parcel of land, irrespective of ownership, that can be identified by legal description, independent of any other parcel of land, using documents on file in the records of the county clerk and recorder's office [Section 76-3-103 (17)(a), MCA].
75. **VICINITY SKETCH:** A map at a scale suitable to locate a proposed subdivision, showing the boundary lines of all adjacent properties and streets and other information necessary to determine the general location of the proposed subdivision.
76. **WATERCOURSE:** Any depression 2 feet or more below the surrounding land serving to give direction to a current of water at least 9 months of the year and having a bed and well-defined banks.
77. **Well and Facility Pads:** A site used for the extraction or the refining of oil and/or natural gas, or for the injection of fluids underground. Producing well pads generally consist of the following equipment:
- i Wellheads
  - ii Separation Units
  - iii Tanks
  - iv Combustors, compressor(s), & flare pits
  - v Pipes interconnecting the above-mentioned equipment.

78. **WILDLIFE:** Those animals that are not domesticated or tamed, or as may be defined in a Growth Policy.
79. **WILDLIFE HABITAT:** The place or area where wildlife naturally lives or travels through.

# **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

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## **I-A. Title**

These regulations will be known and may be cited as “The Prairie County Subdivision Regulations”; hereinafter referred to as “these regulations.”

## **I-B. Authority**

Authorization for these regulations is contained in the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act (“MSPA”) [Title 76, Chapter 3, MCA].

## **I-C. Purpose**

The purposes of these regulations are to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare by regulating the subdivision of land; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to lessen congestion in the streets and highways; to provide for adequate light, air, water supply, sewage disposal, parks and recreation areas, ingress and egress, and other public requirements; to require development in harmony with the natural environment; to promote preservation of open space; to promote cluster development approaches that minimize costs to local citizens and that promote effective and efficient provision of public services; to protect the rights of property owners; and to require uniform monumentation of land subdivisions and transferring interests in real property by reference to a plat or certificate of survey, and provide for phased development. [Section 76-3-102, MCA].

These regulations are intended to comply with MCA, Title 76, Part 5 of the MSPA, and are intended to promote:

1. The orderly development of the jurisdictional area.
2. The coordination of roads within subdivided land with other roads, both existing and planned.
3. The dedication of land for roadways and for public utility easements.
4. The improvement of roads.
5. The provision of proper physical and legal access, including obtaining necessary easements.
6. The provision of adequate open spaces for travel, light, air, and recreation.
7. The provision of adequate transportation, water, drainage, and sanitary facilities.
8. The avoidance or minimizing of congestion.

9. The avoidance of subdivisions which would involve unnecessary environmental degradation.
10. The avoidance of danger or injury by reason of natural hazard or the lack of water, drainage, access, transportation, or other public improvements.
11. The avoidance of excessive expenditure of public funds for the supply of public improvements and services.
12. The manner and form of making and filing of any plat for subdivided lands.
13. The administration of these regulations by defining the powers and duties of approving authorities, including procedures for the review and approval of all plats of subdivisions covered by these provisions.

**I-D.            Jurisdiction**

These regulations govern the subdivision of land within the jurisdictional area of the governing body of Prairie County.

If a proposed subdivision lies within one mile of a third class city or town or within two miles of a second-class city or within three miles of a first class city, the county governing body must submit the preliminary plat to the city or town governing body or its designated agent for review and comment. It is important to note that no city or town has jurisdictional authority within Prairie County. If a proposed subdivision lies partly within an incorporated city or town, the preliminary plat must be submitted to, and approved by, both the city or town and the county governing body.

If a proposed subdivision is located in a rural school district, the governing body shall provide a summary of the information contained in the subdivision application and preliminary plat to school district trustees.

When a proposed subdivision is also proposed to be annexed to a municipality, the governing body of the municipality will combine public hearings and otherwise coordinate the subdivision review process and annexation procedures whenever possible.

These regulations supplement all other regulations, and where they are at variance with other laws, regulations, ordinances, or resolutions, the more restrictive requirements apply. Other regulations include, but are not limited to building codes, development codes, and fire codes.

**I-E.            Severability**

If a court of competent jurisdiction holds any word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph, section, or other part of these regulations invalid, that judgment will affect only the part held invalid.

**I-F. Public Hearing and Notice**

a. Hearing

- i. Public hearings for major subdivisions shall be held by the planning board.
- ii. When a hearing is required by these regulations, notice shall be posted according to the requirements in Subsection I-F (b).

b. Notice

- i. The planning board shall give notice of the time, dates, and location of the hearing by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the county not less than 15 days prior to the date of the hearing.
- ii. At least 15 days prior to the date of the hearing, the planning board shall give notice of the hearing by certified mail to the subdivider, each adjoining landowner to the land included in the preliminary plat, and each purchaser under contract for deed of property immediately adjoining the land included in the preliminary plat.
- iii. The subdivider shall post notices at conspicuous places on the site of the proposed subdivision at least 10 days prior to the public hearing. Notice shall be at least 3 feet by 3 feet and be readable up to 50 feet from the edge of the existing road on proposed site.

**I-G. Construction Timing**

A person may not erect any facility for supply of water, disposal of sewage or solid waste, erect any building or shelter that requires facilities for the supply of water, disposal of sewage, or solid waste until the governing body has given conditional approval of the preliminary plat. In addition, a person shall not begin construction on facilities to be used by the public such as roads, parks or utilities until the governing body has given conditional approval of the preliminary plat. Construction work undertaken prior to the preliminary plat approval subjects the subdivider to the possibility the work will have to be redone or removed.

**I-H. Transfer of Title**

Except as noted below, a final subdivision plat must be filed for record with the county clerk and recorder before title to the subdivided land can be sold or transferred in any manner. After the preliminary plat of a subdivision has been approved or conditionally approved, the subdivider may enter into contracts to sell lots in the proposed subdivision if all of the following conditions are met [Section 76-3-303, MCA]:

- a. That under the terms of the contracts the purchasers of lots in the proposed subdivision make any payments to an escrow agent, which must be a bank or savings and loan association chartered to do business in the State of Montana.
- b. That under the terms of the contracts and the escrow agreement the payments made by purchasers of lots in the proposed subdivision may not be distributed by the escrow agent to the subdivider until the final plat of the subdivision is filed with the county clerk and recorder;
- c. That the contracts and the escrow agreement provide that if the final plat of the proposed subdivision is not filed with the county clerk and recorder within two years of the preliminary plat approval, the escrow agent shall immediately refund to each purchaser any payments made under the contract;
- d. That the contracts contain the following language conspicuously set out therein: “The real property which is the subject hereof has not been finally platted, and until a final plat identifying the property has been filed with the county clerk and recorder, title to the property cannot be transferred in any manner;” and
- e. That the county treasurer has certified that no real property taxes assessed and levied on the land to be divided are delinquent.

**I-I. Permission to Enter**

The governing body or its designated agent(s) or affected agencies identified during the pre-application meeting may investigate, examine, and evaluate the site of the proposed subdivision to verify information provided by the subdivider and to subsequently monitor compliance with any conditions if the preliminary plat is approved conditionally. The submission of a subdivision application constitutes a grant of permission by the subdivider for the governing body, its agents, and affected agencies to enter the subject property. The property owner will have no liability associated with a visit to their property by the governing body, its agents, the public and affected agencies.

**I-J. VariANCES**

**I-J-1. VariANCES Authorized**

The governing body may grant variances from Section V, Design and Improvement Standards, of these regulations when due to the characteristics of land proposed for subdivision, strict compliance with these standards would result in undue hardship and would not be essential to the public welfare. A variance will not be granted if it would have the effect of nullifying the intent and purpose of these regulations.

- a. A public hearing is required to be held for variance request for all major subdivisions. The public hearing shall be held by the planning board pursuant to Subsection I-F (a). Notice of the hearing on the variance request must be posted according to Subsection I-F (b). Public hearings are not required for variance requests for first minor subdivisions.

**I-J-2.**            **Variance Criteria**

The governing body will not approve a variance unless it finds that:

- a.        The granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or general welfare or injurious to other adjoining properties.
- b.        Due to the physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the property involved, strict compliance with the regulations will impose an undue hardship on the owner. Undue hardship does not include personal or financial hardship, or any hardship that is self-imposed.
- c.        The variance will not cause a substantial increase in public costs; and

**I-J-3.**            **Procedure**

The subdivider shall include with the submission of the preliminary plat a written statement describing and justifying the requested variance. If during the review period a need for a variance is identified, and the variance has not been specifically requested, the application can be deemed insufficient and the review period can be suspended until the issue is determined to be sufficiently addressed. For applications being considered by the planning board, the planning board will consider the requested variance and recommend its approval or denial to the governing body.

**I-J-4.**            **Conditions**

In granting variances, the governing body may impose reasonable conditions to secure the objectives of these regulations.

**I-J-5.**            **Statement of Facts**

When a variance is granted, the motion to approve the proposed subdivision must contain a statement describing the variance and the facts and conditions upon which the issuance of the variance is based.

**I-K.**             **Amendment of Regulations**

Before the governing body amends these regulations, it will hold a public hearing on the proposed amendment. Notice of the time and place of the public hearing must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county not less than 15 days or more than 30 days before the date of the hearing.

**I-L.**             **Administration**

**I-L-1.**          **Enforcement**

Except as provided in Section 76-3-303, MCA, and these regulations, every final subdivision plat must be filed for record with the county clerk and recorder before title to

the subdivided land can be sold or transferred in any manner. If unlawful transfers or uses are made, the county attorney shall commence action to enjoin further sales or transfers and compel compliance with all provisions of the MSPA and these regulations. The cost of this action shall be imposed against the party not prevailing.

**I-L-2. Violation and Penalties**

Any person, firm, corporation, or other entity who violates any of the provisions of the MSPA or these regulations is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 or by imprisonment in jail for not more than three months or by both fine and imprisonment. Each sale, lease, or transfer, or offer of sale, lease, or transfer of each separate parcel of land in violation of any provision of the MSPA or these regulations shall be deemed a separate and distinct offense. The Prairie County Attorney's Office is the entity responsible for enforcing these regulations.

**I-L-3. Schedule of Fees:**

The required fee shall accompany the preliminary plat and final plat application. The review fee shall be paid to the planning department for each application reviewed according to the fee schedule as approved and established by the governing body under a separate document. No action shall be taken on applications or appeals until all application fees have been paid in full. The governing body may require the subdivider to pay for third party review fees, such as: Examining Land Surveying, Engineering, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, and other planning consulting review fees. A schedule of fees can be obtained from the County Clerk and Recorder.

**I-L-4. Appeals**

- a. A person who has filed with the governing body an application for a subdivision under the MSPA and these regulations may bring an action in district court to sue the governing body to recover actual damages caused by a final action, decision, or order of the governing body or a regulation adopted pursuant to the MSPA that is arbitrary or capricious.
- b. A party identified in Subsection (d) below who is aggrieved by a decision of the governing body to approve, conditionally approve, or deny an application and preliminary plat for a proposed subdivision or a final subdivision plat may, within 30 days after the written decision, appeal to the district court in the county in which the property involved is located. The petition must specify the grounds upon which the appeal is made. The governing body's decision, based on the record as a whole, must be sustained unless the decision being challenged is arbitrary, capricious, or unlawful.
- c. For the purposes of this section, "aggrieved" means a person who can demonstrate a specific personal and legal interest, as distinguished from a general interest, who has been or is likely to be specially and injuriously affected by the decision.

- d. The following parties may appeal under the provisions of these regulations above in Subsection (b):
  - i. the subdivider.
  - ii. a landowner with a property boundary contiguous to the proposed subdivision or a private landowner with property within the county or municipality where the subdivision is proposed if that landowner can show a likelihood of material injury to the landowner's property or its value.
  - iii. the county commissioners of the county where the subdivision is proposed; and
  - iv. one of the following municipalities:
    - A. a first-class municipality as described in Section 7-1-4111, MCA, if a subdivision is proposed within 3 miles of its limits.
    - B. a second-class municipality, as described in Section 7-1-4111, MCA, if a subdivision is proposed within 2 miles of its limits.
    - C. a third-class municipality, as described in Section 7-1-4111, MCA, if a subdivision is proposed within 1 mile of its limits.

## **II. General Procedures**

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*\*The provisions of this section apply to Section III, IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII of these regulations.*

### **II-A. Preliminary Plats**

#### **II-A-1. Pre-application Process**

- a. Prior to submittal of a subdivision application, the subdivider shall request a pre application meeting with the subdivision administrator and at least one member of the Planning Board. The meeting shall occur within 30 days after the subdivider submits a written request for the meeting to the subdivision administrator.
- b. At the time of the pre-application meeting request, the subdivider shall provide to the subdivision administrator a sketch of the proposed subdivision showing the layout of the proposed features in relation to existing site conditions. It is recommended the representative and the developer or landowner attend the pre-application meeting to avoid potential problems.
  - i. The sketch may be a freehand sketch drawn directly on a print of a topographic map of the area proposed for division at a scale of 1 inch to 400 feet or larger that is adequate to show the property and must include the following:
    - A. Information on the current status of the site, including:
      1. location.
      2. approximate tract and lot boundaries of existing tracts of record.
      3. description of general terrain.
      4. natural features on the land, including water bodies, floodplains geologic hazards, and soil types.
      5. existing structures and improvements.
      6. existing utility lines and facilities serving the area to be subdivided; and
      7. existing easements and rights of way.
    - B. Documentation on the current status of the site, including:
      1. ownership information, such as a deed, option to buy or buy-sell agreement, including permission to subdivide.

2. water rights, including location of Agricultural Water User Facilities.
  3. any special improvement districts; and
  4. rights of first refusal for the property
- ii. Information on the proposed subdivision, including:
- A. tract and proposed lot boundaries.
  - B. proposed public and private improvements.
  - C. location of utility lines and facilities.
  - D. easements and rights of way.
  - E. parks and open space and proposed conservation easements.
  - F. existing conservation easements; and
  - G. existing covenants or deed restrictions.
- c. At the pre-application meeting:
- i. the subdivision administrator and Planning Board member(s) shall identify, for informational purposes, the state laws, local regulations, and growth policy provisions that may apply to the subdivision review process.
  - ii. the subdivision administrator shall provide information on phasing, if applicable.
  - iii. the subdivision administrator shall provide the subdivider with a list of public utilities, local, state and federal agencies, and any other entities that have an interest in the proposed subdivision and that may be contacted for comment by the subdivision administrator or planning board on the subdivision application. The subdivision administrator shall also identify the timeframes that the public utilities, agencies, and other entities are given to respond; and
  - iv. the subdivision administrator may identify particular additional information the subdivision administrator anticipates will be required for review of the subdivision application. This does not limit the ability of the subdivision administrator to request additional information at a later time.

- d. Unless the subdivider submits a subdivision application within 6 months of this pre-application meeting, the subdivider must request a new pre-application meeting prior to submitting the subdivision application.

## **II-A-2. Subdivision Application and Preliminary Plat Submittal**

The subdivider shall provide the required copies of the preliminary plat and supplement materials as determined by the subdivision administrator. All preliminary plats shall be 24 inch by 36-inch size, 18 inch by 24 inch in size and/or 11 inch by 17-inch size as specified by the subdivision administrator. The required copies of the all supplement materials shall be organized with a cover sheet, table of contents, identification tags for each element listed below and shall be bound in a three-ring binder for each set and ready for distribution. The subdivider shall also provide the subdivision administrator with an electronic form (WORD or PDF format).

The subdivider shall submit to the governing body or to the agent or agency designated by the governing body a subdivision application addressing these topics and containing the following materials, all described in more detail in forms provided by the subdivision administrator, as determined by the subdivision administrator:

1. A completed and signed Subdivision Application Form.
2. The required review fee.
3. A preliminary plat (and if applicable a preliminary site plan).
4. A copy of the most current certificate of survey or subdivision plat pertaining to the subject parcel to be subdivided.
5. A Vicinity Sketch, as described in the Supplements (#5), showing the location of the nearest utilities.
6. A topographic map.
7. A stormwater drainage plan.
8. If development is planned in phases, a phasing plan meeting the requirements of Section IV-A-2.
9. Title Report dated no more than 6 months prior to the date of preliminary plat submittal.
10. Lienholders acknowledgement of subdivision.
11. Documentation of legal and physical access.
12. Documentation of existing easements, including those for Agricultural Water User Facilities.
13. Existing covenants and deed restrictions.
14. Existing water rights.
15. Existing mineral rights.
16. Names and addresses of all adjoining property owners.
17. Proposed road plans and profiles include the location and dimensions of the roads and if proposed alleys, sidewalks and / or paths.
18. Approach/access/encroachment permits submitted to the Montana Department of Transportation or the local jurisdiction.
19. Road maintenance agreement.
20. Proposed easements, including the location of nearest utilities.

21. Proposed disposition of water rights.
22. Proposed disposition of mineral rights.
23. Parkland dedication calculations, location of and description of proposed parkland, or proposal for cash-in-lieu.
24. Environmental assessment and/or summary of probable impacts.
25. Transportation impact analysis or traffic study, for major subdivisions.
26. Noxious Weed Management Compliance Plan.
27. Existing and proposed property owners' association documents, including draft articles of incorporation, declaration, and bylaws.
28. Required water and sanitation information.
29. Letter requesting a revocation of agricultural covenants.
30. Letter indicating locations of cultural or historic resources.
31. Variance request.
32. An engineering study that identifies the floodway and Base Flood Elevation (BFE) if identified during the preapplication meeting.
33. Letter identifying and proposing mitigation for potential hazards or other adverse impacts as identified in the pre-application meeting and not covered by any of the above required materials.
34. Such additional relevant and reasonable information as identified by the subdivision administrator that is pertinent to the required elements of this section; and
35. If proposing a first minor subdivision, or a subsequent minor subdivision, a copy of each instrument of transfer for the parcel or tract pertaining to the subject parcel filed or recorded since July 1, 1973. The instruments of transfer include but not limited to deed(s), certificate of survey(s) or subdivision plat(s).

**II-A-3. Review Process**

For both minor and major subdivisions, the initial review process is as follows:

- a. Element Review
  - i. Within 5 working days of receipt of a subdivision application and fee, the subdivision administrator shall determine whether the application contains all of the applicable materials required by Section II-A-2 and shall give written notice to the subdivider of the subdivision administrator's determination. The County Clerk and Recorder can provide the name and contact information for the current subdivision administrator. The Clerk and Recorder can be contacted at 406-635-5575.
    - A. If the subdivision administrator determines that elements are missing from the application, the subdivision administrator shall identify those elements in the notification and take no further action until all of the missing elements have been submitted.

- B. The subdivider shall submit additional information to correct the deficiencies. The additional materials must be submitted in the form of two paper copies and one electronic copy.
- C. If the subdivider submits additional information to correct the deficiencies, the subdivision administrator shall have 5 working days to notify the subdivider whether the application contains all the materials required by Section II-A-2 Subdivision Application and Preliminary Plat Submittal as applicable.
- D. If the applicant does not submit information to correct the deficiencies within 180 days following the subdivision administrator's letter identifying the missing elements, the application and file will be terminated. The subdivision administrator shall notify the applicant 30 days prior to the application being terminated.
- E. This process shall be repeated until the subdivider submits an application containing all the materials required by Section II-A-2, or the application is terminated or withdrawn.

b. Sufficiency Review

- i. Within 15 working days after the subdivision administrator notifies the subdivider that the application contains all of the required elements as provided in Subsection (a) above, the subdivision administrator shall determine whether the application and required elements contain detailed, supporting information that is sufficient to allow for the review of the proposed subdivision under these regulations and shall give written notification to the subdivider of the subdivision administrator's determination.
  - A. If the subdivision administrator determines that the information in the application is not sufficient to allow for review of the proposed subdivision, the subdivision administrator shall identify specific required information in its notification and no further action shall be taken on the application by the subdivision administrator until all of the materials identified as insufficient are submitted.
  - B. The subdivider shall submit additional information to address the insufficient items. The additional materials must be submitted in the form of two paper copies and one electronic copy.
  - C. If the subdivider submits additional information to correct the deficiencies in accordance with Subsection (i)(B) above, the subdivision administrator shall have 15 working days to notify the subdivider whether the submitted information and required elements

contain detailed, supporting information that is sufficient to allow for review of the proposed subdivision under these regulations.

D. If the applicant does not submit information to correct the deficiencies within 180 days following the subdivision administrator's letter identifying the insufficient items, the application and file will be terminated. The subdivision administrator shall notify the applicant 30 days prior to the application being terminated.

E. This process shall be repeated until the application contains detailed, supporting information that is sufficient for review of the proposed subdivision under the provisions of these regulations, or the application is terminated or withdrawn.

ii. A determination that an application contains sufficient information for review as provided in this Subsection (b) does not ensure that the proposed subdivision will be approved or conditionally approved by the governing body and does not limit the ability of the subdivision administrator, planning board, or the governing body to request additional information during the review process.

iii. A determination of sufficiency by the subdivision administrator pursuant to this subsection does not limit the DEQ from requiring additional water and sanitation information as part of the DEQ review of water and sanitation information.

c. Applicable Regulations

Subdivision review and approval, conditional approval or denial shall be based on those regulations in effect at the time a subdivision application and preliminary plat is deemed to contain sufficient information for review. If regulations change during the element or sufficiency review, the determination of whether the application contains the required elements and sufficient information, and the subdivision review, shall be based on the new regulations.

**II-A-4. Amended Applications**

a. If the subdivider changes the subdivision application or preliminary plat before the public hearing for major subdivisions, or before the governing body makes its decision for first minor subdivisions, the subdivider shall submit the amended application or preliminary plat to the subdivision administrator for review.

i. Within 5 working days of receiving the amended application or preliminary plat, the subdivision administrator shall determine whether the changes to the subdivision application or preliminary plat are material, as determined in Subsection (c) below.

- ii. The applicable review period is suspended while the subdivision administrator considers the amended application or preliminary plat.
  - iii. If the subdivision administrator determines the changes are not material, the applicable review period resumes when the subdivision administrator mails notice of the decision to the subdivider.
  - iv. If the subdivision administrator determines the changes are material, the subdivision administrator shall either require the subdivider to schedule a new pre-application meeting and resubmit the application and preliminary plat as a new subdivision application, or proceed with the applicable review period upon certification from the subdivision administrator that the application is sufficient for review.
- b. By making changes to a pending subdivision application or preliminary plat, the subdivider consents to suspension of the review period as provided above in Subsection (a)(ii).
- c. The following changes, although not an exhaustive list, may be considered material:
  - i. configuration or number of lots.
  - ii. road layout.
  - iii. water and/or septic proposals.
  - iv. configuration of park land or open spaces.
  - v. easement provisions.
  - vi. designated access.
  - vii. changes to the proposed use of the lots; or
  - viii. changes to proposed covenants.
- d. A subdivider whose subdivision application or preliminary plat has been deemed materially changed by the subdivision administrator may appeal the subdivision administrator's decision to the governing body. The subdivider may request a public meeting with the governing body for first minor subdivision, or a public hearing with the governing body for major subdivisions and may submit additional evidence to show that the changes to the preliminary plat are not material.
  - i. The applicable review period is suspended until the governing body decision on the appeal is made.
  - ii. If the governing body concludes that the evidence and information demonstrate that the changes to the subdivision application or

preliminary plat are material, the governing body shall require the subdivision application and preliminary plat to be resubmitted pursuant to Subsection (a)(iv) above.

- iii. If the governing body concludes that the evidence and information demonstrate that the changes to the subdivision application or preliminary plat are not material, the applicable review period resumes as of the date of the decision.
- iv. By appealing the decision of the subdivision administrator, the subdivider agrees to suspension of the applicable review period provided in Subsection (d)(i).

**II-A-5. Amending Approved Preliminary Plats Before Final Plat Approval**

- a. If the subdivider proposes to change the preliminary plat after the preliminary plat approval but before the final plat approval, the subdivider shall submit the proposed changes to the subdivision administrator for review.
  - i. Within 5 working days of receiving the proposed changes, the subdivision administrator shall determine whether the changes to the preliminary plat are material pursuant to Subsection (b) below.
  - ii. If the subdivision administrator determines the changes are material, the subdivision administrator may either require a public hearing with the applicable body for majors subdivisions, or a meeting with the governing body for first minor subdivisions, or, if the changes are extensive, the subdivision administrator may require the subdivider to begin the subdivision review process again, starting with the pre-application meeting, and require payment of a new application fee.
  - iii. If the subdivision administrator determines the changes are not material, the subdivision administrator shall accept the changes, notify the subdivider and the governing body of that decision, and the governing body shall approve those changes in a meeting for which notice has been given of non-material changes to the preliminary plat.
- b. The following changes, although not an exhaustive list, may be considered material:
  - i. configuration or number of lots.
  - ii. road layout.
  - iii. water and/or septic proposals.
  - iv. configuration of park land or open spaces.
  - v. easement provisions.

- vi. designated access.
  - vii. changes to the proposed use of the lots.
  - viii. changes to the proposed covenants; or
  - ix. changes to conditions of approval.
- c. A subdivider whose proposed changes to the preliminary plat have been deemed material by the subdivision administrator may appeal the subdivision administrator's decision to the governing body by written notice within 10 working days. The subdivider may request a public meeting with the governing body and may submit additional evidence to show that the changes to the preliminary plat are not material.
- d. If the subdivider and subdivision administrator determine that a condition of approval is illegal or impossible to comply with due to circumstances outside the subdivider's control, economic hardship notwithstanding, the condition may be reviewed by the governing body through a properly noticed public hearing for majors subdivisions, or a public meeting with the governing body for first minors, in order to determine if the condition may be waived or amended.

**II-A-6. Extension of Preliminary Plat Approval Period**

- a. At the end of the preliminary plat approval period the governing body may grant an extension according to the following:
- i. The extension request is made by the subdivider in writing at least two weeks prior to the expiration of the preliminary plat.
  - ii. All requests for extensions must be in writing and must provide responses to the following criteria and supporting documentation, if any:
    - A. Progress to date in completing or demonstration and evidence of good faith efforts to satisfy the required conditions of preliminary plat approval.
    - B. Duration of the required extension and the ability of the subdivider to meet the required conditions of preliminary plat approval within the requested extension period.
    - C. Significant changes in the vicinity of the subdivision that have occurred or are planned to occur within the requested extension period and whether the preliminary plat conditions adequately mitigate the significant changes. Significant changes constitute changes that may render the subdivision non-compliant with

current design standards, such as road design, wildfire, or flood standards.

- D. Consistency with adopted comprehensive planning documents, including but not limited to, the jurisdiction's growth policy, annexation policy, capital improvements plan, transportation plan, etc.
  - E. Impacts to public health, safety, and general welfare.
  - F. Planning and provisions of public facilities and services in the vicinity of the subdivision and whether the requested extension conforms to those plans and provisions.
- iii. Prior to granting any extensions greater than 3 years past original signed statement of original preliminary plat approval for a major subdivision, the governing body must hold a public hearing. Notice of the hearing must be given by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the county not less than 15 days prior to the date of the hearing.
  - iv. Prior to granting any extension of a preliminary plat approval for a minor subdivision, the governing body will hold a public meeting noticed in accordance with the standard practices of the governing body.
  - v. After the hearing or meeting, the governing body shall determine the extent to which the request meets the criteria for extension, including whether or not any changes to the primary criteria impacts identified in the original subdivision approval or any new information not previously considered exists that creates any new potentially significant adverse impacts that would support denial of the subdivision extension request. Additional conditions may not be imposed as a condition of subdivision extension.
  - vi. Any mutually agreed-upon extension must be in writing and dated and signed by the members of the governing body and the subdivider or subdivider's agent.
- b. The governing body may issue more than one extension.

## **II-B. Final Plats**

### **II-B-1. Final Plat Contents**

The final plat submitted for approval must conform to the preliminary plat as previously reviewed and approved by the governing body and must incorporate all required modifications and comply with all conditions imposed at the time of subdivision application and preliminary plat approval. The final plat and accompanying documents must comply with the Montana Uniform Standards for Final Subdivision Plats 24.183.1107, ARM (provided in Appendix A).

**II-B-2. Final Plat Initial Review**

a. **Final Plat Submittal**

A final plat is considered to be received on the date of delivery to the governing body or the agent or agency designated by the governing body when accompanied by the review fee submitted as provided in Section 76-3-602, MCA. The final plat approval application form, which can be obtained from the subdivision administrator, and all supplementary documents must be submitted to the subdivision administrator at least 60 working days prior to the expiration of preliminary plat approval to accommodate for review time according to Subsection II-B-2 (b) and Section II-B-5 of these regulations. The submittal shall include, as applicable:

- i. A complete final plat application.
- ii. the final plat review fee.
- iii. a written statement from the applicant or their representative outlining how each condition of approval has been satisfied.
- iv. information such as certified engineering plans, pictures of the site, or other documents supporting how the conditions have been met as outlined in the applicant's written statement.
- v. a Title Report or updated Abstract dated no less than 30 days prior to the date of submittal.
- vi. acknowledgement from all Lienholders, if applicable.
- vii. the DEQ and/or local reviewing authority approval.
- viii. all road plans and profiles, state or local encroachment permits, and traffic studies (if required).
- ix. all engineering plans.
- x. any homeowner association documents, including bylaws, covenants, and/or declarations.
- xi. final plat certificates consistent with samples included in the Supplements.
- xii. A Subdivision Improvement Agreement in accordance with Section II-B-4.
- xiii. County attorney (and/or if applicable, city attorney) approval; and

- xiv. one 11" x 17" and one 18" x 24" or larger copies of the final plat, completed in accordance with the Uniform Standards for Final Subdivisions Plats set forth in Appendix A.

b. Review by Subdivision Administrator

- i. Within 20 working days of receipt of a final plat, the subdivision administrator shall determine whether the final plat contains the information required in Subsection II-B-2 (a) and shall notify the subdivider or, with the subdivider's written permission, the subdivider's agent of that determination in writing. If the subdivision administrator determines that the final plat does not contain the information required under subsections, the subdivision administrator shall identify the final plat's defects in the notification.
  - A. The subdivision administrator may review subsequent submissions of the final plat only for information found to be deficient during the original review of the final plat under Subsection II-B-2 (b)(i).
  - B. The time limits, provided in Subsection II-B-2 (b)(i), apply to each submission of the final plat until a written determination is made that the final plat contains the information required under Subsection II-B-2 (a). and the subdivider or the subdivider's agent is notified.
  - C. Final plat applications will not be considered complete by the subdivision administrator and will not be scheduled with the governing body until materials demonstrating that all conditions of preliminary approval have been satisfied are submitted.
- ii. If the subdivision administrator determines the final plat differs materially from the approved or conditionally approved preliminary plat, the applicant shall be required to submit the amendments pursuant to Section II-A-5. The subdivider may appeal the subdivision administrator's decision according to the procedures in Subsection II-A-5 (d).
- iii. The subdivision administrator shall require that final subdivision plats be reviewed for errors and omissions in calculation or drafting by an examining land surveyor before recording with the Clerk and Recorder. When the survey data shown on the plat meets the conditions pursuant to these regulations, the examining surveyor shall certify the compliance in a printed or stamped signed certificate on the plat.
- iv. The subdivision administrator may forward the application to the public works director and/or county attorney, or county department, requesting their review. Any comments received shall be included in the subdivision administrators report to the governing body.

- v. Time periods for final plat review can be extended by mutual agreement in writing.

**II-B-3. Restrictive Covenants – Approval, Content and Enforcement**

- a. The governing body may require that some or all restrictive covenants governing the use of land within the subdivision, whether proposed by the subdivider or required by the governing body, be set forth in a separate heading identifying them as plat approval covenants, and indicating: “These covenant(s) may not be repealed or amended without prior written consent of the (name of the governing body).”
- b. The governing body may require that all restrictive covenants it has required as a condition of plat approval contain the following language: “The (name of the governing body) is a party to this restrictive covenant and may enforce its terms.”
- c. If common property is to be deeded to a property owners’ association, the covenants and by-laws which govern the association must, at a minimum, provide for the:
  - i. Formation of a property owners’ association concurrently with the filing of the final subdivision plat. Articles of Incorporation shall be filed with the Secretary of State’s office.
  - ii. Mandatory membership for each property owner. Purchasers of property may also be required to sign a waiver of right to protest the formation of a maintenance district to maintain improvements.
  - iii. Perpetual reservation of the common property when required under Section 76-3-621 (6)(a), MCA.
  - iv. Payment of liability insurance premiums, local taxes, and the cost of maintaining recreational or other facilities.
  - v. Placement of liens on the property of lot owners who are delinquent in the payment of association fees and assessments.
  - vi. Adjustment of assessments to meet changing needs.
  - vii. Means of enforcing the covenants, and of receiving and processing complaints.
  - viii. Transition of control of the association from the Declarant to the homeowners.
  - ix. Dissolution of the association and modification of the covenants and restrictions after obtaining the governing body’s approval of the change; and

- x. Regular maintenance of roads, parks, buildings, drainage facilities, and other facilities controlled by the association.

**II-B-4. Subdivision Improvements Agreement: Guaranty**

- a. As a condition of approval of the final plat, the subdivider must have installed all required improvements or have entered into a subdivision improvements agreement guaranteeing the construction, installation, and maintenance of all required improvements [Section 76-3-507, MCA]. The governing body may require up to 100% completion of improvements related to public health and safety, such as roads, firefighting facilities, and installation of utilities, before agreeing to the use of a subdivision improvements agreement. If 100% completion is required, engineering plans must be filed before approval of the final plat. A model subdivision improvements agreement and alternative methods of guaranteeing required improvements, the procedures, and requirements for securing an agreement, and suggested conditions for maintenance are available from the subdivision administrator.
- b. Security Guarantee
  - i. If the subdivider chooses to enter into a subdivision improvements agreement, the subdivider shall submit estimated costs prepared by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana for completing the required improvements. The amount of the guarantee shall be 125 percent (125%) of the estimated cost.
  - ii. The subdivider shall provide a monetary security guarantee for 125 percent (125%) of the required improvements. Acceptable forms of guarantees are:
    - A. Irrevocable Letter of Credit from a financial institution or other reputable institution subject to the approval of the governing body or designee.
    - B. A Surety Performance Bond to guarantee the funds to complete improvements, subject to any requirements of the bonding company. The bond shall be payable to the governing body and shall remain in effect until the improvements have been completed and accepted by the governing body; or
    - C. An Escrow Account where the subdivider has deposited cash, or collateral readily convertible to cash at face value either with the governing body or in escrow with a bank. The subdivider shall give the governing body an agreement with the bank guaranteeing the following:
      - 1. That the funds in the escrow account are to be held in trust until released by the governing body and may not be used or

pledged by the subdivider as security for any obligation during that period.

2. That should the subdivider fail to complete the required improvements, the bank shall immediately make the funds in escrow available to the governing body for completing these improvements.

c. Reduction and Release of Guarantee

- i. Upon completion of the required improvements, the subdivider shall submit to the governing body a statement certifying that:
  - A. All required improvements are complete.
  - B. All required improvements are in compliance with the minimum standards specified by the governing body for their construction if the governing body has standards. If standards do not exist, the governing body may require improvements be in compliance with design plans prepared by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana.
  - C. The developer knows of no defects in those improvements
  - D. That these improvements are free and clear of any encumbrances or liens
  - E. All applicable fees and surcharges have been paid.
- ii. In those cases where some improvement guarantees have been made in Subsection II-B-4 (b). above, the amount of the guarantee may be reduced upon installation and acceptance by the governing body of the required improvements. The amount of reduction shall correspond to 90 percent (90%) of the value of the completed improvements. The reduction cannot include the value of improvements that have not been completed.
- iii. Upon completion of all of the required improvements and certification of the items in Subsection II-B-4 (c). above, the governing body shall authorize the release of any remaining portion of the improvement guarantee.

**II-B-5. Final Plat Approval**

a. Approval by the Governing Body

The governing body shall examine every final subdivision plat. If a determination is made under Subsection II-B-2 (b). that the final plat contains the information

required under Subsection II-B-2 (a) the governing body shall review and approve or deny the final plat within 20 working days.

The governing body shall approve it if it conforms to the conditions of preliminary plat approval and to the terms of the MSPA and these regulations or deny it pursuant to Subsection (ii) below.

- i. If the final plat is approved, the governing body shall certify its approval on the face of the final plat. When applicable, a certificate of the governing body expressly accepting any dedicated land, easements, or improvements will be filed with the final plat.
- ii. If the final plat is denied, the governing body shall write a letter stating the reason for denial and forward a copy to the subdivider. The governing body will return the final plat to the subdivider within 10 working days of the action. The subdivider may then make any necessary corrections and resubmit the final plat for approval.

Time periods for final plat review can be extended by mutual agreement in writing.

b. Inaccurate Information

The governing body may withdraw approval of a final plat if it determines that material information by the subdivider is inaccurate.

**II-B-6. Final Plat Filing**

After it is approved, the final plat may not be altered in any manner except as provided in Section II-B-7 below. The county clerk and recorder may not accept any plat for filing that does not bear the governing body's approval in proper form or that has been altered. The clerk and recorder may file an approved plat only if it is accompanied by the documents specified in the Montana Uniform Standards for Monumentation (24-183.1101, ARM), and Final Subdivision Plats (24.183.1107, ARM), contained in Appendix A.

**II-B-7. Amending Filed Plats**

- a. Changes that materially alter any portion of a filed plat, its land divisions, or improvements, must be made by filing an amended plat showing all alterations. Any alteration which increases the number of lots or modifies six or more lots, or abandons or alters a public road right-of-way or parkland dedication must be reviewed by the subdivision administrator and approved by the governing body, and the amended plat shall be filed at the County Clerk & Recorder Office.
- b. An amended plat that must be reviewed by the governing body is subject to the procedures for reviewing major or minor subdivisions, as appropriate. The governing body may not approve an amended final plat without the written consent of the owners and lienholders of all lots which will be modified by the proposed amendment.

- c. The governing body may not approve an amendment that will place a lot in non-conformance with the standards contained in Section V of these regulations unless the governing body holds a public hearing on the amendment and issues a written variance from the standards pursuant to Section I-J, Variances.
- d. The final amended plat submitted for approval must comply with the requirements for final subdivision plats under the Uniform Standards for Final Subdivision Plats (refer to 24.183.1107, ARM in Appendix A).

### **III. Review and Approval Procedures for Minor Subdivisions**

#### **III-A. First Minor Subdivisions**

If the tract of record proposed to be subdivided has not been subdivided or created by a subdivision or has not resulted from a tract of record that has had more than five parcels created from that tract of record under Section 76-3-201 or 76-3-207, MCA since July 1, 1973, then the proposed subdivision is a first minor subdivision.

#### **III-A-1. First Minor Subdivision Review**

The pre-application process and initial review process set forth in Section II, General Procedures, apply to this section.

#### **III-A-2. First Minor Subdivision Application and Preliminary Plat Submittal**

The subdivider shall submit to the subdivision administrator a subdivision application containing the materials identified in Section II-A-2 and in the pre-application meeting.

#### **III-A-3. First Minor Subdivision Exceptions**

The following do not apply to first minor subdivisions:

- a. preparation of an environmental assessment.
- b. public hearing requirements; and
- c. parkland dedication.

#### **III-A-4. First Minor Subdivision Review Process**

##### **a. Time Period for Approval, Conditional Approval, or Denial**

Within 35 working days of receiving a complete and sufficient application, the governing body shall approve, conditionally approve or deny the proposed subdivision according to Section III-A-7 of these regulations, unless the subdivider and the subdivision administrator agree to an extension or suspension of the review period, not to exceed one year.

##### **b. Public Agency and Utility Review**

Review and comment by public agencies or utilities may not delay the governing body's action on the subdivision application beyond the 35-working day review period. The governing body will make these comments available to the subdivider and to the general public upon request. If, during the review of the application, the Subdivision Administrator contacts a public utility, agency, or other entity that was not included on the list provided during the pre-application meeting, the subdivision

administrator shall notify the subdivider of the contact and the timeframe for response.

**III-A-5. Amended Applications Prior to Governing Body Decision**

If the subdivider changes the subdivision application or preliminary plat after the subdivision administrator makes a determination of sufficiency pursuant to Section II-A-3 but before the governing body decision, the subdivider shall submit the amended application to the subdivision administrator for review according to the procedures in Section II-A-4 Amended Applications.

**III-A-6. Subdivider's Preference for Mitigation**

No later than two working days before the meeting at which the governing body is to consider the subdivision application and preliminary plat, the subdivider is encouraged to submit in writing to the subdivision administrator the subdivider's comments on and responses to the subdivision administrator's recommendations, as well as any proposed mitigation measures not already discussed with the subdivision administrator. The governing body will consult with the subdivider and will give due weight and consideration to the subdivider's expressed preferences regarding mitigation [Section 76-3-608 (5)(b), MCA].

**III-A-7. First Minor Subdivision Governing Body Decision and Documentation**

a. Prerequisites to Approval

The governing body may not approve or conditionally approve a subdivision application and preliminary plat unless the proposed subdivision:

- i. provides easements for the location and installation of any planned utilities, both on and off site.
- ii. provides legal and physical access to each parcel within the subdivision and the notation of that access on the applicable plat and any instrument transferring the parcel.
- iii. assures that all required public or private improvements will be installed before final plat approval, or that their installation after final plat approval will be guaranteed as provided by Section II-B-4 of these regulations.
- iv. assures that the requirements of Section 76-3-504 (1)(j), MCA, regarding the disclosure and disposition of water rights as set forth in Section V-O, of these regulations, have been considered and will be accomplished before the final plat is submitted; and
- v. assures that the requirements of Section 76-3-504 (1)(k) regarding watercourse and irrigation easements as set forth in Section V-N have

been considered and will be accomplished before the final plat is submitted.

b. Consideration – Standards

In approving, conditionally approving, or denying a minor subdivision application, the governing body shall consider Subsection (a) above and whether the proposed subdivision complies with:

- i. these regulations, including but not limited to, the standards set forth in Section V.
- ii. other applicable regulations.
- iii. the MSPA, including but not limited to the following impacts:
  - A. impact on agriculture.
  - B. impact on agricultural water user facilities.
  - C. impact on local services.
  - D. impact on the natural environment.
  - E. impact on wildlife; and
  - F. wildlife habitat; and
  - G. impact on public health and safety.

Refer to the “Definitions” section at the beginning of these regulations for definitions for each of the above criteria. Refer to Appendix B for a discussion of the evaluation and decision-making related to these criteria.

- H. Proposed mitigation.

c. Consideration – Evidence

In making its decision to approve, conditionally approve, or deny a proposed minor subdivision the governing body may consider and weigh the following, as applicable:

- i. the subdivision application and preliminary plat.
- ii. the summary of probable impacts and proposed mitigation.
- iii. the Prairie County Growth Policy.
- iv. the subdivision administrator's staff report and recommendations; and

- v. any additional information authorized by state law.

d. Water and Sanitation-Special Rules

- i. Water and sanitation information provided during the application review process, including public comment, may be used as a basis for a conditional approval or denial of a subdivision only if the governing body finds that the application does not comply with previously adopted subdivision or other regulations.
- ii. For a proposed subdivision that will create one or more parcels containing less than 20 acres, the subdivider shall obtain approval by the DEQ as a condition of approval of the final plat. This approval applies to the development of lots at the time of the approval and is no guarantee that a source of water or a location for a septic system or drain fields will be available when the lots are actually developed.
- iii. For a proposed subdivision that will create one or more parcels containing 20 acres or more, the subdivider shall demonstrate in the preliminary plat application that there is an adequate water source and at least one area for a septic system and a replacement drain field for each lot. This information shall be submitted to the local reviewing authority so as to complete the sanitation review of parcels that do not fall under the review authority of DEQ.
- iv. The governing body shall collect public comment on water and sanitation information and shall make any comments submitted, or a summary of the comments submitted, available to the subdivider within 30 days after conditional approval or approval of the subdivision application and preliminary plat.
- v. The subdivider shall, as part of the subdivider's application for sanitation approval, forward the comments or the summary provided by the governing body to the:
  - A. reviewing authority provided in , Title 76, chapter 4, MCA for subdivisions that will create one or more parcels containing less than 20 acres; or
  - B. the local reviewing authority for proposed subdivisions that will create one or more parcels containing 20 acres or more and less than 160 acres.

e. Documentation of Governing Body Decision

- i. In rendering its decision to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the proposed subdivision the governing body shall issue written findings of fact that discuss and weigh the proposed subdivision's compliance with the above subsections. Findings of fact by the governing body concerning whether the development of the proposed subdivision meets the requirements of this regulations must be based on the record as a whole. The governing body's findings of fact must be sustained unless they are arbitrary, capricious, or unlawful.
- ii. When the governing body approves, denies, or conditionally approves the proposed subdivision, it shall within 30 working days following the oral decision send the subdivider a letter, with the appropriate signature, and make the letter available to the public. The letter shall:
  - A. contain information regarding the appeal process for the denial or imposition of conditions.
  - B. identify the regulations and statutes that are used in reaching the decision to approve, deny, or impose conditions and explain how they apply to the decision.
  - C. provide the facts and conclusions that the governing body relied upon in making its decision and reference documents, testimony, or other materials that form the basis of the decision.
  - D. provide the conditions that apply to the preliminary plat approval and that must be satisfied before the final plat may be approved; and
  - E. set forth the time limit for approval, pursuant to Subsection (f) below.

f. Subdivision Application and Preliminary Plat Approval Period

- i. Upon approval or conditional approval of the preliminary plat, the governing body shall provide the subdivider with a dated and signed statement of approval. The approval shall be in force for no more than three calendar years.
  - A. At least 30 days prior to the expiration of the preliminary plat approval, the governing body may, at the request of the subdivider, extend the approval for a mutually agreed-upon period of time. Any mutual agreed-upon extension must be in writing and dated and signed by the members of the governing body and the subdivider or the subdivider's agent. The governing body may issue more than one extension.

- B. The governing body may extend the approval for more than one year if that approval period is included as a specific condition of a written subdivision improvements agreement between the governing body and the subdivider, provided for in Section II-B-4.
- ii. After the application and preliminary plat are approved, the governing body may not impose any additional conditions as a prerequisite to final plat approval unless the preliminary plat approval expires.
- iii. The governing body may withdraw approval or conditional approval of an application and preliminary plat if it determines that information provided by the subdivider, and upon which the approval or conditional approval was based, is inaccurate.

**III-A-8. First Minor Subdivision Final Plat**

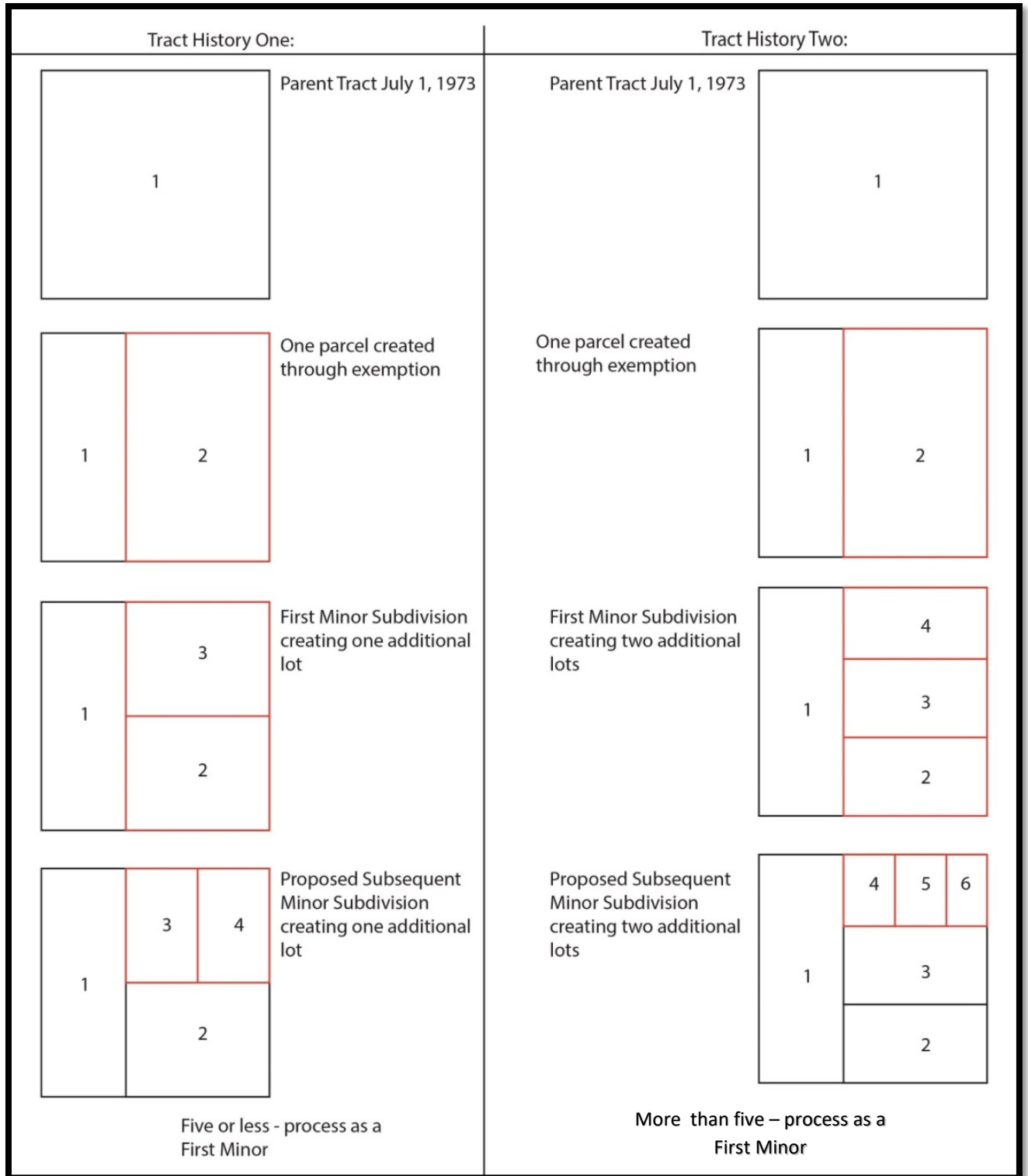
The final plat must include the contents and be submitted and reviewed in accordance with the appropriate requirements contained in Section II-B, Final Plats.

**III-B. Subsequent Minor Subdivisions**

In accordance with Section 76-3-609 (4) MCA, the governing body may adopt subdivision regulations that establish requirements for review of subsequent minor subdivisions that meet or exceed the requirements that apply to the first minor subdivision. These regulations require all subsequent minor subdivisions to be processed as first minor subdivisions according to Section III-A-1 through III-A-8., only if the preliminary plat application meets the following criteria:

- a. It is the second or subsequent minor subdivision on a tract of record as it existed on July 1, 1973; and/or
- b. It would not result in a total of more than five parcels created from subdivision and any combination of exemption under Section 76-3-201 or 76-3-207, MCA on a tract of record since July 1, 1973.

If a proposed subdivision is not a first minor subdivision it is a subsequent minor subdivision and shall be processed according to the requirements of Section III. Review and Approval Procedures for Minor Subdivisions, with the exception that a public hearing is required for the subdivision.



**Figure 1 – How to count tract history to determine how to process subsequent minor subdivisions.**

## **IV. REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES FOR MAJOR SUBDIVISIONS**

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### **IV-A. Review and Approval Procedures for Major Subdivisions**

The pre-application process and initial review process set forth in Section II, General Procedures, apply to this section.

#### **IV-A-1. Subdivision Application and Preliminary Plat Submittal**

The subdivider shall submit to the governing body or to the agent or agency authorized by the governing body a subdivision application containing the materials identified in Section II-A-2 and in the pre-application meeting.

#### **IV-A-2. Phased Subdivision and Preliminary Plat Submittals**

A subdivider applying for phased development review shall submit with the phased development application an overall phased development preliminary plat on which independent platted development phases must be presented. The phased development application must contain the information required pursuant to Section I through Section IV of these regulations for all phases of a development and a schedule for when the subdivider plans to submit for review each phase of the development.

The subdivider may change the schedule for review of each phase of the development upon approval of the governing body after a public hearing as provided below in Subsection (c) if the change does not negate conditions of approval or otherwise adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare.

- a. Except as otherwise provided by this Section IV-A-2, the phased development application must be reviewed in conformity with Sections I through Section IV of these regulations. In addition, each phase of the phased development must be reviewed as provided below in Subsection (c).
- b. The governing body may approve phased developments that extend beyond the time limits set forth in these regulations in Subsection IV-A-2 (c)(ii) but all phases of the phased development must be submitted for review and approved, conditionally approved, or denied within 20 years of the date the overall phased development preliminary plat is approved by the governing body.
- c. Prior to the commencement of each phase, the subdivider shall provide written notice to the governing body. The governing body shall hold a public hearing pursuant to Section I-F (of these regulations) within 30 working days after receipt of the written notice from the subdivider.
  - i. After the hearing, the governing body shall determine whether any changed primary criteria impacts, or new information exist that create

new potentially significant adverse impacts for the phase or phases. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section II-A, the governing body shall issue supplemental written findings of fact within 20 working days of the hearing and may impose necessary, additional conditions to minimize potentially significant adverse impacts identified in the review of each phase of the development for changed primary criteria impacts or new information.

- ii. Any additional conditions must be met before final plat approval for each particular phase and the approval in accordance with Section II-B is in force for not more than 3 calendar years or less than 1 calendar year within the maximum time frame provided above in Subsection (b).
- d. The governing body may impose a reasonable periodic fee for the review under Subsection (c), above, of the phases in the phased development.
- e. Modifications to an approved phasing development plan prior to final plat approval shall be reviewed according to the procedures in Section II-A-5.

**IV-A-3. Time Period for Approval, Conditional Approval, or Denial**

a. Governing Body Review

Within 60 working days, or 80 working days for proposals containing 50 or more lots, the governing body shall approve, conditionally approve or deny the proposed subdivision according to Section IV-A-8 of these regulations, unless the subdivider and the subdivision administrator agree to an extension or suspension of the review period, or a subsequent public hearing is held pursuant to Section IV-A-7 of these regulations. The review period of 60 or 80 working days begins the day after the subdivision administrator notifies the subdivider or the subdivider's agent in writing that the subdivision application is sufficient for review.

b. Public Agency and Utility Review

Review and comment by public agencies or utilities may not delay the governing body's action on the subdivision application beyond the 60- or 80-working day review period. The governing body will make these comments available to the subdivider and to the general public upon request. If, during the review of the application, the subdivision administrator or the planning board contacts a public utility, agency, or other entity that was not included on the list provided during the pre-application meeting, the subdivision administrator shall notify the subdivider of the contact and the timeframe for response.

**IV-A-4. Amended Applications Prior to Public Hearing**

- a. If the subdivider changes the subdivision application or preliminary plat after the subdivision administrator makes a determination of sufficiency pursuant to Section II-A-3 but before the planning board hearing, the subdivider shall submit the

amended application to the subdivision administrator for review according to the procedures in Section II-A-4 Amended Applications.

**IV-A-5. Planning Board Hearing, Consideration and Recommendation**

a. Hearing

After the subdivision application is deemed to have all the required elements and contain detailed, supporting information that is sufficient to allow for review, and the subdivision administrator has prepared a staff report, the planning board shall schedule and hold a public hearing on the subdivision application.

b. Recommendation

i. Consideration-Standards

In recommending approval, conditional approval or denial of the subdivision application and preliminary plat, the planning board shall base its recommendation on compliance of the subdivision application with the following:

- A. these regulations, including but not limited to the standards set forth in Section V.
- B. The MSPA, including but not limited to Section 76-3-608 (3), as delineated in Subsections IV-A-10 (a) and (b) of these regulations; and
- C. other applicable regulations

ii. Consideration-Evidence

In recommending approval, conditional approval or denial of the subdivision application and preliminary plat, the planning board may consider, without limitation, the following (as applicable):

- A. the subdivision application and preliminary plat.
- B. the environmental assessment.
- C. the summary of probable impacts and proposed mitigation.
- D. an officially adopted growth policy.
- E. information provided at public hearing(s).
- F. subdivision administrator's staff report and recommendation; and
- G. any additional information authorized by law.

iii. Written Recommendation

Within 10 working days after the public hearing, the subdivision administrator shall submit the following, in writing, to the subdivider and the governing body:

- A. recommended findings of fact based on the evidence in Subsection (b)(ii) above that discuss and consider the subdivision's compliance with and impact on the items listed in Subsection (b)(i) above of these regulations.
- B. recommendation for approval, conditional approval (including any recommended conditions and/or mitigation measures), or denial of the subdivision application and preliminary plat; and
- C. a recommendation for approval or denial of any requested variances. (See Section I-J).

c. Water and Sanitation Information

The planning board or subdivision administrator shall collect public comment regarding the water and sanitation information required by the MSPA and these regulations. The subdivision administrator shall forward all comments regarding water and sanitation to the governing body.

**IV-A-6. Subdivider's Preference for Mitigation**

No later than two working days before the meeting or hearing at which the governing body is to consider the subdivision application and preliminary plat, the subdivider is encouraged to submit in writing to the subdivision administrator the subdivider's comments on and responses to the planning board's recommendations as well as any proposed mitigation measures not already discussed with the planning board. The governing body will consult with the subdivider and will give due weight and consideration to the subdivider's expressed preference regarding mitigation. [Section 76-3-608 (5)(b), MCA].

**IV-A-7. Amended Applications Following the Public Hearing**

- a. If the subdivider changes the subdivision application or preliminary plat following the public hearing, the subdivider shall submit the amended application or preliminary plat to the subdivision administrator for review.
  - i. Within 5 working days of receiving the amended application or preliminary plat, the subdivision administrator shall determine whether the changes to the subdivision application or preliminary plat are material, as determined in Subsection (c) below.
  - ii. The applicable review period is suspended while the subdivision administrator considers the amended application or preliminary plat.

- iii. If the subdivision administrator determines the changes are not material, the applicable review period resumes when the subdivision administrator mails notice of the decision to the subdivider.
  - iv. If the subdivision administrator determines the changes are material, the subdivision administrator shall either require the subdivider to schedule a new pre-application meeting and resubmit the application and preliminary plat as a new subdivision application, or schedule a new planning board hearing to take comment on the amended application or preliminary plat. Notice of the subdivision administrator's determination to schedule a new planning board hearing shall be provided as set forth in Section I-F. A supplemental staff report shall be prepared to address the changes to the original application
- b. By making changes to a pending subdivision application or preliminary plat, the subdivider consents to suspension of the review period as provided above in Subsection (a)(ii).
- c. The following changes, although not an exhaustive list, may be considered material:
  - i. configuration or number of lots.
  - ii. road layout.
  - iii. water and/or septic proposals.
  - iv. configuration of park land or open spaces.
  - v. easement provisions.
  - vi. designated access.
  - vii. changes to the proposed use of the lots; or
  - viii. changes to proposed covenants.
- d. A subdivider whose subdivision application or preliminary plat has been deemed materially changed by the subdivision administrator may appeal the subdivision administrator's decision to the governing body. The subdivider may request a public hearing with the governing body for major subdivisions and may submit additional evidence to show that the changes to the preliminary plat are not material.
  - i. The applicable review period is suspended until the governing body decision on the appeal is made.
  - ii. If the governing body concludes that the evidence and information demonstrate that the changes to the subdivision application or

preliminary plat are material, the governing body shall require the subdivision application and preliminary plat to be resubmitted pursuant to Subsection (a)(iv) above.

- iii. If the governing body concludes that the evidence and information demonstrate that the changes to the subdivision application or preliminary plat are not material, the applicable review period resumes as of the date of the decision.
- iv. By appealing the decision of the subdivision administrator, the subdivider agrees to suspension of the applicable review period provided in Subsection (d)(i) above.

**IV-A-8. Governing Body Meeting – Consideration of New Information**

- a. If an amended application was not submitted to the subdivision administrator following the public hearing, but new and additional information is presented to the governing body following the planning boards' public hearing regarding the proposed major subdivision, the governing body shall determine if the new information constitutes the need for a subsequent public hearing. New information is considered to be information or analysis of information not considered by the planning board at the public hearing:
- b. The governing body shall determine whether public comments or documents presented for consideration following the public hearing or at the governing body's public meeting constitute either:
  - i. information or analysis of information that was presented at the planning board hearing on the subdivision application that the public has had a reasonable opportunity to examine and on which the public has had a reasonable opportunity to comment, in which case the governing body shall proceed to its decision whether to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the proposed subdivision; or
  - ii. new information or analysis of information that has never been submitted as evidence or considered by the planning board at a hearing on the subdivision application, in which case the governing body shall proceed as set forth in Subsection (c) below.
- c. If the governing body determines that public comments or documents presented at the meeting constitute new information or an analysis of information regarding the subdivision application that has never been submitted as evidence or considered by the planning board at the public hearing on the subdivision application, the governing body shall determine whether the public comments or documents are relevant and credible with regard to the governing body's decision, pursuant to Subsections (d) below.

- i. If the governing body determines the information or analysis of information is either not relevant or not credible, then the governing body shall approve, conditionally approve, or deny the proposed subdivision without basing its decision on the new information or analysis of information; or
  - ii. If the governing body determines the new information or analysis of information is relevant and credible, then the governing body shall direct the planning board to schedule a subsequent public hearing pursuant to Section IV-A-7.
- d. New information or analysis of information is considered to be credible if it is based on one or more of the following:
  - i. physical facts or evidence.
  - ii. supported personal observations.
  - iii. evidence provided by a person with professional competency in the subject matter; or
  - iv. scientific data supported by documentation.

**IV-A-9. Subsequent Public Hearing**

- a. If directed by the governing body pursuant to Section IV-A-8, the planning board shall hold a subsequent public hearing for consideration of new information.
  - i. At the subsequent hearing, the planning board shall consider only the new information or analysis of information that may have an impact on the findings and conclusions that the governing body will rely upon in making its decision on the proposed subdivision.
- b. If a subsequent public hearing is held pursuant to Section IV-A-7, it must be held within 45 days of the governing body's determination to schedule a subsequent hearing.
  - i. Notice of the time, date and location of the subsequent hearing shall be posted according to Subsection I-F (b) of these regulations.
- c. If a subsequent public hearing is held, the applicable review period is suspended as of the date of the governing body's decision to schedule a subsequent hearing. The applicable review period resumes on the date of the subsequent public hearing.

**IV-A-10. Governing Body Decision and Documentation**

a. Prerequisites to Approval

The governing body may not approve or conditionally approve a subdivision application and preliminary plat unless the proposed subdivision:

- i. provides easements for the location and installation of any planned utilities.
- ii. provides legal and physical access to each parcel within the subdivision and the notation of that access on the applicable plat and any instrument transferring the parcel.
- iii. assures that all required public or private improvements will be installed before final plat approval, or that their installation after final plat approval will be guaranteed as provided by Section II-B-4 of these regulations.
- iv. assures that the requirements of Section 76-3-504 (1)(j), MCA, regarding the disclosure and disposition of water rights as set forth in Section V-O have been considered and will be accomplished before the final plat is submitted; and
- v. assures that the requirements of Section 76-3-504 (1)(k) regarding watercourse and irrigation easements as set forth in Section V-N have been considered and will be accomplished before the final plat is submitted.
- vi. Provides for the appropriate park dedication or cash-in-lieu.

b. Consideration-Standards

In approving, conditionally approving, or denying a minor subdivision application and preliminary plat, the governing body shall consider Subsection (a) above, and whether the proposed subdivision complies with:

- i. these regulations, including, but not limited to, the standards set forth in Section V.
- ii. other applicable regulations.
- iii. the MSPA, including but not limited to the following impacts:
  - A. impact on agriculture
  - B. impact on agricultural water user facilities
  - C. impact on local services

- D. impact on the natural environment.
- E. impact on wildlife; and
- F. impact on wildlife habitat; and
- G. impact on public health and safety.

Refer to the “Definitions” section at the beginning of these regulations for definitions for each of the above criteria. Refer to Appendix B for a discussion of the evaluation and decision-making related to these criteria.

- iv. proposed mitigation

c. Consideration-Evidence

In making its decision to approve, conditionally approve, or deny a proposed subdivision, the governing body may consider and weigh the following, as applicable:

- i. the subdivision application and preliminary plat.
- ii. the environmental assessment.
- iii. the summary of probable impacts and mitigation.
- iv. an officially adopted growth policy.
- v. comments, evidence, and discussions at the public hearing.
- vi. subdivision administrator's staff report and recommendations.
- vii. planning board recommendation; and
- viii. any additional information authorized by law.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the governing body may not consider any information regarding the subdivision application that is presented after the final public hearing (which may include a subsequent hearing if any) when making its decision to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the proposed subdivision.

d. Water and Sanitation-Special Rules

- i. Water and sanitation information provided during the application review process, including public comment, may be used as a basis for a conditional approval or denial of a subdivision only if the governing body finds that the application does not comply with previously adopted subdivision or other regulations.

- ii. For a proposed subdivision that will create one or more parcels containing less than 20 acres, the subdivider shall obtain approval by the DEQ as a condition of approval of the final plat. This approval applies to the development of lots at the time of the approval and is no guarantee that a source of water or a location for a septic system or drain fields will be available when the lots are actually developed.
  - iii. For a proposed subdivision that will create one or more parcels containing 20 acres or more, the subdivider shall demonstrate in the preliminary plat application that there is an adequate water source and at least one area for a septic system and a replacement drain field for each lot. This information shall be submitted to the local reviewing authority so as to complete the sanitation review of parcels that do not fall under the review authority of DEQ.
  - iv. The governing body shall collect public comments submitted regarding water and sanitation information and shall make any comments submitted or a summary of the comments submitted available to the subdivider within 30 days after conditional approval or approval of the subdivision application and preliminary plat.
  - v. The subdivider shall, as part of the subdivider's application for sanitation approval, forward the comments or the summary provided by the governing body to the:
    - A. reviewing authority provided in Title 76, chapter 4, MCA for subdivisions that will create one or more parcels containing less than 20 acres; and
    - B. local reviewing authority or board of health for proposed subdivisions that will create one or more parcels containing 20 acres or more and less than 160 acres.
- e. Documentation of Governing Body Decision
- i. In rendering its decision to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the proposed subdivision, the governing body shall issue written findings of fact that discuss and weigh the proposed subdivision's compliance with the preceding subsections. Findings of fact by the governing body concerning whether the development of the proposed subdivision meets the requirements of this chapter must be based on the record as a whole. The governing body's findings of fact must be sustained unless they are arbitrary, capricious, or unlawful.
  - ii. When the governing body approves, denies, or conditionally approves the proposed subdivision, it shall within 30 working days following the oral decision send the subdivider a letter, with the appropriate signature, and make the letter available to the public. The letter shall:

- A. contain information regarding the appeal process for the denial or imposition of conditions.
  - B. identify the regulations and statutes that are used in reaching the decision to approve, deny, or impose conditions and explain how they apply to the decision.
  - C. provide the facts and conclusions that the governing body relied upon in making its decision and reference documents, testimony, or other materials that form the basis of the decision; and
  - D. provide the conditions that apply to the preliminary plat approval and that must be satisfied before the final plat may be approved.
  - E. set forth the time limit for approval, pursuant to Subsection (f) below.
- f. Subdivision Application and Preliminary Plat Approval Period
- i. Upon approval or conditional approval of the preliminary plat, the governing body shall provide the subdivider with a dated and signed statement of approval. The approval shall be in force for no more than three calendar years.
    - A. At least 30 days prior to the expiration of the preliminary plat approval, the governing body may, at the request of the subdivider, extend the approval for a mutually agreed-upon period of time. Any mutual agreed-upon extension must be in writing and dated and signed by the members of the governing body and the subdivider or the subdivider's agent. The governing body may issue more than one extension.
    - B. The governing body may extend the approval for more than one year if a longer approval period is included as a specific condition of a written Subdivision Improvements Agreement between the governing body and the subdivider, provided for in Section II-B-4.
  - ii. After the application and preliminary plat are approved, the governing body may not impose any additional conditions as a prerequisite to final plat approval unless the preliminary plat approval expires, at which time a new application shall be required.
  - iii. The governing body may withdraw approval or conditional approval of an application and preliminary plat if it determines that information provided by the subdivider, and upon which the approval or conditional approval was based, is inaccurate.

**IV-B. Major Final Plats**

The final plat must have the contents and be submitted and reviewed in accordance with the appropriate requirements contained in Section II-B, Final Plats.

## **V. DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS**

All subdivisions approved by the governing must comply with the provisions of this section, except where granted a variance pursuant to Section I-I, Variances. The governing body may not grant variances from the provisions of Section V-C, Lands Unsuitable for Subdivision or from the provisions of Section V-D, Floodplain Provisions. For planned unit developments, subdivisions created by rent or lease, and condominiums, refer to Sections VI, VII, and VIII and of these regulations for additional information.

### **V-A. Conformance with Regulations**

The design and development of a subdivision must conform with any other regulations.

### **V-B. Natural Environment**

The design and development of subdivisions must provide satisfactory building sites which are properly related to topography, and must, to the extent possible, preserve the natural terrain, natural drainage, existing topsoil, trees, and natural vegetation.

### **V-C. Lands Unsuitable for Subdivision**

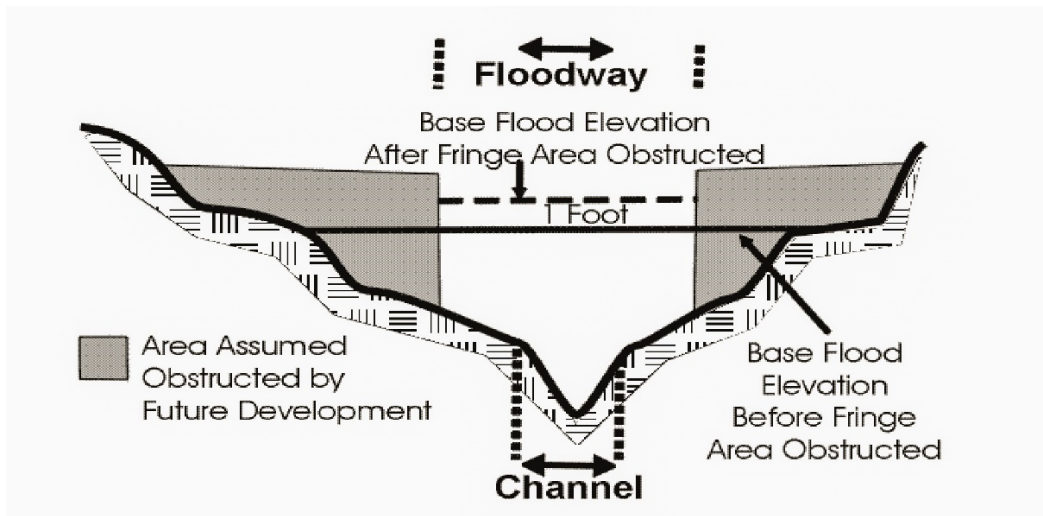
The governing body may find land to be unsuitable for subdivision because of potential hazards such as flooding, snow avalanches, rock falls, landslides, adverse soil types, steep slopes in excess of 25 percent slope, high potential for wildfire, subsidence, high water table, polluted or non-potable water supply, high voltage lines, high pressure gas lines, aircraft or vehicular traffic hazards or congestion, or severe toxic or hazardous waste exposure; or because of unreasonable burdens on the general public such as requirements for the excessive expenditure of public funds, environmental degradation, or other features which may be detrimental to the health, safety, or general welfare of existing or future residents. These lands must not be subdivided unless the hazards are eliminated or will be mitigated by approved design and construction plans.

### **V-D. Floodplain Provisions**

- a. Prairie County does not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program and no Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) have been adopted for the jurisdictional area of the County.
- b. The County may require the completion an engineering study that identifies the floodway and Base Flood Elevation (BFE) for a proposed subdivision if the necessity of such a study is identified during the preapplication meeting. If required, this detailed evaluation must be performed by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana experienced in this field of work.
  - i. A copy of the study identifying the floodway and BFE shall be submitted with the preliminary plat application to the local the subdivision administrator. The governing body shall forward the study to the Floodplain Administrator and the Water Resources Division of

the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) for comment. The governing body shall not delay the preliminary plat review process to wait for comments. Any comments received by the governing body shall be forwarded to the subdivider.

- ii. The areas at and below the BFE shall be identified on the preliminary plat as flood hazard area. The flood hazard area shall be identified on the final plat as a no build zone.



**Figure 2: A diagram showing an example floodway, 100-year floodplain and base flood elevation (BFE). This diagram is not to scale.**

**V-E. Improvement Design**

Engineering and survey plans, specifications, and reports required in connection with public and private improvements and other elements of the subdivision application required by the governing body must be prepared by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana or a professional land surveyor as their respective licensing laws allow in accordance with the MSPA and these regulations.

**V-F. Lots**

Each lot must contain a satisfactory building site and conform to county health board regulations.

- a. No single lot may be divided by a municipal or county boundary line.
- b. No single lot may be divided by a public road, alley, public rights-of-way, or easements (does not include irrigation easements), emergency access, gas, or oil pipeline easement.

**V-G. Streets and Roads**

All roadway improvements including approaches, pavement, curbs, gutters, traffic control devices, and drainage systems shall be designed and constructed in accordance with these regulations and the applicable design standards adopted by the governing body, If the governing body has not adopted design standards, roadway improvements shall be designed and constructed based on site specific considerations in accordance with design guidelines in the most current version of the Montana Department of Transportation “Geometric Design Standards” or “A policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets” or as appropriate the “Guidelines for Geometric Design for Very Low-Volume Roads (ADT ≤ 400)” published by the American Society of State Highway Transportation Officials (ASSHTO), and the Montana Department of Transportation Road Design Manual.

a. General Design

i. Roadways

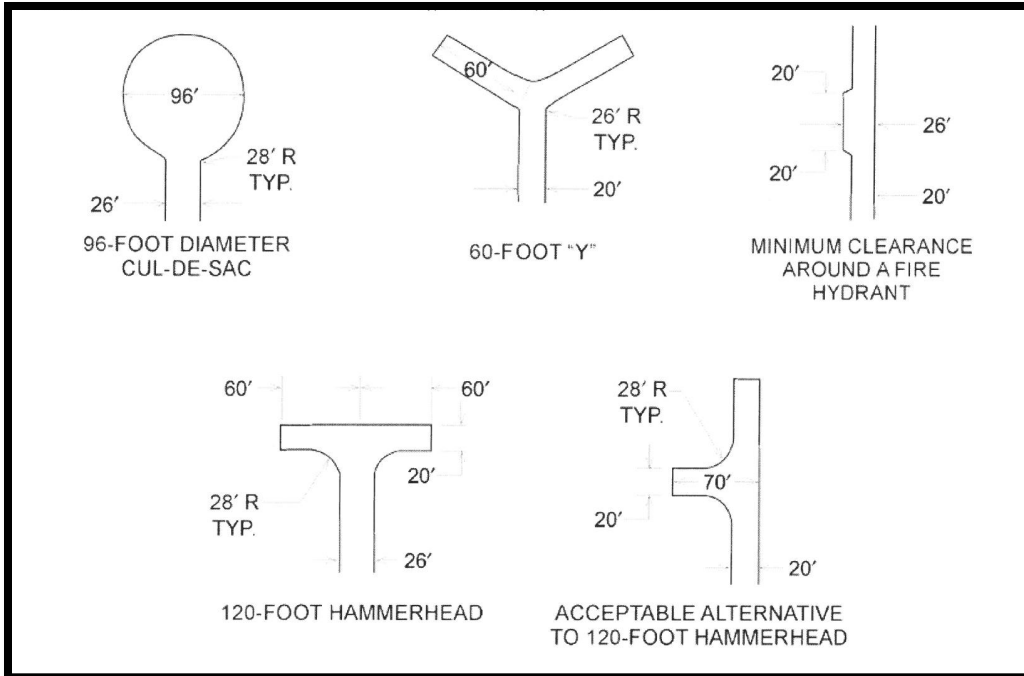
The arrangement, type, extent, width, grade, materials, and location of all roadways shall be considered in their relationship to existing and planned streets and roads, to topographical conditions, maintenance considerations, the delivery of emergency services, to public convenience and safety, in their relation to the proposed uses of the land to be served by them, and to impacted lands outside the subdivision.

ii. Relation to Subdivided Areas

The developer shall arrange the roadways to provide for the continuation of roadways between adjacent parcels when such continuation is necessary for the convenient movement of traffic, effective provision of emergency services, and the efficient provision of utility easements.

iii. Dead-End Roadways

Dead end roads longer than 150 feet require an approved turnaround. Refer below to Figure 4 for approved turnaround alternatives. Dead-end roads with an approved turnaround are only permitted on local roads and driveways. All turnarounds must also conform to the design specifications in Table V-1. Dead end roads longer than 750 feet are not permitted.



**Figure 3. Approved turnaround alternatives.**

iv. Half Roadways

Half roadways are prohibited except when it is shown that they are beneficial to the County or municipal and that they provide for access by emergency service vehicles.

v. Second or Emergency Access

A. For major residential subdivisions, a second access may be required if identified as needed during the pre-application meeting. The second access may be an emergency access, designed to the standards of a local road with the exception of road width, which may be 18 feet, and easement width, which may be 40 feet. The emergency access shall not function now or in the future as a primary access unless it is upgraded to a full local road standard. Emergency access roads must provide legal access in emergency situations to the subdivision. Where requested by the Fire Department having jurisdiction, gates or other approved barricades shall be required at either end of the road to restrict through traffic.

vi. Roadway Dedication and Easements

**NOTE: Approval of a subdivision plat by the governing body shall not be construed as acceptance of the subdivision roadways rights-of-way or easements into the County road system.**

A. County Roads

1. All roadways within a proposed subdivision and providing primary access or providing primary access through neighboring lands in unincorporated areas shall have dedicated easements providing access to the public or to dedicated easements providing access for the use of the subdivision. The type of easement is subject to the discretion of the governing body. Such easements provide for legal access while the property remains under private ownership. Subdivision roadways constitute an acceptable roadway easement when all of the following conditions are met:
  - a. the easement is accepted by the governing body.
  - b. the easement is recorded in the Office of the Clerk and Recorder.
  - c. the easement clearly grants to the public, or to the subdivision, an unrestricted right of ingress and egress from a public roadway to the parcels within the subdivision.
  - d. a signed statement from a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana documenting roads are built according to engineering plans and county standards; and

vii. Roadway Maintenance

- A. The face of the final plat shall contain language clearly stating that the residents within the subdivision are responsible for all road maintenance within the subdivision.

viii. Drainage Channels and Waterways

- A. Bridges and culverts shall be provided and installed by the developer where drainage channels and waterways intersect any road right-of-way or approach. Bridges and culverts shall be appropriately sized in accordance with the drainage area. Bridges and culverts shall be designed by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana.
- B. Bridges must be designed and constructed to meet the current edition of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Load Resistance and Factor Design (LRFD) Design Specifications and the AASHTO Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets. Permits for

construction over waterways, including USACE 404 and state permits, may be required.

- C. Culverts shall be a minimum of 18 inches in diameter and shall extend across the entire width of the roadway including the side slope toes. Culvert gauge and depth of backfill shall be included in the design.

ix. Intersections

The following requirements shall apply to roadway intersections:

- A. The intersection of more than two roads at one point shall be avoided.
- B. Roads shall be laid out so as to intersect as nearly as possible at right angles. No road shall intersect any other road at less than a 75-degree angle.
- C. Two roads meeting a third road from opposite sides shall meet at the same point or their centerlines should be offset by a minimum of 200 feet.
- D. Intersection design shall conform to the specifications provided below in Table V-1.
- E. Intersection design must provide acceptable visibility for traffic safety as dictated by the designed operating speeds on the individual roadways.
- F. Approaches to intersecting roads must not exceed a maximum landing of three percent.

x. Road Signs

All traffic signs shall be installed by the developer. Traffic signs shall be of the size, shape, height, and placement in accordance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The installation of traffic signs shall be certified by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana.

xi. Rural Addressing and Postal Service in Unincorporated Areas

In order to provide for timely response by emergency service providers, lot purchasers shall be notified of their responsibility to receive and post addresses as a part of the building permit process. Unit numbers shall be clearly visible from the road, either at the driveway entrance or on the primary structure. Unit numbers shall be at least four inches in length

per number. All addresses will be assigned by the County Address Coordinator. It is important to note that most County residents receive mail delivery via postal boxes in at the post offices in Fallon and Terry.

b. Traffic Study

i. Vehicle Trip Calculation

- A. The ADT generated by a residential major subdivision shall be calculated on the basis of eight trips per household per day, or as identified in a traffic study completed by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana.
- B. ADT for commercial/industrial developments must be calculated according to the most current version of ITE Trip Generation Manual, or by a traffic study completed by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana.

ii. Traffic Studies Required

- A. A traffic study completed by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana is required for all major subdivisions:
- B. Traffic studies for roads in the jurisdiction of the governing body shall be completed in the recommended format found in Supplements

c. Improvements

- i. All roadway improvements including pavement, utilities, and drainage must be constructed in accordance with the standards prescribed in these regulations.
- ii. Roadway subgrades must be free of topsoil, sod, vegetation or organic matter, soft clay, or other substandard materials.
- iii. Streets and roads must be designed to ensure proper drainage, including but not limited to surface crown, culverts, drainage swales and storm drains.
- iv. In unincorporated areas where access from a public road to the subdivision will cross properties not owned by the subdivider, the subdivider must obtain property easements in compliance with these design and improvement standards, from each property owner or the appropriate administrator of public lands. Each easement must allow construction and perpetual maintenance of a road accessing the property and allow vehicular travel on the road. The easement shall either be

dedicated to the public, or the subdivision at the discretion of the governing body.

- A. Adequate and appropriate easements must be granted by each property owner through a signed and notarized document that grants the easement in conformance with the design.
- B. The location of any road easement must be shown on the plat or on a supplemental map. The existence of easements must be noted on the face of the final plat and on any deeds or other instruments conveying lots within the subdivision.
- v. Existing trees and other vegetation must be preserved whenever possible. Plantings may be required for buffering, screening, or soil erosion protection and are subject to approval by the governing body. Borrow areas for roads must be seeded with approved plant materials to reduce erosion.
- vi. Approach/Encroachment Permits: All approaches onto County roads shall be built according to the approved encroachment permits obtained from the County Road Department. Other requirements include:
  - A. Approach/Encroachment permits for individual lots accessing a privately built and maintained internal subdivision road are not required.
  - B. Approach/Encroachment permits are required for all internal subdivision roads accessing a county road. The approach must be built according the permit at the time of final plat.
  - C. Approach/Encroachments onto MDT roads and highways must be permitted and built according to MDT requirements prior to final plat.
  - D. Approach/Encroachment permits are required for any access onto a municipal road. The approach must be built according to the permit at the time of final plat.
- d. Off-site Roadway Improvements
  - i. The governing body shall require off-site road improvements for major subdivisions when the improvements are proportional to the direct impact of the subdivision. Off-site road improvements shall be required in the following manner based on the recommendations of the traffic study required according to Subsection V-G (b) and as agreed by the applicable agency.

e. Definitions and Classification Standards

i. Arterial Roads

Arterial roads are designed to move vehicles through an area. The roads have limited access, higher speeds and may have traffic signals near populated areas. Arterials should ideally have a wider shoulder than other roads. Wider shoulders allow more room for people to pull over if they have vehicle trouble, plus they provide additional room for wide loads or recovery associated with loss of vehicle control. A six-foot shoulder is consistent with Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) standards for rural roads with more than 550 vehicles per day. The MDT standard for a bike lane varies from four to five feet and the six-foot shoulder allows for cyclists to use the shoulder. Secondary arterials typically have lower volumes and narrower shoulders than primary arterials. The only roads designated as arterial roads within Prairie County are the Primary State Highways.

ii. Major Collectors

Major collectors are designed to serve both traffic movement and access. The roads typically are paved and have crossroad access but limited private driveway access and medium to high speeds. Within incorporated areas, no distinction is made between major and minor collectors. In unincorporated areas, the distinction is made mostly from the standpoint of placing greater priority on those designated as major collectors. State Secondary Highways in Prairie County are designated as major collectors.

iii. Minor Collectors

Minor collectors are similar to major collectors except they may carry a greater level of localized traffic, and their condition may not be as high a priority as major collectors. The roads typically have limitations to road or driveway access and medium speeds similar to those on major collectors.

iv. Local Roads

Local roads are streets with the lowest traffic volumes. They are designed to offer access to farms and residences, connecting driveways to collectors or arterials. Most of the roads in the county are classified as local roads and exist sporadically throughout Prairie County.

v. Primary Access Roads

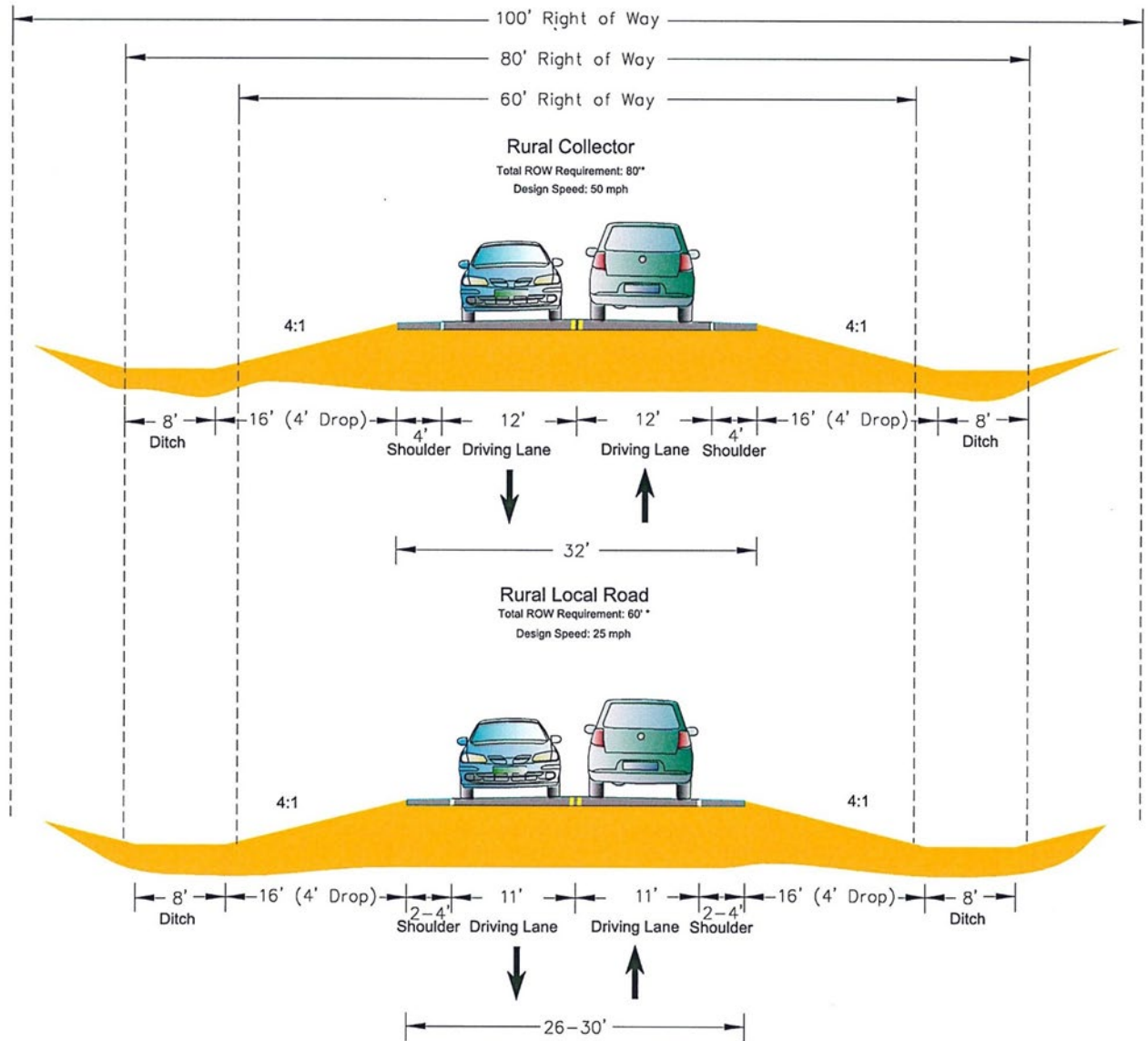
Primary access roads are the major access to a subdivision.

vi. Driveways

All driveway approaches onto County roads shall be built according to the approved encroachment permits obtained from the County Road Department.

**TABLE V-1 ROADWAY DESIGN STANDARDS**

<b>Roadway Type</b>	<b>Rural Collector*</b>	<b>Urban Collector</b>	<b>Local</b>
Road Surface / Min. ROW Width (No Parking)	26/80 Feet	42/80 Feet	26/60 Feet
Road Surface / Min. ROW Width (Parking – One Side)	40/80 Feet	50/100 Feet	34/60 Feet
Road Surface / Min. ROW Width (Parking – Both Sides)	40/80 Feet	58/100 Feet	42/80 Feet
Centerline Radius on Curves	315** Feet	300 Feet	150 Feet
Tangent length between Reserve Curves	100 Feet	100 Feet	50 Feet
Stopping Site Distance	300 Feet	300 Feet	300 Feet
Minimum Angle of Intersection Centerlines	75 Degrees	75 Degrees	75 Degrees
Curb Radius at Intersections	50 Feet	50 Feet	15 Feet
Maximum Length of Cul-De-Sac			600 Feet
Maximum Roadway Grade	7 Percent	5 Percent	6 Percent
Max Grade within 50 Feet of Intersecting Centerlines	2 Percent	2 Percent	3 Percent
Minimum in Slope	4:1	4:1	4:1
Minimum Back Slope	4:1	4:1	Variable
Minimum Culvert Size	18 Inch	18 Inch	18 inch
* Rural Collectors are designed for a speed of 35mph. Rural Collectors may be designed for other speeds with prior approval from the Prairie County Public Works Department. The design of the road should be based on the AASHTO “Green Book” or the “Geometric Design of Very Low-Volume Roads” as applicable.			
** The radius includes an 8% super elevation.			



**Notes:**

- \*Additional ROW required where significant elevation disparities exist
- Additional right-of-way may be required at intersections in order to accommodate additional geometric configurations (i.e. turn lanes, signals, roundabouts, etc.)
- Due to the features of the site or highway, the county/city may require additional right-of-way
- Typical sections are subject to MDT standards on State Highways

**Figure 4: Rural typical cross sections for collector and local roads.**

**V-H. Stormwater Drainage Facilities**

**a. General**

- i. The applicant must submit a stormwater drainage plan meeting the minimum requirements of DEQ with the preliminary plat application.
- ii. All stormwater drainage systems are subject to approval of the local governing body.

- iii. For subdivisions containing lots less than 20 acres in size and as applicable based on the requirements of Title 76, Chapter 4, MCA, the stormwater drainage facilities must be reviewed and approved by the DEQ prior to approval of the final plat.
- iv. For subdivisions creating one or more parcels containing 20 acres or more, the subdivider shall submit the required information only to the subdivision administrator. DEQ review and approval is not required. The governing body may have a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana or the DEQ review the plan and provide comments.
- v. When applicable, stormwater drainage facilities must be designed and certified by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana.

b. Stormwater Drainage Discharge

- i. Curbs and gutters or swales will be required as determined by the governing body according to the character of the area, density of development, and nature of adjoining properties. Curbs and gutters of adjoining properties must be extended according to current specifications of local and state authorities and conform to the adjoining properties' existing services.
- ii. Culverts or bridges of adequate size must be provided and installed by the subdivider where drainage channels intersect any street or road right-of-way or easement. All culverts must extend at least across the entire width of the base of the fill; the amount of backfill to be placed over the culvert and the culvert's capacity must be determined by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana. The plan must include arrangements for driveway culverts.
- iii. Drainage systems must not discharge into any sanitary sewer facility.
- iv. Drainage systems shall not discharge into agricultural user facilities without the written permission of the appropriate irrigation district.
- v. Drainage systems that may have impacts to county roads shall be submitted to the Prairie County Public Works Department for review.

c. Stormwater Drainage Easements

- i. The subdivider must provide suitable drainage facilities for any surface runoff affecting the subdivision; these facilities must be located in street rights-of-way or in perpetual easements of appropriate widths and are subject to approval by the governing body. Drainage easements must be drawn on the plat and a signed statement granting the easements must appear on the plat.

**V-I. Water Supply Systems**

a. General

- i. The subdivider shall present evidence meeting the minimum requirements of the local reviewing authority and DEQ, that a suitable water supply is available in quantity and quality at the time of preliminary plat application.
- ii. All water systems are subject to approval by the governing body.
- iii. Water systems required by the governing body shall meet the minimum requirements of the local reviewing authority, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Subdivisions containing lots less than 20 acres in size must be reviewed and approved under Title 76, Chapter 4, MCA, by the DEQ prior to approval of the final plat.
- iv. For subdivisions creating one or more parcels containing 20 acres or more, the subdivider shall submit the required information only to the local reviewing authority and the subdivision administrator. DEQ review and approval is not required. This demonstration to the local reviewing authority is to evaluate the ability to develop lots and is no guarantee that a source of water will be available when the lots are actually developed.

b. Type of System

- i. Any system with more than two connections must be designed by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Montana and reviewed by DEQ.
- ii. The governing body may require that any proposed central system provide adequate and accessible water for fire protection.
- iii. Where the subdivision is within the service area municipal system, or a public water supply system, the subdivider must install complete water system facilities in accordance with the requirements of the jurisdiction involved and the DEQ. The subdivider must submit plans and specifications for the proposed facilities to the jurisdiction involved and to the DEQ and must obtain their approvals prior to undertaking any construction.

**V-J. Wastewater Treatment Systems**

- a. The subdivider shall present evidence meeting the minimum requirements of the local reviewing authority and DEQ for the proposed wastewater treatments systems at the time of preliminary plat application.
- b. All wastewater treatment systems are subject to the approval of the governing body.
- c. Systems for subdivision lots less than 20 acres in size must meet the minimum standards of the local reviewing authority, and DEQ which are incorporated into and made a part of these regulations by this reference, prior to final plat approval.
- d. For a proposed subdivision that will create one or more parcels containing 20 acres or more, the subdivider shall demonstrate to the local reviewing authority adequate evidence that a sewage disposal facility is sufficient in terms of capacity. In addition, the subdivider shall demonstrate that there is at least one area for a septic system and a replacement drain field for each lot. This demonstration to the local reviewing authority is to evaluate the ability to develop lots at the platting stage and is no guarantee that a location for a septic system or drain fields will be available when the lots are actually developed.

Where the subdivision is within the service area of a municipal or public sanitary sewer system, the subdivider must install complete sanitary sewer system facilities in accordance with the requirements of the jurisdiction involved and the DEQ. The subdivider must submit plans and specifications for the proposed facilities to the jurisdiction involved and to the DEQ and must obtain their approvals prior to undertaking any construction.

**V-K. Solid Waste**

- a. The subdivider creating a major subdivision must meet the solid waste regulations and minimum standards required by DEQ.

**V-L. Utilities**

- a. The subdivider must provide adequate and appropriate easements for the construction of utilities within the subdivision. The subdivider must obtain any easements necessary to extend utilities to the subdivision.
- b. The subdivider is encouraged to work with utility providers to ensure that all utility facilities meet applicable laws and all rules and regulations of any appropriate regulatory authority having jurisdiction over such facilities. Utility easements must be located along the side, and rear lot lines wherever necessary.
- c. Utility easements must be a minimum of 15 feet wide unless otherwise specified by a utility company or the governing body.

- d. When a utility is to be located in an existing, dedicated right-of-way or roadway easement, a notice of utility occupancy must be obtained from the governing body, or local or state highway department.
- e. In addition to showing the location of the utility easement on the plat with dashed lines, the following statement must be on the final plat:

"The undersigned hereby grants unto each and every person, firm, or corporation, whether public or private, providing or offering to provide telecommunications, electric power, gas, cable television, water, or sewer service to the public, the right to the joint use of an easement for the construction, maintenance, repair and removal of their lines and other facilities, in, over, under and across each area designated on this plat as 'Utility Easement' to have and to hold forever."

**V-M. Water Course and Irrigation Easements**

- a. Except as noted below in Subsection (b), the subdivider shall establish within the subdivision ditch easements that:
  - i. are in locations of appropriate topographic characteristics and sufficient width to allow the physical placement and unobstructed maintenance of open ditches or below ground pipelines for the delivery of water for irrigation to persons and land legally entitled to the water under an appropriated water right or permit of an irrigation district or other private or public entity formed to provide for the use of the water right on the subdivision lots;
  - ii. are a sufficient distance from the centerline of the ditch to allow for construction, repair, maintenance, and inspection of the ditch; and
  - iii. prohibit the placement of structures or the planting of vegetation other than grass within the ditch easement without the written permission of the ditch owner.
- b. The subdivider need not establish irrigation easements as provided above if:
  - i. the average lot size in the proposed subdivision will be one acre or less and the subdivider provides for disclosure, in a manner acceptable to the governing body, notifying potential buyers that lots within the subdivision are classified as irrigated land and may continue to be assessed for irrigation water delivery even though the water may not be deliverable to the lots; or
  - ii. the water rights have been removed from the land within the subdivision or the process has been initiated to remove the water rights from the subdivided land; and

- iii. the fact the water rights have been or will be removed from the land within the subdivision is denoted on the preliminary plat. If the removal of water rights has not been completed at the time the final plat is filed, the subdivider shall provide written notification to prospective buyers of the subdivider's intention to remove the water right and shall document that intent, when applicable, in agreements and legal documents for related sales transactions.
- c. The subdivider shall, unless otherwise provided under separate written agreement or filed easement, show on the preliminary and final plat, and file and record with the county clerk and recorder, ditch easements for the unobstructed use and maintenance of existing water delivery ditches, pipelines, and facilities in the proposed subdivision that are necessary to convey water through the subdivision to lands adjacent to or beyond the subdivision boundaries in quantities and in a manner that are consistent with historic and legal rights. A minimum width of 10 feet is required on each side of irrigation canals and ditches for maintenance purposes.

**V-N. Disposition of Water Rights**

If a subdivision will create lots averaging less than five acres in size, the subdivider shall submit evidence with the final plat that the subdivider has:

- a. reserved all or a portion of the appropriation water rights owned by the owner of the land to be subdivided and transfer these water rights to a single entity for use by landowners within the subdivision who have a legal right to the water and reserved and severed any remaining surface water rights from the land;
- b. if the land to be subdivided is subject to a contract or interest in a public or private entity formed to provide for the use of a water right on the subdivision lots, established a landowner's water use agreement administered through a single entity. This agreement must specify how the water rights will be administered and describe the rights and responsibilities of landowners within the subdivision who have a legal right and access to the water; or
- c. reserved and severed all surface water rights from the land proposed for subdivision.

**V-O. Park Land Dedication – Cash in Lieu – Waivers – Administration**

- a. Except as provided below, the final plat of a residential subdivision must show that the subdivider has dedicated to the governing body a cash or land donation equal to:
  - i. 11% of the area of the land proposed to be subdivided into parcels of one-half acre or smaller.
  - ii. 7.5% of the area of the land proposed to be subdivided into parcels larger than one-half acre and not larger than one acre.

- iii. 5% of the area of the land proposed to be subdivided into parcels larger than one acre and not larger than three acres; and
    - iv. 2.5% of the area of the land proposed to be subdivided into parcels larger than three acres and not larger than five acres.
  - b. A park dedication is not required for:
    - i. First minor subdivisions in unincorporated areas.
    - ii. subdivision lots larger than five acres.
    - iii. nonresidential subdivision lots.
    - iv. subdivisions in which parcels of land will not be created, other than subdivisions that will provide permanent multiple spaces for recreational camping vehicles, mobile homes, or condominiums; or
    - v. subdivisions which will create only one additional parcel.
  - c. The governing body, in consultation with the subdivider and the planning board or park board that has jurisdiction, may determine suitable locations for parks and playgrounds and, giving due weight and consideration to the expressed preference of the subdivider, may determine whether the park dedication must be a land donation, cash donation, or a combination of both. When a combination of land donation and cash donation is required, the cash donation may not exceed the proportional amount not covered by the land donation. The land dedicated for park use may be inside or outside the boundaries of the proposed subdivision.
  - d. The governing body will waive the park dedication requirement if it determines that:
    - i. the preliminary plat provides for a planned unit development or other development with land permanently set aside for park and recreational uses sufficient to meet the needs of the persons who will ultimately reside in the development; and  
  
the area of the land and any improvements set aside for park and recreational purposes equals or exceeds the area of the dedication required under Subsection V-Q (a).
    - ii. the proposed subdivision will provide for the long-term protection of critical wildlife habitat; cultural, historical, or natural resources; agricultural interests; or aesthetic values; and  
  
the provision of this long-term protection will result in the reduction of the area of the land proposed to be subdivided by an amount equal to or

exceeding the area that would have had to be dedicated under Subsection V-Q (a) above;

- iii. the area of the land proposed to be subdivided, by virtue of a combination of the provisions of Subsections (d)(i) and (ii) above, is reduced by an amount equal to or exceeding the area of the dedication required under Subsection V-Q (a); or

the subdivider provides for land outside of the subdivision to be set aside for park and recreational uses sufficient to meet the needs of the persons who will ultimately reside in the subdivision; and

the area of the land and any improvements set aside for park and recreational uses equals or exceeds the area of dedication required under Subsection V-Q (a).

- e. The local governing body may waive the park dedication requirement if:
  - i. the subdivider provides land outside the subdivision that affords long-term protections of critical wildlife habitat, cultural, historical, or natural resources, agricultural interests, or aesthetic values; and
  - ii. The area of land to be subject to long-term protection, as provided in Subsection (e)(i), equals or exceeds the area of dedication required under Subsection V-Q (a).
- f. Subject to the approval of the local governing body and acceptance by the school district trustees, a subdivider may dedicate a land donation provided under Subsection V-Q (a) to a school district, adequate to be used for school facilities or buildings.
- g. The governing body will administer funds dedicated to the public under this section in accordance with Section 76-3-621, MCA.
- h. For the purposes of this park dedication requirement:
  - i. “cash donation” means the fair market value of the unsubdivided, unimproved land; and
  - ii. “dwelling unit” means a residential structure in which a person or persons reside.

**V-P. Fire Protection**

- a. All subdivisions must be planned, designed, constructed, and maintained so as to minimize the risk of fire and to permit the effective and efficient suppression of fires in order to protect persons, property, grazing lands, and forested areas. The

governing body may require reasonable fire protection measure in order to protect public health and safety.

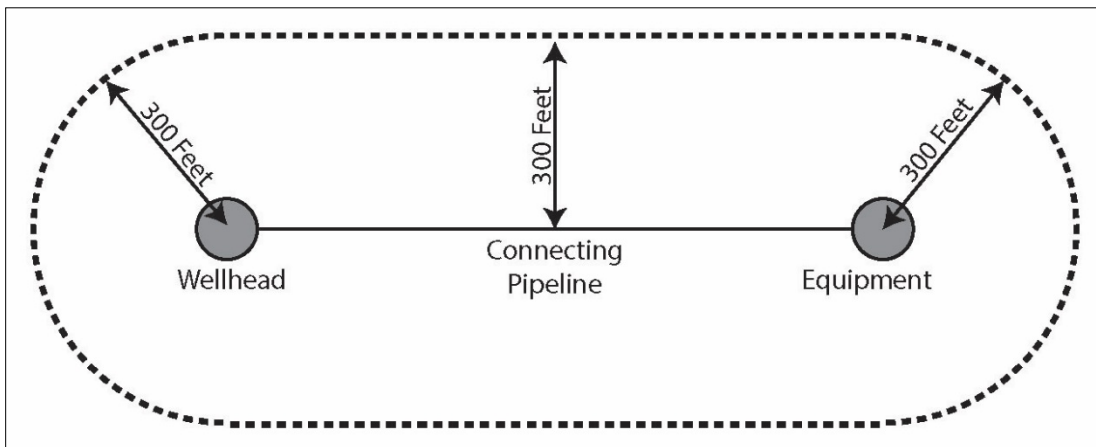
- b. Subdivisions within unincorporated areas shall comply with applicable fire codes adopted by the local governing body.
- c. The governing body may require reasonable fire protection measures recommended by the applicable fire protection authority.

**V-Q. Noxious Weeds**

A Noxious Weed Control Plan shall be developed in conjunction with the County Weed Board and implemented for every new subdivision. The applicant must meet the requirements of the plan prior to final plat. A statement shall be included on the face of the final plat indicated the property owners within the subdivision are responsible for controlling noxious weeds on their property in accordance with the Plan.

**V-R. Well and Facility Pads**

- a. General
  - i. Areas subject to oil, gas, and injection well leases must be identified on the preliminary plat, and on the face of the final plat.
  - ii. No residential lots shall be created within a minimum of 300 feet of any wellhead, connecting pipeline and equipment located on a well or facility pad (Figure 4).



**Figure 4: An example of how to measure the 300 feet from equipment located on a well or facility pad.**

## **VI. SUBDIVISIONS PROVIDING MULTIPLE SPACES FOR RECREATIONAL CAMPING VEHICLES OR MOBILE HOMES**

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### **VI-A. General**

#### **VI-A-1. Definitions**

A subdivision that provides or will provide multiple spaces for rent or lease on which recreational camping vehicles or mobile homes will be placed shall be reviewed according to this chapter. The land is owned, however, as one parcel under single ownership (which can include a number of persons owning property in common). Spaces and pads which are designated through this process as being for rent or lease do not result in a division of land whose title can be conveyed. However, the perimeter of the mobile home / manufactured park and any part of the parent tract outside of the perimeter are considered lots in a subdivision whose titles can be conveyed and must also be reviewed pursuant to these regulations.

##### **a. Mobile/Manufactured Homes Parks**

Developments which are subject to subdivision review because they will provide two or more spaces for mobile/manufactured homes will be reviewed under Section VI-B-2. Mobile/Manufactured Home Park Standards, below.

##### **b. Recreational Camping Vehicles Parks**

Developments which are subject to subdivision review because they will provide two or more spaces for recreational camping vehicles will be reviewed under Section VI-B-3. Recreational Vehicle Park Standards, below.

##### **c. Preliminary site plan**

A conceptual plan of a subdivision providing multiple spaces for rent or lease that is submitted at the time of preliminary plat application showing at minimum the boundaries of the subject parcel, the location of spaces, pads, roads, storage areas, parking areas, location of common areas and facilities, location of parks and/or recreation areas if required, and any other information deemed necessary by the governing body.

##### **d. Final site plan**

A site plan of a subdivision providing multiple spaces for rent or lease that is submitted at the time of final plat application showing at minimum the location of spaces, pads, roads, storage areas, parking areas, location of common areas and facilities, location of parks and/or recreation areas if required, and any other information deemed necessary by the governing body or necessary to meet

conditions of preliminary approval. The site plan shall be submitted to the Clerk and Recorder with the final plat at the time the final plat is recorded.

**VI-A-2. Review and Approval**

a. Submittal Requirements

- i. The subdivider shall submit a completed application in accordance with Section II-A-2 Subdivision Application and Preliminary Plat Submittal, and a plan of the proposed development conforming to the requirements for preliminary plats.
- ii. In addition, the requirements outlined Section II-A-2, preliminary applications for mobile home parks, manufactured home parks and RV parks shall submit a preliminary site plan showing the following:
  - A. A layout of all spaces, pads, buildings, or structures proposed for rent or lease.
  - B. location and dimension of internal roads.

any additional information required by the governing body.

b. Preliminary Approval

- i. Proposed subdivisions providing multiple spaces for rent or lease are subject to the initial review process for preliminary plats found in Section II-A-2 Review Process.
- ii. Proposed subdivisions providing multiple spaces for rent or lease creating five or fewer spaces must be reviewed according to Section III-A First Minor Subdivisions.
- iii. Proposed subdivisions providing multiple spaces for rent or lease creating more than five spaces must be reviewed according to Section IV Review and Approval Procedures for Major Subdivisions.
- iv. Proposed subdivisions providing multiple spaces for rent or lease that will expand an existing subdivision for rent or lease resulting in the accumulative total of more than five spaces must be reviewed according to Section IV Review and Approval Procedures for Major Subdivisions.

c. Final Plat Approval

- i. The applicant shall submit an application for final plat in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section II-B Final Plats.

- A. The final plat application shall include a final plat showing the perimeter of the proposed park and any additional lots that may be created.
- B. A final site plan, showing the following shall be included with the final plat application and filed at the Clerk and Recorder:
  - 1. A layout of all spaces, pads, buildings, or structures proposed for rent or lease.
  - 2. location and dimension of internal roads.
  - 3. any additional information required by the governing body.
- ii. The subdivider shall install all required improvements prior to approval of the final plat and plan. The governing body or its agents will inspect all required improvements in order to assure conformance with the approved construction plans and specifications.
- iii. If a subdivision that will provide multiple spaces for recreational camping vehicles or mobile homes is also a “trailer court,” “work camp,” “youth camp,” or “campground” as those terms are defined in Section 50-52-102, MCA, the governing body will not grant final approval of the subdivision until the subdivider obtains a license for the facility from the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services under Title 50, Chapter 52, MCA
- iv. The governing body shall not grant final approval until the applicant has met all of the requirements of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) in Title 76, Chapter 4, MCA and/or Title 50, Chapter 60, MCA as applicable.

**VI-B. Design Standards for Subdivision Providing Multiple Spaces for Rent or Lease**

**VI-B-1. General Design Standards for Mobile Home Parks and Recreational Vehicle Parks**

- a. Subdivisions providing multiple spaces for rent or lease must comply with the provisions of Section V as applicable.
- b. The governing body may require provision for:
  - i. centralized solid waste facilities.
  - ii. a water source for fire protection.
- c. Street requirements for Mobile Home Parks and Recreational Vehicle Parks

- i. Streets within mobile or manufactured home parks or recreational vehicle parks must meet the design standards specified in Section V-H Streets and Roads unless otherwise specified in this section.
    - ii. All streets within mobile or manufactured home parks or recreational vehicle parks shall be private.
    - iii. Streets must be designed to provide safe access to public roads.
    - iv. Streets within mobile or manufactured home parks or recreational vehicle parks must be designed to provide safe traffic circulation and parking.
  - d. Maintenance of common and shared facilities
    - i. The owner of the Mobile Home Park or Recreational Vehicle Park is responsible for maintenance of all shared and common facilities.
  - e. Pad numbers must be placed on the street side of the mobile home or recreational vehicle. It must be placed in a location that is clearly visible from the street.

**VI-B-2. Design Standards for Mobile/Manufactured Home Parks**

- a. Mobile/Manufactured Home Spaces
  - i. Mobile/manufactured home spaces must be arranged to permit the safe and practical placement and removal of mobile homes.
  - ii. All mobile/manufactured homes must be located at least 25 feet from any property boundary line abutting upon a public street or highway right-of-way and at least 15 feet from other boundary lines of the park.
  - iii. The mobile/manufactured home pad must be located at least 10 feet from the street that serves it.
  - iv. No mobile/manufactured home or its attached structures, such as awnings and carports, may be located within a minimum of 20 feet from any other mobile home or its attached structures.
- b. Electrical Systems
  - i. Electrical systems must be designed and installed in accordance with the applicable State building codes.
- c. Gas Systems
  - i. Gas equipment and installations must be designed and constructed with the applicable provisions of the “National Fuel Gas Code” (NFPA

Pamphlet 54-1981) and the “Standard for the Storage and Handling of Liquefied Petroleum Gases” (NFPA Pamphlet 58-1981).

**VI-B-3. Design Standards for Recreational Vehicle Parks**

Because of the unique manner of use of Recreational Vehicle Parks in Prairie County, the standards included in this section have been developed specifically to address the potential impacts to life and safety due to the nature of use of these facilities.

a. Space and Pad Layout

- i. Recreational vehicles must be separated from each other by at least 20 feet. Any structure or part of a structure attached to the vehicle such as attached awnings must, for purposes of this separation requirement, be considered part of the recreational vehicle.
- ii. All recreational vehicles must be located at least 25 feet from any property boundary line abutting upon a public street or highway right-of-way and at least 15 feet from other boundary lines of the park.

b. Electrical Systems

- i. Electrical systems must be designed and installed in accordance with the applicable State building codes.

c. Propane Storage

The storage of propane tanks shall meet the following standards:

- i. 100-pound propane tanks
  - a. The minimum distance from the opening of a building is 3 feet
  - b. The minimum distance from any source of ignition is 5 feet
- ii. 100-gallon propane tanks
  - a. The minimum distance from the opening of a building is 5 feet
  - b. The minimum distance from any source of ignition is 10 feet
  - c. Additionally, four (or fewer) 100-gallon tanks can be placed next to each other on a single property as long as placement restrictions are adhered to.
- iii. 500-gallon propane tanks
  - a. The minimum distance from the opening of a building is 10 feet

- b. The minimum distance from any source of ignition is 10 feet
  - c. The minimum distance from a property line is 10 feet
- iv. 1000-gallon propane tanks
  - a. The minimum distance from the opening of a building is 10 feet
  - b. The minimum distance from any source of ignition is 10 feet
  - c. The minimum distance from a property line is 10 feet

## **VII. CONDOMINIUMS**

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### **VII-A. Exemptions**

- a. All condominium, townhome, or townhouse or conversions developments are subdivisions subject to the terms of these Regulations and the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act (MSPA), except those exempted by Section 76-3-203, MCA, as described below:
  - i. The approval of the original subdivision of land expressly contemplated the construction of the condominiums, townhomes, or townhouses or conversions and any applicable park dedication requirements in Section 76-3-621, MCA are complied with; or
  - ii. The condominium, townhome, or townhouse or a conversion proposal is in conformance with applicable local zoning regulations when local zoning regulations are in effect.

### **VII-B. Procedures**

- i. All condominium, townhome, or townhouse or conversion developments which are not exempt from subdivision review, are subject to the applicable procedures contained in Section II. General Procurers and Section VI. Subdivisions Created for Rent or Lease.
  - A. All condominium, townhome, or townhouse or conversion developments creating five or fewer units must be reviewed according to Section III-A First Minor Subdivisions.
  - B. All condominium, townhome, or townhouse or conversion developments creating more than five units must be reviewed according to Section IV Review and Approval Procedures for Major Subdivisions.
  - C. All condominium, townhome, or townhouse or conversion developments that will expand an existing development resulting in the accumulative total of more than five units must be reviewed according to Section IV Review and Approval Procedures for Major Subdivisions.

### **VII-C. Design Standards.**

- a. A. Condominium and townhome or conversion developments shall comply with those standards contained in Section V. Design and Improvement Standards.

- b. Condominium, townhome, and townhouse or conversion developments shall comply with all applicable provisions of the Unit Ownership Act – Condominiums, Title 70, Chapter 23, MCA, as amended.

## **VIII. DIVISIONS OF LAND EXEMPT FROM SUBDIVISION REVIEW**

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### **VIII-A. Purpose**

The MSPA provides miscellaneous exemptions for some divisions of land, which are found in Part 2 of Title 76, Chapter 3, MCA. These divisions are exempt from local subdivision review and approval and are therefore not subject to the review requirements or design standards of these regulations. However, pursuant to Section 76-3-504 (1)(p), MCA local subdivision regulations, must, at a minimum, establish criteria that the governing body or reviewing authority will use to determine whether proposed methods of disposition, using the exemptions provided in Section 76-3-201 or 76-3-207, MCA, are attempts to evade the MSPA. This Section establishes those criteria and the administrative processes for examination of exempt divisions of land.

### **VIII-B. Exemption Examination Process**

#### **VIII-B-1. Advisory Meeting**

- a. A landowner or their representative is encouraged to request a meeting with the subdivision administrator prior to submitting an application for an exemption.
- b. This advisory meeting is intended to give the landowner feedback from the subdivision administrator on whether or not the proposed exemption is in compliance with the MSPA and the criteria of this Section prior to submitting a survey and the additional document claiming the exemption.
- c. It is requested that the landowner or their representative bring information to the meeting that will assist the subdivision administrator in providing feedback. A list of information that is recommended for this meeting can be found in the Prairie County Subdivision Regulations Supplements.
- d. This meeting is advisory only; the actual determination on the exemption will be made once the application is submitted with the required materials.

#### **VIII-B-2. General Submittal and Administrative Procedures**

##### **a. Submittal Requirements**

A landowner(s) (“claimant” herein) claiming an exemption listed under Section IX-C (Subsections IX-C-1 through IX-C-7) shall submit a draft certificate of survey, amended plat or, where a survey is not required, a draft instrument of conveyance and evidence of entitlement to the claimed exemption to the subdivision administrator for examination. Additional submittal requirements of Section IX-B-3(a) and those specific to certain types of exemptions are listed in Section IX-C (Subsections IX-C-1 through IX-C-7).

Once the application is submitted and if the subdivision administrator determines there are missing submittal requirements the subdivision administrator shall identify the missing requirements (or documents) in writing and shall return the application to the landowner or their representative and shall take no further action.

b. Subdivision Administrator Review

- i. The subdivision administrator shall review the document(s) and may consult with the County Attorney, Examining Land Surveyor, Prairie County Clerk and Recorder, County contract sanitarian, and other staff and officials (e.g., the Montana DEQ, Department of Revenue, etc.). Additional copies may be required for other county departments for comment and suggested corrections if necessary. The subdivision administrator will identify which departments are to receive a copy; a paper copy or pdf file may be sent the department(s) as identified; it is the responsibility of the person submitting the survey to provide and send the required copies to the departments.
- ii. Once the subdivision administrator has received comments and suggested corrections from all pertinent departments, the subdivision administrator will contact the surveyor regarding any suggested corrections that would be helpful to expedite review and consideration of the document and survey to be made prior to submittal of the mylar certificate of survey and associated documents (a signed recordable copy of the Certificate and signed documents).
- iii. The exemption shall be examined within 30 calendar days of submittal to determine whether it complies with the requirements set forth in this chapter, the MSPA, and the Montana Sanitation in Subdivisions Act. The subdivision administrator shall make the determination in writing, explaining the reasons for the determination.
- iv. If the subdivision administrator finds that the proposed use of the exemption complies with the statutes and applicable criteria, the subdivision administrator shall advise the claimant and the Prairie County Clerk and Recorder that the applicable documents may be filed. If the subdivision administrator finds the proposed use of the exemption does not comply with the statutes and the criteria in this chapter, the subdivision administrator shall advise the claimant and the Prairie County Clerk and Recorder of the decision.
- v. After review and approval of the applicable documents by the subdivision administrator and Examining Land Surveyor, and when all appropriate signatures are in place, the proper documents shall be filed with the Prairie County Clerk and Recorder's Office within one calendar year of the notification from the subdivision administrator that the applicable documents may be filed. An extension may be granted by the

subdivision administrator if all circumstances surrounding the exemption are the same as when the exemption was approved.

- vi. If the use of an exemption is denied, the landowner may initiate the process to apply for subdivision review subject to the requirements of these subdivision regulations and other applicable regulations or appeal the subdivision administrator's decision to the governing body.

c. Appeals

- i. A landowner(s) whose proposed use of exemption has been denied by the subdivision administrator may appeal the subdivision administrator's decision to the applicable governing body. The appeal request shall be submitted in writing to the subdivision administrator with 10 working days. The landowner(s) may submit additional evidence to show that the use of the exemption in question is appropriate and not intended to evade the MSPA, and, thereby overcome any presumption of evasion. The subdivision administrator shall submit a staff report and applicable materials to the governing body for its consideration.
- ii. If the governing body (at a duly noticed public meeting or public hearing held within 20 working days) concludes that the evidence and information overcomes the presumption that the exemption is being invoked to evade the MSPA or otherwise finds the exemption appropriate, the governing body may authorize the use of the exemption in writing. A survey claiming such an exemption from subdivision review (or an instrument of conveyance if no survey is required), which otherwise is in proper form and approved by the Examining Land Surveyor, may be filed if it is accompanied by written authorization of the governing body.
- iii. If the governing body determines that the proposed use of an exemption was for the purpose of evading the MSPA or these regulations, the landowner proposing to use the exemption may submit a subdivision application for the proposed land division.

**VIII-B-3. Exemption Review Criteria**

- a. When determining whether an exemption is claimed for the purpose of evading the MSPA, the subdivision administrator (and governing body when considering appeals), shall consider all of the surrounding circumstances. These circumstances may include but are not limited to:
  - i. the nature of the claimant's business,
  - ii. the prior history of the particular tract in question (the tract of record on file at the County Clerk & Recorder Office filed prior to July 1, 1973),

- iii. the proposed configuration of the tracts if the proposed exempt transaction(s) is completed,
  - iv. and any pattern of exempt transactions that will result in the equivalent of a subdivision without local government review. [State ex rel. Dreher v. Fuller, 50 St. Rpt. 454, 1993]
- b. Exempt divisions of land that would result in a pattern of development equivalent to a subdivision may be presumed to be adopted for purposes of evading the MSPA based on the surrounding circumstances in Subsection (a), above.
- c. When determining whether an exemption is claimed for the purpose of evading the MSPA, the subdivision administrator (and governing body when considering appeals), shall consider the criteria for review outlined for the specific exemptions listed in Section X-C below.

**VIII-B-4. General Requirements for Exemptions**

- a. Prairie County does not have zoning regulations, thus proposed exemptions do not need to comply with such regulations.
- b. To exempt divisions and/or remaining parcels of land resulting from the exemptions in Section 76-3-207, MCA from the survey requirements of MCA 76-3-401, the parcel(s) must be able to be described as a 1/32 or larger aliquot part of a United States Government section.
- c. Filing of any certificate of survey, amended plat, or instrument of conveyance using an exemption from subdivision review shall include the appropriate certifications and requirements found in Appendix A, as applicable.
- d. Subject to the following, a division of land exempt from subdivision review by Section 76-3-207, MCA (family transfers, agricultural exemptions, relocation of common boundaries, or utility sites) may not be made unless the Prairie County Treasurer has certified that all real property taxes and special assessments assessed and levied on the land to be divided have been paid.
  - i. If a division of land includes centrally assessed property and the property taxes applicable to the division of land are not specifically identified in the tax assessment, the department of revenue shall prorate the taxes applicable to the land being divided on a reasonable basis. The owner of the centrally assessed property shall ensure that the prorated real property taxes and special assessments are paid on the land being sold before the division of land is made.
  - ii. The Prairie County Treasurer may accept the amount of the tax prorated pursuant to the above Subsection IX-B-4 (e)(i) as a partial payment of the total tax that is due.

- e. For purposes of this Section, a tract of record becomes “created” when a new tract of record becomes of record, such as when a single tract is divided into two tracts. Boundary line relocations that start with two tracts and result in two tracts do not “create” new tracts.

**VIII-C. Requirements for Specific Exemptions**

**VIII-C-1. Gift or Sale to a Member of the Immediate Family [Section 76-3-207 (1)(b), MCA]:**

Divisions made outside of platted subdivisions for the purpose of a single gift or sale in each county to each member of the landowner's immediate family

a. Statement of Intent

The intent of this exemption is to allow a landowner to create one parcel for conveyance to each immediate family member without local subdivision review.

b. Requirements

- i. This exempt division may only be made outside of any platted subdivision.
- ii. Only one parcel may be conveyed to each immediate family member of the landowner under this exemption in each county where the landowner owns property.
- iii. For purposes of this exemption, “immediate family member” means a spouse, child by blood or adoption, and parent of the grantor.
- iv. This exemption may only be used when the grantors and grantees are natural persons and not entities such as corporations, partnerships, and trusts.
- v. Filing of any certificate of survey (or recording of an instrument of conveyance) that would use this exemption must show the name of the grantee, relationship to the landowner, and the parcel to be conveyed under this exemption, and the landowner's certification of compliance [ARM 24.183.1104 (1)(f)] found in Appendix A.
- vi. Any certificate of survey that would use this exemption shall be accompanied by the instrument of conveyance, such as a deed.

c. Criteria for Review

- i. Any proposed use of a family transfer exemption to divide a tract of record that was created through use of an exemption. This is in effect regardless of previous ownership of the tracts and pertains to remaining

tracts of less than 160 acres as well as to those tracts that were created through the exemptions.

- ii. Any proposed use of a family transfer exemption to divide a tract that was created as part of an overall development plan with such characteristics as common roads, utility easements, restrictive covenants, open space or common marketing or promotional plan.
- iii. A transfer of a parcel of land by one or more family member to another, so as to prepare for a qualifying family transfer, followed by an attempted use of this exemption.
- iv. Any proposed use of a family transfer exemption that would create more than one remaining parcel of less than 160 acres.

**VIII-C-2. Divisions of Land for Agricultural Use Only [Section 76-3-207 (1)(c), MCA]:**

Divisions made outside of platted subdivisions by gift, sale, or agreement to buy and sell in which the parties to the transaction enter a covenant running with the land and revocable only by mutual consent of the governing body and the property owner that the divided land will be used exclusively for agricultural purposes.

a. Statement of Intent

The intent of this exemption is to allow a landowner to create a parcel without local subdivision review where the parcel will be used only for production of livestock or agricultural crops and no residential, commercial or industrial buildings, which require water or sewer, will be built on it.

b. Requirements

- i. For purposes of this exemption, the term “agricultural purposes” means the use of land for raising crops or livestock, or for the preservation of open space, and specifically excludes residential, commercial, and industrial uses and structures, as well as any facilities for commercially or industrially processing agricultural products.
- ii. The division must be located outside any platted subdivision.
- iii. The division must be exempt from sanitation review by the MDEQ pursuant to Section 76-4-125 (2)(c), MCA, as a division made for purposes other than the construction of water supply or sewage and solid waste disposal facilities. This sanitation exclusion must be properly invoked by the property owner.
- iv. The landowner must enter into a covenant running with the land and revocable only by mutual consent of the governing body and the

property owner, heirs, successors and assigns that the newly created agricultural parcel will be used exclusively for agricultural purposes as defined above. The covenant must be signed by the property owner and the governing body and acknowledge that any change in use of the newly created agricultural parcel for anything other than agricultural purposes subjects the parcel to subdivision review.

- v. The division must meet the agricultural definition as described in the “Definitions” section of these regulations and does not include gardening for personal use, keeping of house pets, or landscaping for aesthetic purposes.
- vi. A certificate of survey (or instrument of conveyance) that uses this exemption requires a covenant running with the land in accordance with Section 76-3-207 (1)(c), MCA, and a signed and acknowledged recitation of the covenant on the face of the survey (or conveyance document) [ARM 24.183.1104 (f)(iii), refer to Appendix A]. Any such certificate of survey must be accompanied by a separate, recordable, document reciting the covenant.
- vii. Any change in use of the newly created agricultural parcel for anything other than agricultural purposes subjects the parcel to subdivision review. Residential, commercial, or industrial structures, including facilities for commercial processing of agricultural products, may not be utilized, constructed, or erected on parcels created under this exemption unless the covenant is revoked through subdivision review.

c. Criteria for Review

- i. Any proposed use of agricultural exemption to divide a tract of record that was created through use of an exemption. This is in effect regardless of previous ownership of the tracts and pertains to remaining tracts of less than 160 acres as well as to those tracts that were created through the exemptions.
- ii. Any proposed use of an agricultural exemption to divide a tract that was created as part of an overall development plan with such characteristics as common roads, utility easements, restrictive covenants, open space or common marketing or promotional plan.
- iii. Any proposed use of an agricultural exemption that would create more than one remaining parcel of less than 160 acres.
- iv. Any circumstance where the landowner does not sufficiently demonstrate that the planned use of the exempted parcel is for agricultural purposes only.

d. Removal

Removal of the agricultural covenant according to Section 76-3-207 (1)(c), MCA; or,

- i. The Board of County Commissioners may, in its discretion, approve the removal of the agricultural covenant without subdivision review if:
  - A. The original lot lines are restored through aggregation of the covenanted tract prior to, or in conjunction with, the lifting of the agricultural covenant; or,
  - B. The proposed lifting of the covenant is for a government or public entity seeking to use the tract for public purposes. Public purposes are defined for the purposes of this section as utility stations, airports, cemeteries, water and/or wastewater facilities.
    1. The Board of County Commissioners shall determine the qualifications and purpose of the public entity, by the following:
      - a. will hold a public hearing as set forth in Section II-F,
      - b. will consider the information and evidence provided at the public hearing,
      - c. will issue written findings of fact based on the information and evidence within 15 working days, and.
      - d. will either approve or deny the removal of the agricultural covenant.
  - ii. An Agricultural Exemption Removal agreement lifting the agricultural covenant shall be recorded at the office of the Prairie County Clerk and Recorder.
  - iii. The revocation of an Agricultural Covenant Exemption does not affect sanitary restrictions imposed under Title 76, Chapter 4, MCA.

**VIII-C-3. Relocation of Common Boundaries and Aggregation of Lots [Section 76-3-207 (1) (a), (d),(e), and (f), MCA]:**

a. Statement of Intent

The intent of these exemptions is to allow a change in the location of one or more boundary line between parcels and to allow transfer of the land without subdivision review or to allow more than one parcel to be aggregated into fewer parcels.

b. Requirements

- i. If the relocation of common boundaries would result in the permanent creation of an additional parcel of land, the division of land must be reviewed as a subdivision.
- ii. If a change is made to a platted subdivision which results in a redesign or rearrangement of six or more lots in a platted subdivision, the division of land must be reviewed as a major subdivision.
- iii. Certificates of survey or amended plats for those altering platted subdivisions, claiming one of these exemptions must clearly distinguish between existing boundary locations and new boundary locations. This shall be accomplished by showing the existing boundaries with dashed lines and the new boundaries with solid lines. The appropriate certification set forth in ARM 24.183.1104 (1)(f) must be included on the certificate of survey or amended plat.
- iv. Any restriction or requirement on the original platted lot or original unplatted parcel continues to apply to those areas.

c. Criteria for Review

- i. If the resulting lots are inconsistent with the approved subdivision and the uses in it, the use of the exemption will be presumed to have been adopted for the purpose of evading the MSPA.
- ii. The use of this exemption is presumed to have been adopted for the purpose of evading the MSPA if:
  - A. the reviewing agent determines that the documentation submitted according to this section does not support the stated reason for relocation; or
  - B. the proposed relocation creates a parcel of less than 160 acres which, prior to the relocation included more than 160 acres.

**VIII-C-4. Exemption to Provide Security for a Construction Mortgage, Lien or Trust Indenture [Section 76-3-201 (1)(b), MCA ]:**

If a parcel of land was divided through the use of this exemption and one of the parcels created by the division was conveyed by the landowner to another party without foreclosure before October 1, 2003, the conveyance of the remaining parcel is not subject to the requirements of Parts 5 & 6 of the MSPA and Section I-V (the subdivision review process) of these regulations.

a. Statement of Intent

Under policies by many lending institutions and federal home loan guaranty programs, a landowner who is buying a tract with financing or through a contract for deed is required to hold title to the specific site on which the residence will be built. The intended purpose of this exemption is to allow a landowner who is buying a tract using financing or contract for deed to segregate a smaller parcel from the tract for security for financing construction of a home on the property.

b. Use of Exemption

- i. This exemption is not available to simply create a parcel without review by claiming that the parcel will be used for security to finance construction of a home or other structure on the proposed lot.
- ii. This exemption may not be properly invoked unless:
  - A. The claimant is purchasing a larger tract through financing or a contract for deed (and thus does not hold title); and
  - B. A lending institution requires the landowner to hold title to a smaller parcel of the tract because the smaller tract is required as security for a building construction loan.

c. Requirements

- i. These regulations do not require a certificate of survey or amended plat to invoke the use of the exemption claimed under Section 76-3-201 (1)(b), MCA. Surveys for this exemption are at the discretion of the claimants, lending institutions, surveyors, etc., but are encouraged to provide proper legal descriptions in the event of default of the lien and creation of the tract(s).
- ii. When this exemption is to be used, the landowner shall submit the following along with an affidavit affirming entitlement to the claimed exemption to the subdivision administrator:
  - A. A statement of how many parcels within the original tract would be created by use of the exemption.
  - B. The draft deed, trust indenture or mortgage for the exempt parcel (which states that the tract of land is being created only to secure a construction mortgage, lien, or trust indenture).
  - C. A statement explaining who will have title to and possession of the balance of the original parcel after title to the exempted parcel is conveyed.

- D. A signed statement from a lending institution that the creation of the exempted parcel is necessary to secure a construction loan for buildings or other improvements on the parcel; and
- E. Documentation that the lending institution is a financial or lending institution registered to do business in the State of Montana.

d. Criteria for Review

- i. It will create more than one building site.
- ii. The financing is not for construction on the exempted parcel, or for re-financing.
- iii. The person named in the statement explaining who would have possession of the remainder parcel if title to the exempted parcel is conveyed is anyone other than the borrower of funds for construction.
- iv. There exists a prior agreement to default or a prior agreement to purchase only a portion of the original tract.
- v. Title to the exempted parcel will not be initially obtained by the lending institution if foreclosure occurs.
- vi. It appears that the principal reason the parcel is being created is to create a building site and using the parcel to secure a construction loan is a secondary purpose; or
- vii. The division of land is created for the purpose of conveyance to any entity other than the financial or lending institution to which the mortgage, lien or trust indenture was given, or to a purchaser upon foreclosure of the mortgage, lien or trust indenture.

**VIII-C-5. Division for Rights-of-way or Utility Site [Section 76-3-201 (1)(h), MCA]:**

a. Statement of Intent

The intent is to create a rights-of-way or utility site. Rights-of-way for land dedication for city, county roads or other transportation systems, typically require land dedications rather than easements, or utilities as utilities are defined in Section 76-3-103, MCA. A subsequent change in the use of the land to a residential, commercial, or industrial use is subject to the requirements of this chapter (of the MSPA) and these regulations.

b. Requirements

- i. Documentation required per Section IX-B-4.

- ii. Landowner approval or proof of eminent domain authority by the entity acquiring the right-of-way.
  - iii. Documentation to be filed shall include a notarized statement from the recipient accepting the right-of-way, stating the purpose of the right-of-way, and noticing that under Section 76-3-201, MCA a subsequent change in the use to residential, commercial or industrial subjects the division to review under the MSPA and these regulations.
  - iv. Any certificate of survey that would use this exemption shall be accompanied by the instrument of conveyance, such as a deed.
- c. Criteria for Review
- i. The proposed is for right-of-way or utility site.
  - ii. The entity for which a right-of-way does meeting the definition of city, county roads or other transportation systems, or the entity for which a utility site is created does meet the definition of a utility per Section 69-3-101, MCA.

**VIII-C-6. Court Ordered Divisions [Section 76-3-201 (1)(a), MCA]:**

- a. The intent of this exemption is to provide for divisions of land created by order of any court of record in this state or by operation of law or that, in the absence of agreement between the parties to the sale, could be created by an order of any court in this state pursuant to the law of eminent domain, Title 70, Chapter 30, MCA.
- b. Pursuant to Section 76-3-201 (2), MCA, before a court of record orders a division of land, the court shall notify the governing body of the pending division and allow the governing body to present written comments on the division.

**VIII-C-7. Condominiums, Townhomes, or Townhouses [Section 76-3-203, MCA]:**

a. Statement of Intent

Generally, condominiums, townhomes, or townhouses, or conversion as those terms are defined in Section 70-23-102, MCA are subject to review as subdivisions, but under certain circumstances they may be exempt from review pursuant to Section 76-3-203, MCA.

b. Use of the exemption

- i. Condominiums, townhomes, or townhouses, or conversion as those terms are defined in Section 70-23-102, MCA are exempt from subdivision review if:

- A. They are constructed on lots subdivided in compliance with these regulations and the approval of the original subdivision of land expressly contemplated the construction of the condominiums, townhomes, or townhouses or conversion and any applicable park dedication requirements in Section 76-3-621, MCA and Section V-P of these regulations are complied with; or
- B. The condominium, townhome, or townhouse or conversion proposal is in conformance with applicable local zoning regulations when local zoning regulations are in effect. There are no zoning regulations in effect in the jurisdictional area of Prairie County.

c. Requirements

- i. To use the exemption, the Declaration of Unit Ownership must include an exhibit containing certification from the subdivision administrator or governing body that the condominiums are exempt from review under Section 76-3-203, MCA (*See Section 70-23-301, MCA*).
- ii. Only the local government has the authority to determine whether a division of land is exempt from subdivision review. The act of recording a condominium declaration does not establish the declaration’s validity simply because the Prairie County Clerk and Recorder’s Office accepted and recorded it.
- iii. To obtain certification from the subdivision administrator that the condominiums, townhomes, or townhouses or conversion are exempt from review as a subdivision, the person seeking the use of the exemption shall submit evidence of and an affidavit affirming entitlement to the exemption to the subdivision administrator, who will review the documents under Section V-B-2 above; however, an exemption claimed pursuant to Section 76-3-203, MCA is not subject to examination under the Exemption Evasion Criteria of Section IX-B-3 above.

**VIII-C-8. Exemptions not requiring action by the subdivision administrator.**

The exemptions listed in this Section IX-C-7 are presumed to not be intended for the purpose of evading the MSPA if properly invoked, and therefore do not require submittal of information to the subdivision administrator for examination under the General Procedures for Exemptions as outlined in Section IX-B above. However, if a survey is to be filed with the Prairie County Clerk and Recorder’s Office to utilize the exemption, the survey is subject to examination by the Examining Land Surveyor for compliance with the uniform standards adopted under Appendix A of these regulations. These exemptions are as follows:

- a. A division of land created by lease or rental of contiguous airport-related land owned by a city, a county, the state, or a municipal or regional airport authority is

not subject to the subdivision review requirements of this chapter or the MSPA, provided that the lease or rental is for onsite weather or air navigation facilities, the manufacture, maintenance, and storage of aircraft, or air carrier-related activities. [Section 76-3-205 (1), MCA]

- b. A division of state-owned land is not subject to the subdivision review requirements of this chapter or the MSPA unless the division creates a second or subsequent parcel from a single tract for sale, rent, or lease for residential purposes after July 1, 1974. [Section 76-3-205 (2), MCA]
- c. Deeds, contracts, leases, or other conveyances which were executed prior to July 1, 1974. [Section 76-3-206, MCA]
- d. State Highways: Instruments of transfer of land which is acquired for state highways may refer by parcel and project number to state highway plans which have been recorded in compliance with Section 60-2-209, MCA and are exempted from the surveying and platting requirements of the MSPA and these regulations. If such parcels are not shown on highway plans of record, instruments of transfer of such parcels shall be accompanied by and refer to appropriate certificates of survey and plats when presented for recording. A survey or plat for the recordation of an instrument transferring title to a remainder that was created when the state obtained property for a highway right-of-way is not required. [44 A.G. Opinion 25 (1992)]
- e. The following divisions in Section 76-3-201, MCA not previously included in this section:
  - i. A division of land that creates an interest in oil, gas, minerals, or water that is severed from the surface ownership of real property.
  - ii. A division of land that creates cemetery lots.
  - iii. A division of land that is created by the reservation of a life estate.
  - iv. A division of land that is created by lease or rental for farming and agricultural purposes.
  - v. A division of land that is in a location over which the state does not have jurisdiction; and

#### **VIII-C-9. Identification Codes**

To assist in the implementation of this review process and to monitor those parcels by exemption the Clerk and Recorder may cause the following identification codes to be added to the numbering of recorded certificates of survey filed after the effective date of these regulations.

CO ... Court order [76-3-201 (1)(a), MCA]

ME ... Mortgage Exemption [76-3-201 (1)(b), MCA]  
LE ... Life Estate [76-3-201 (1)(e), MCA]  
RB ... Relocation of Common Boundary [76-3-207 (1)(a), MCA]  
FC ... Family Conveyance [76-3-207 (1)(b), MCA]  
AE ... Agricultural Exemption [76-3-207 (1)(c), MCA]  
OS ... Occasional Sale (used prior to April 6, 1993)  
AL ... Aggregation of Lots [76-3-207 (e), MCA]  
US ... Utility Site [76-3-201 (1)(h), MCA]  
ROW ... Rights-of-Way [76-3-201 (1)(h), MCA]

# **APPENDIX A: UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR MONUMENTATION, CERTIFICATES OF SURVEY, AND FINAL SUBDIVISION PLATS**

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## **24.183.1101 UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR MONUMENTATION**

### **24.183.1101 UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR MONUMENTATION**

(1) The following standards govern the monumentation of land surveys:

- (a) The terms "monument" and "permanent monument" as used in these regulations mean any structure of masonry, metal, or other permanent, durable material placed in the ground, which is exclusively identifiable as a monument to a survey point, expressly placed for surveying reference.
- (b) All metal monuments must be at least one-half inch in diameter and 18 inches in length with a cap not less than one inch in diameter marked in a permanent manner with the license number of the surveyor in charge of the survey and either the name of the surveyor or the company employing the surveyor. Metal monuments marking a public land survey corner as described in 70-22-101, MCA, must be at least 24 inches long and 5/8 inch in diameter with an appropriately stamped metal cap at least two inches in diameter. A monument marking a public land survey corner may also consist of a cap as described in this rule set firmly in concrete.
- (c) Before a subdivision plat or certificate of survey may be filed for record, the surveyor shall confirm the location of as many monuments as, in the surveyor's professional judgment, are necessary to reasonably assure the perpetuation of any corner or boundary established by the survey and to enable other surveyors to reestablish those corners and boundaries and retrace the survey. The surveyor shall clearly identify on the face of the plat or certificate of survey all monuments pertinent to the survey, and the descriptions of these monuments must be sufficient to identify the monuments.
- (d) The surveyor shall set all monuments prior to the filing of a plat or certificate of survey, except those monuments that will be disturbed by the installation of improvements, or because of severe weather conditions, may, in the surveyor's judgment, be more appropriately and accurately set after the weather has improved. In these two circumstances the surveyor may set monuments after the survey document is filed if the surveyor certifies on the survey document that the monuments will be set by a specified date. The surveyor shall set monuments, the placement of which has been deferred because of severe weather conditions, within 240 days of the date on which the survey document was filed.
  - (i) If during the later monumentation of the corners of a plat or certificate of survey that were not monumented before the plat or certificate was filed, the surveyor finds that it is necessary to set a reference monument to a corner, the surveyor shall prepare and file an amended certificate of survey or subdivision plat.
  - (ii) The failure of the surveyor to set the monuments by the date certified on the record of survey will be deemed a violation of these rules.
- (e) The surveyor shall set monuments at the following locations:

- (i) at each corner and angle point of all lots, blocks and parcels of land created by the survey.
- (ii) at every point of intersection of the outer boundary of a subdivision with an existing road right-of-way line of record or a road right-of-way line created by the survey.
- (iii) at every point of curve, point of tangency, point of reversed curve, point of compounded curve, and point of intersection on each road right-of-way line created by the survey; and
- (iv) at the intersection of a boundary line and a meander line. Meander line angle points need not otherwise be monumented.
- (f) If the placement of a required monument at its proper location is physically impractical, the surveyor may set a reference or witness monument. This monument has the same status as other monuments of record if its location is properly shown. If the surveyor relies upon any existing monument in conducting a survey, he or she shall confirm the location of the monument and show and describe it on the resulting certificate of survey or subdivision plat.
- (g) If the land surveyor sets a monument that is on, is a part of, and controls a property line, then the surveyor shall file a certificate of survey which complies with the requirements of ARM 24.183.1104. Alternatively, the surveyor may file a corner record in lieu of a certificate of survey pursuant to 70-22-105(2), MCA.
  - (2) Remonumentation of public land survey corner monuments shall conform to ARM 24.183.1002.

#### **24.183.1104 UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATES OF SURVEY**

- (1) A certificate of survey must comply with the following requirements:
  - (a) A certificate of survey must be legibly drawn with permanent black ink or printed or reproduced by a process guaranteeing a permanent record and must be 18 inches by 24 inches or 24 inches by 36 inches. Margins must be a minimum 1/2-inch on all sides, or as required by the filing office.
  - (b) One original on three mil or heavier matte stable-base polyester film or equivalent and/or one original on 24# white bond paper or equivalent must be submitted, or on such medium as required by the filing office.
  - (c) If more than one sheet must be used to adequately depict the land surveyed, each sheet must show the number of that sheet and the total number of sheets included. All certifications must be placed on sheet number one of the certificate of survey.
  - (d) A certificate of survey must show or contain the following information:
    - (i) a title or title block including the quarter-section, section, township, range, principal meridian, county, and if applicable, city or town in which the surveyed land is located. Except as provided in (1)(f)(v), a certificate of survey must not contain the title "plat," "subdivision," or any title other than "Certificate of Survey".
    - (ii) the name(s) of the person(s) who commissioned the survey, the name(s) of the owner(s) of the land surveyed, if other than the person(s) commissioning the survey, the names of any adjoining plats, and the numbers of any adjoining certificates of survey previously filed;

- (iii) the date the survey was completed and a brief explanation of why the certificate of survey was prepared, such as to create a new parcel, retrace a section line, or retrace an existing parcel of land.
- (iv) a north arrow.
- (v) a scale bar. The scale of the certificate of survey must be sufficient to legibly represent the required information and data on the certificate of survey.
- (vi) the location of, and other information relating to all monuments found, set, reset, replaced, or removed as required by ARM 24.183.1101.
- (A) If additional monuments are to be set after the certificate of survey is filed, the location of these monuments must be shown by a distinct symbol, and the certificate of survey must contain a certification by the land surveyor as to the reason the monuments have not been set and the date by which they will be set, as required by ARM 24.183.1101(1)(d).
- (B) All monuments found during the survey that influenced the position of any corner or boundary indicated on the certificate of survey must be clearly shown as required by ARM 24.183.1101(1)(c).
- (C) Witness and reference monuments must be clearly shown.
- (vii) the location of any section corner or corners of divisions of sections the land surveyor deems to be pertinent to the survey or was used as a control in the survey.
- (viii) basis of bearing. For purposes of this rule, the term "basis of bearing" means the land surveyor's statement as to the origin of the bearings shown on the certificate of survey. If the basis of bearing(s) refers to two previously monumented points in a previously filed survey document, then the two previously monumented points must be shown and described on the certificate of survey, the line marked by the two previously monumented points must be labeled "basis of bearing," and the previously filed survey document name or number must be cited in the land surveyor's statement as to the origin of the bearing(s). If the certificate of survey shows true bearings, the basis of bearing must describe the method by which these true bearings were determined.
- (ix) the bearings, distances, and curve data of all boundary lines and all control or pertinent lines used to determine the boundaries of the parcel(s) surveyed. If the parcel surveyed is bounded by an irregular shoreline or a body of water that is a riparian boundary, the bearings and distances of a meander traverse generally paralleling the riparian boundary must be given.
  - (A) The courses along a meander line are shown solely to provide a basis for calculating the area of a parcel that has one or more riparian boundaries as the parcel existed at the time of survey.
  - (B) For purposes of this rule, a line that indicates a fixed boundary of a parcel is not a "meander" or "meander line" and may not be designated as one.
  - (C) If a boundary, control, or pertinent line contains multiple segments of the whole, then the overall distance must be shown, and each segment must at least include distance.
- (x) data on all curves sufficient to enable the reestablishment of the curves on the ground. For circular curves, the data must at least include radius and arc length, and either delta angle, radial bearings, or chord bearing and distance. All non-tangent points

- of intersection on the curve must show either the bearings of radial lines or chord length and bearing. Non-tangent curves must be so labeled.
- (xi) lengths of all lines shown to at least tenths of a foot, and all angles and bearings shown to at least the nearest minute. Distance measurements must be stated in English units, but their metric equivalents, shown to the nearest hundredth of a meter, may be noted parenthetically.
  - (xii) at least one record measurement reference for each line and curve, if available, must be shown.
  - (xiii) a narrative legal description of the parcel(s) surveyed.
    - (A) The land surveyor, at his or her discretion, may choose the form of the narrative legal description as follows:
      - (I) If the parcel surveyed is either an aliquot part of a U.S. government section or a U.S. government lot, the narrative legal description may be the aliquot part or the government lot description of the parcel.
      - (II) If the certificate of survey depicts the division of one or more parcels shown on a previously filed certificate of survey, the narrative legal description may be the number of the previously filed certificate of survey and the parcel number of the parcel(s) previously surveyed;
      - (III) If the certificate of survey depicts the retracement of one or more parcels shown on a previously filed certificate of survey, plat, or amended plat, the narrative legal description may be the number of the previously filed certificate of survey or the name of the previously filed plat or amended plat, and the parcel number of the parcel(s) previously surveyed;
      - (IV) If the survey creates or retraces one or more parcels, the narrative legal description may be either the metes-and-bounds description of each individual parcel created by the survey or the metes-and-bounds description of the perimeter boundary of the parcels surveyed; or
      - (V) If the narrative legal description does not fall within (1)(d)(xiii)(A)(I), (II), or (III), then the narrative legal description required by this subsection must conform with (1)(d)(xiii)(A)(IV).
    - (B) When the narrative legal description is metes-and-bounds, the point of beginning, which is also the point of closure of the legal description of the parcel surveyed, must be labeled "Point of Beginning." Alternatively, the point of beginning may be labeled "POB" if the abbreviation is defined on the certificate of survey.
    - (C) The requirement of this rule does not apply to certificates of survey that depict a partial retracement of the boundaries of an existing parcel or establish the location of lines or corners that control the location of an existing parcel.
  - (xiv) all parcels created or retraced by the certificate of survey designated by number or letter, and the bearings, distances, curve data, and area of each parcel, except as provided in (1)(f)(iii). If a parcel created by the certificate of survey is identifiable as a 1/32 or larger aliquot part of a U.S. government section or as a U.S. government lot, it may be designated by number or letter or by its aliquot part or government lot identification.
  - (xv) the location, bearings, distances, and curve data of any easement that will be created by reference to the certificate of survey.

- (xvi) the dated signature and the seal of the land surveyor responsible for the survey. The land surveyor's signature certifies that the certificate of survey has been prepared in conformance with the applicable sections of the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act and the regulations adopted under the Act.
  - (xvii) a memorandum of any oaths administered under 76-3-405, MCA.
  - (xviii) if applicable, the certificate of the examining land surveyor; and
  - (xix) space for the clerk and recorder's filing information.
- (e) Certificates of survey that do not represent a division or aggregation of land, such as those depicting the retracement of an existing parcel and those prepared for informational purposes, must contain a statement as to their purpose and must meet applicable requirements of this rule for form and content. If the purpose of a certificate of survey is stated as a retracement or partial retracement, and if multiple tracts of record contained within the parcel's perimeter boundary on the certificate of survey are not individually shown, then the certificate of survey does not expunge the tracts of record unless it conforms to (1)(f)(iv) and contains the acknowledged certificate of the property owner(s) citing the applicable exemption in its entirety.
- (f) Procedures for divisions of land exempted from review as subdivisions. If one or more parcels on a certificate of survey is created by an exemption from subdivision review under 76-3-207, MCA, then, except as provided in (1)(f)(iii) and (iv), the certificate of survey must establish the boundaries of the exemption parcel(s). The certificate of survey is not required to establish, but may establish, the exterior boundaries of the remaining portion of the parent tract of land. However, the certificate of survey must show portions of the existing unchanged boundaries sufficient to identify the location and extent of the exemption parcel to be created. Unsurveyed portions of the parent tract of land must be labeled, "NOT A PART OF THIS CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY" or "NOT INCLUDED IN THIS CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY". The certificate of survey must contain the acknowledged certificate of the property owner stating that the division of land is exempt from review as a subdivision and cite the applicable exemption in its entirety. The certificate of survey must meet the following requirements:
- (i) If the exemption relied upon requires that the property owner enter into a covenant running with the land, the certificate of survey may not be filed unless it shows or contains a signed and acknowledged recitation of the covenant in its entirety.
  - (ii) If a certificate of survey invokes the exemption for gift(s) or sale(s) to members of the landowner's immediate family, the certificate of survey must indicate the name of the proposed grantee, the relationship of the grantee to the landowner, and the parcel to be conveyed to the grantee.
  - (iii) If a certificate of survey invokes the exemption for the relocation of common boundary line(s):
    - (A) The certificate of survey must contain the signatures of all landowners whose tracts of record will be altered by the proposed relocation. The certificate of survey must show that the exemption was used only to change the location of a boundary line or lines common to two or more tracts of record, and must clearly distinguish the prior boundary location or locations (shown, for example, by dashed or broken

- line(s) with a notation) from the new boundary location or locations (shown, for example, by solid line(s) with a notation);
- (B) The certificate of survey must show the boundaries of the area that is being removed from one tract of record and joined with another tract of record. The certificate of survey is not required to establish, but may establish, the exterior boundaries of the resulting tracts of record. However, the certificate of survey must show portions of the existing unchanged boundaries sufficient to clearly identify both the location and the extent of the boundary relocation. Unsurveyed portions of the tracts of record must be labeled, "NOT A PART OF THIS CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY" or "NOT INCLUDED IN THIS CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY"; and
  - (C) The certificate of survey must contain the following notation: "The area that is being removed from one tract of record and joined with another tract of record is not itself a tract of record. Said area shall not be available as a reference legal description in any subsequent real property transfer after the initial transfer associated with the [certificate of survey or amended plat] on which said area is described, unless said area is included with or excluded from adjoining tracts of record."
- (iv) If a certificate of survey invokes the exemption for aggregation of parcels or lots:
    - (A) The certificate of survey must contain the signatures of all landowners whose tracts of record will be altered by the proposed aggregation. The certificate of survey must show that the exemption was used only to eliminate a boundary line or lines common to two or more tracts of record, and must clearly distinguish the prior boundary location or locations (shown, for example, by dashed or broken line(s) with a notation) from the new perimeter boundary location or locations (shown, for example, by solid line(s) with a notation); and
    - (B) The certificate of survey must establish the perimeter boundary of the resulting tract(s) of record.
  - (v) A survey document that modifies lots on a filed plat and invokes an exemption from subdivision review under 76-3-201 or 76-3-207(1)(d), (e), or (f), MCA, must be entitled "amended plat of [lot, block, and name of subdivision being amended]," but for all other purposes must comply with the requirements for form and descriptive content of certificates of survey contained in this rule.
  - (vi) If the certificate of survey invokes an exemption from subdivision review under 76-3-207, MCA, the certificate of survey must contain or be accompanied by a certification by the county treasurer that all real property taxes and special assessments assessed and levied on the surveyed land have been paid.
  - (vii) For purposes of this rule, when the parcel of land for which an exemption from subdivision review is claimed is being conveyed under a contract-for-deed, the terms "property owner," "landowner," and "owner" mean the seller of the land under the contract-for-deed.
  - (g) The land surveyor, at his or her discretion, may provide additional information on the certificate of survey regarding the survey.
    - (h) Procedures for filing certificates of survey of divisions of land entirely exempted from the requirements of the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act. The divisions of land described in 76-3-201, 76-3-205, and 76-3-209, MCA, and divisions of federally owned land made by a U.S. government agency are not required to be surveyed, nor must a certificate of survey or

plat showing these divisions be filed with the clerk and recorder. However, a certificate of survey of one of these divisions may be filed with the clerk and recorder if the certificate of survey meets the requirements for form and content for certificates of survey contained in this rule, and contains a certificate of all the landowners citing the applicable exemption from the Act in its entirety, or when applicable, that the land surveyed is owned by the federal government. The certificate of survey must establish the boundaries of the exemption parcel(s). The certificate of survey is not required to establish, but may establish, the exterior boundaries of the remaining portion of the parent tract of land. However, the certificate of survey must show portions of the existing unchanged boundaries sufficient to identify the location and extent of the exemption parcel to be created. Unsurveyed portions of the parent tract of land must be labeled, "NOT A PART OF THIS CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY" or "NOT INCLUDED IN THIS CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY."

#### **24.183.1107 UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR FINAL SUBDIVISION PLATS**

- (1) A final subdivision plat must comply with the following requirements:
  - (a) the plat complies with the requirements contained in (2).
  - (b) the plat includes a Conditions of Approval sheet(s) that complies with the requirements contained in (4); and
  - (c) the plat is accompanied by documents listed in (5).
- (2) A plat must comply with the following requirements:
  - (a) A plat must be legibly drawn with permanent black ink or printed or reproduced by a process guaranteeing a permanent record and must be 18 inches by 24 inches or 24 inches by 36 inches. Margins must be a minimum 1/2-inch on all sides, or as required by the filing office.
  - (b) One original on three mil or heavier matte stable-base polyester film or equivalent and/or one original on 24# white bond paper or equivalent must be submitted, or on such medium as required by the filing office.
  - (c) If more than one sheet must be used to adequately depict the land surveyed, each sheet must show the number of that sheet and the total number of sheets included. Except as provided in (4)(b), all certifications must be placed on sheet number one of the plat.
  - (d) A survey document that results in an increase in the number of lots or modifies six or more lots on a filed plat must be entitled "amended plat of (lot, block, and name of subdivision being amended)," and unless it is exempt from subdivision review by 76-3-201 or 76-3-207(1)(d), (e), or (f), MCA, must meet the filing requirements for final subdivision plats specified in this rule.
  - (e) A plat must show or contain the following information:
    - (i) a title or title block including the quarter-section, section, township, range, principal meridian, county, and if applicable, city or town in which the subdivision is located. The title of the plat must contain the words "plat" and either "subdivision" or "addition".
    - (ii) the name(s) of the person(s) who commissioned the survey, the name(s) of the owner(s) of the land to be subdivided, if other than the person(s) commissioning the survey,

- the names of any adjoining plats, and the numbers of any adjoining certificates of survey previously filed;
- (iii) a north arrow.
  - (iv) a scale bar. The scale of the plat must be sufficient to legibly represent the required information and data on the plat.
  - (v) the location of, and other information relating to all monuments found, set, reset, replaced, or removed as required by ARM 24.183.1101.
  - (A) If additional monuments are to be set after the plat is filed, the location of these monuments must be shown by a distinct symbol, and the plat must contain a certification by the land surveyor as to the reason the monuments have not been set and the date by which they will be set, as required by ARM 24.183.1101(1)(d).
  - (B) All monuments found during the survey that influenced the position of any corner or boundary indicated on the plat must be clearly shown as required by ARM 24.183.1101(1)(c).
  - (C) Witness and reference monuments must be clearly shown.
  - (vi) the location of any section corner or corners of divisions of sections the land surveyor deems to be pertinent to the survey or was used as control in the survey.
  - (vii) basis of bearing. For purposes of this rule, the term "basis of bearing" means the land surveyor's statement as to the origin of the bearings shown on the plat. If the basis of bearing(s) refers to two previously monumented points in a previously filed survey document, then the two previously monumented points must be shown and described on the plat, the line marked by the two previously monumented points must be labeled "basis of bearing," and the previously filed survey document name or number must be cited in the land surveyor's statement as to the origin of the bearing(s). If the plat shows true bearings, the basis of bearing must describe the method by which these true bearings were determined.
  - (viii) the bearings, distances, and curve data of all boundary lines and all control or pertinent lines used to determine the boundaries of the subdivision. If the subdivision is bounded by an irregular shoreline or a body of water that is a riparian boundary, the bearings and distances of a meander traverse generally paralleling the riparian boundary must be given.
    - (A) The courses along a meander line are shown solely to provide a basis for calculating the area of a parcel that has one or more riparian boundaries as the parcel existed at the time of survey.
    - (B) For purposes of this rule, a line that indicates a fixed boundary of a parcel is not a "meander" or "meander line" and may not be designated as one.
    - (C) If a boundary, control, or pertinent line contains multiple segments of the whole, then the overall distance must be shown, and each segment must at least include distance.
  - (ix) data on all curves sufficient to enable the reestablishment of the curves on the ground. For circular curves, the data must at least include radius and arc length, and either delta angle, radial bearings, or chord bearing and distance. All non-tangent points of intersection on the curve must show either the bearings of radial lines or chord length and bearing. Non-tangent curves must be so labeled.
  - (x) lengths of all lines shown to at least tenths of a foot, and all angles and bearings shown to at least the nearest minute. Distance measurements must be stated in English

- units, but their metric equivalents, shown to the nearest hundredth of a meter, may be noted parenthetically.
- (xi) at least one record measurement reference for each line and curve, if available, must be shown.
  - (xii) all lots and blocks in the subdivision designated by number, the bearings, distances, and curve data of each lot and block, the area of each lot, and the total area of all lots. (Excepted lands must be labeled "NOT INCLUDED IN THIS SUBDIVISION" or "NOT INCLUDED IN THIS PLAT".
  - (xiii) all existing rights-of-way for streets, alleys, avenues, roads, and highways that adjoin or are within the boundaries of the subdivision; their names and widths from public record (if ascertainable); the bearings, distances, and curve data of their adjoining boundaries. If the existing right(s)-of-way is contained within the boundaries of the subdivision, then the area of the portion of the right(s)-of-way within the subdivision shall be shown.
  - (xiv) all rights-of-way for streets, alleys, avenues, roads, and highways that will be created by the filing of the plat, their names, widths, bearings, distances, curve data, and area.
  - (xv) except as provided in (2)(e)(xiii) and (xiv), the location, bearings, distances, curve data, and areas of all parks, common areas, and other grounds dedicated for public use.
  - (xvi) the total area of the subdivision.
  - (xvii) a narrative legal description of the subdivision.
    - (A) The land surveyor, at his or her discretion, may choose the form of the narrative legal description as follows:
      - (I) If the land to be subdivided is either an aliquot part of a U.S. government section or a U.S. government lot, the narrative legal description may be the aliquot part or the government lot description of the land.
      - (II) If the plat depicts the division of one or more parcels shown on a previously filed certificate of survey or plat, the narrative legal description may be the number of the previously filed certificate of survey or name of the previously filed plat and the parcel number of the parcel(s) previously surveyed;
      - (III) The narrative legal description may be the metes-and-bounds description of the perimeter boundary of the subdivision; or
      - (IV) If the narrative legal description does not fall within (2)(e)(xvii)(A)(I) or (II), the narrative legal description required by this subsection is the metes-and-bounds description of the perimeter boundary of the subdivision.
    - (B) When the narrative legal description is metes-and-bounds, the point of beginning, which is also the point of closure of the legal description of the subdivision surveyed, must be labeled "Point of Beginning." Alternatively, the point of beginning may be labeled "POB" if the abbreviation is defined on the plat.
  - (xviii) the dated signature and the seal of the land surveyor responsible for the survey. The land surveyor's signature certifies that the plat has been prepared in conformance with the applicable sections of the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act and the regulations adopted under the Act. The land surveyor's signature and certification do not include certification of the Conditions of Approval sheet(s).
  - (xix) a memorandum of any oaths administered under 76-3-405, MCA.

- (xx) the dated, signed, and acknowledged consent to the subdivision of the owner of the land to be subdivided. For purposes of this rule, when the parcel of land proposed for subdivision is being conveyed under a contract-for-deed, the terms "property owner," "landowner," and "owner" mean the seller of the land under the contract-for-deed;
- (xxi) certification by the governing body that the final plat is approved.
- (xxii) if applicable, the landowner's certificate of dedication of streets, alleys, avenues, roads, highways, parks, playground easements, or other public improvements.
- (xxiii) if applicable, or as required by subdivision regulations, the landowner(s)' certification statement(s) as follows:
  - (A) A statement that federal, state, and local plans, policies, regulations, and/or conditions of subdivision approval that may limit the use of the property, including the location, size, and use are shown on the Conditions of Approval sheet or as otherwise stated.
  - (B) A statement that buyers of property should ensure that they have obtained and reviewed all sheets of the plat and all documents recorded and filed in conjunction with the plat and that buyers of property are strongly encouraged to contact the local planning department and become informed of any limitations on the use of the property prior to closing.
  - (C) A statement that all or part of the required public improvements have been installed and/or security requirements pursuant to 76-3-507, MCA, secure the future construction of any remaining public improvements to be installed.
- (xxiv) if applicable, a certificate of the governing body accepting any dedicated land, easements, or improvements.
- (xxv) if applicable, the certificate of the examining land surveyor.
- (xxvi) space for the clerk and recorder's filing information; and
- (xxvii) a minimum two-inch by four-inch blank space below the clerk and recorder's filing information for the recording numbers of the documents listed in (5).
- (f) The land surveyor, at his or her discretion, may provide additional information on the plat regarding the survey.
- (3) The following certifications of final plat approval must appear on the plat or on the Conditions of Approval sheet as contained in (4), or recorded or filed as contained in (5) of these rules:
  - (a) A certification by the county treasurer that all real property taxes and special assessments assessed and levied on the land to be subdivided have been paid and, if applicable, certification of the local health officer having jurisdiction.
- (4) If applicable, a sheet(s) of the plat prepared by the landowner(s) or their representative(s) depicting conformance with subdivision application approval shall be entitled "Conditions of Approval of [insert name of subdivision]" with a title block including the quarter-section, section, township, range, principal meridian, county, and, if applicable, city or town in which the subdivision is located, and shall contain:
  - (a) any text and/or graphic representations of requirements by the governing body for final plat approval including, but not limited to, setbacks from streams or riparian areas, floodplain boundaries, no-build areas, building envelopes, or the use of particular parcels.

- (b) a certification statement by the landowner that the text and/or graphics shown on the Conditions of Approval sheet(s) represent(s) requirements by the governing body for final plat approval and that all conditions of subdivision application have been satisfied; and
- (c) a notation stating that the information shown is current as of the date of the certification required in (4)(b), and that changes to any land-use restrictions or encumbrances may be made by amendments to covenants, zoning regulations, easements, or other documents as allowed by law or by local regulations.
- (5) If applicable, the following documents as specified by local government shall accompany the approved final plat and shall be recorded or filed with the plat as specified by the clerk and recorder, and the recording or filing number(s) for each document may be written on the plat by the clerk and recorder:
  - (a) a title report or certificate of a title abstractor showing the names of the owners of record of the land to be subdivided, and the names of any lien holders or claimants of record against the land, and the written consent to the subdivision by the owners of the land if other than the subdivider, and any lien holders or claimants of record against the land;
  - (b) any covenants or deed restrictions relating to the subdivision.
  - (c) for lots less than 20 acres in size, exclusive of public roadways, a certification from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality stating that it has approved the plans and specifications for water supply and sanitary facilities pursuant to 76-4-104(2), MCA.
  - (d) if required by the governing body, for lots of 20 acres or greater in size, written documentation that the subdivider has demonstrated that there is an adequate water source and at least one area for a septic system and replacement drainfield for each lot in accordance with 76-3-604(8)(b), MCA;
  - (e) a copy of any security requirements, pursuant to 76-3-507, MCA, securing the future construction of any remaining public improvements to be installed.
  - (f) unless otherwise provided in local subdivision regulations, copies of final plans, profiles, grades, and specifications for improvements, including a complete grading and drainage plan, with the certification of a professional engineer that all required improvements which have been installed are in conformance with the attached plans. Local subdivision regulations may authorize the subdivider, under conditions satisfactory to the governing body, to prepare these plans and specifications after the final plat has been filed, or file them with a government official other than the clerk and recorder, or both. If the approved plans and specifications are or will be filed with a government official other than the clerk and recorder, then a document or a statement on the Conditions of Approval sheet that states where the plans can be obtained must be filed or recorded;
  - (g) if a street, alley, avenue, road, or highway created by the plat will intersect with a state or federal right-of-way, a copy of the access or encroachment permit; and
  - (h) any other documents satisfying subdivision application approval required by the governing body to be filed or recorded.

## **APPENDIX B: EVALUATION OF IMPACTS TO AGRICULTURE, AGRICULTURAL WATER USER FACILITIES, LOCAL SERVICES, NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

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Subdivision applications and subdivision review by the County staff will include documentation and analysis of whether or not the proposed subdivision will impact agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, local services, the natural environment, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and public health and safety as defined in this Growth Policy.

The County will evaluate each proposed subdivision with regards to the expected impacts upon each of the criteria, and the degree to which the subdivision applicant proposes to mitigate any adverse impacts. This evaluation will be based upon the subdivision application, staff review, and reports and information gathered from public hearings and other sources of information as deemed appropriate. Upon completion of its review and evaluation, the County will render a decision on the proposed subdivision with respect to the requirements of the Prairie County Subdivision Regulations, the County Growth Policy, and the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act.

### Evaluation Criteria for Effects on Agriculture

- a. Potential conflicts between the proposed subdivision and adjacent agricultural operations shall be evaluated including:
  - Interference with the movement of livestock or farm machinery
  - Interference with agricultural production and activities
  - Maintenance of fences
  - Proliferation of weeds
  - Harassment of livestock by pets

### Evaluation Criteria for Effects on Agricultural Water User Facilities

- a. Easements to protect the operation and maintenance of water user facilities on or accessed through a subdivision shall be considered.
- b. Potential subdivision nuisance complaints or problems due to agricultural water user facilities such as safety hazards to residents or water problems from irrigation ditches, head gates, siphons, sprinkler systems or other facilities shall be considered.
- c. Ownership of water rights and the historic and current use of facility on the proposed subdivision shall be examined.
- d. Allocation of water rights within a subdivision shall be considered.

### Evaluation Criteria for Effects Upon Local Services

- a. All subdivisions shall be provided with adequate legal and physical access. This will include gravel roads.
- b. All subdivisions shall have access to electrical power and telephone services.

Evaluation Criteria for Effect on Natural Environment

- a. All subdivisions will be designed to minimize their impact upon the environment.

Evaluation Criteria for Effect on Public Health and Safety

- a. Potential hazards to residents of subdivision from high voltage lines, high-pressure gas lines, highways, roads, railroads, or railroad crossings, nearby industrial or mining activity.
- b. Presence of natural hazards such as flooding, high winds, wildfire, or difficulties such as highwater table, expansive soils, or excessive slopes.

Evaluation Criteria for Effect on Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

- a. All subdivisions will be designed to minimize their impact upon wildlife.

## APPENDIX C: GENERALIZED SUBDIVISION REVIEW PROCESS FLOWCHART

### PRAIRIE COUNTY SUBDIVISION REVIEW GENERALIZED STEPS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS\*

GENERALIZED SUBDIVISION REVIEW STEPS	GENERALIZED PROCESS FOR EACH STEP
<b>First Step: Preapplication Meeting</b>	Preapplication meeting is held via phone or in person. <b>Call the County Clerk and Recorder's office to schedule a meeting: 406-635-5575.</b> The meeting is meant to help the County understand proposal and to provide guidance to the applicant to understand the application/review process. <b>The potential use of an exemption from review should be discussed at this meeting.</b>
<b>Second Step: Submit the Application</b>	Applicant compiles a preliminary plat application and submits it to the County. The contents are listed in regulations and identified during the preapplication meeting.
<b>Third Step: Element Review of Application</b>	Subdivision Administrator (SA) conducts an element review. The SA has 5 working days to determine if all the necessary elements listed in the regulations and identified in the preapplication meeting have been submitted.
<b>Fourth Step: Sufficiency Review of the Application</b>	Subdivision Administrator (SA) conducts a sufficiency review. The SA has 15 working days to determine if the contents of the application are sufficient to conduct a proper review.
<b>Fifth Step: Subdivision Administrator Review and Recommendation</b>	The Subdivision Administrator (SA) conducts a formal review of the application and may contact a variety of local, state, and federal agencies to collect additional information. The SA will draft a formal report and recommendation for the Planning Board and/or the Commission.
<b>Sixth Step (1A): Planning Board Hearing, Review and Recommendation (Major Subdivisions)</b>  <b>Sixth Step (1B): County Commission Meeting, Review and Decision (Minor Subdivisions)*</b>  <b>Sixth Step (1C): County Commission Meeting, Review and Decision (Major Subdivisions)</b>	<p>If the application is for a major subdivision (6 or more lots) the Planning Board would hold a noticed public hearing and consider the testimony of the applicant and County residents and the Subdivision Administrator's recommendation. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Board would make a recommendation to conditionally approve or deny the application to the County Commission.</p> <p>If the application is for any type of minor subdivision the County Commission would review the application at one of its regularly scheduled meetings. <u>Public hearings are not permitted for First Minor Subdivisions.*</u> The Commission would consider the applicant's testimony and the Subdivision Administrator's recommendation and either conditionally approve the application or deny it.</p> <p>If the proposal is for a major subdivision (6 or more lots) the County Commission would consider the proposal at one of its regularly scheduled meetings following the Planning Board hearing. The Commission would consider the applicant's testimony and the Planning Board's recommendation and either conditionally approve the application or deny it.</p>
<b>Seventh Step: Conditional Approval (if applicable)</b>	If granted conditional approval, the applicant would work to complete the conditions of approval that might include completing road construction, obtaining DEQ approval, surveying etc.
<b>Eighth Step: Final Plat Submittal and Review</b>	<p>The applicant would submit evidence that the conditions of approval have been met and might include certification by an engineer on improvements, DEQ approval letters, final plat compiled by a surveyor.</p> <p>The Subdivision Administrator would review this information to ensure they meet the necessary standards. Review by the County Attorney, examining land surveyor and other entities maybe required.</p>
<b>Ninth Step: Final Plat Approval</b>	If the Subdivision Administrator finds that the final plat and conditions of approval have been met, the County Commission can consider approving and signing the final plat.
<b>Tenth Step: Filing of the Final Plat</b>	Upon approval and signature by the County Commissioners, the final plat may be filed with the Clerk and Recorder, thus creating the new lots.

\*The specific steps in the review process will vary depending upon the type of subdivision application submitted. Please refer to the County Subdivision Regulations, state statute and discuss any questions with the Prairie County Subdivision Administrator.





\*Public hearings are not permitted for first minor subdivisions.

## APPENDIX D: GENERALIZED EXEMPTION REVIEW PROCESS FLOWCHART

### PRAIRIE COUNTY DIVISIONS EXEMPT FROM REVIEW GENERALIZED STEPS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS\*

**GENERALIZED REVIEW  
STEPS**

**GENERALIZED PROCESS FOR EACH STEP**

<b>First Step: Advisory Meeting (optional)</b>	This meeting is intended to provide guidance on whether the proposed exemption would comply with statute and the regulations. The landowner or their representative should provide information (surveys, deeds etc.) to assist the subdivision administrator in discussing the proposed exemption. <b>Call the County Clerk and Recorder's office to schedule a meeting: 406-635-5575.</b>
	
<b>Second Step: Submit the Exemption Application</b>	A landowner claiming an exemption would submit a draft certificate of survey, amended plat or, as applicable, a draft instrument of conveyance and evidence of entitlement to the exemption to the subdivision administrator.
	
<b>Third Step: Examination of Exemption Application</b>	If the application is complete the subdivision administrator will examine the document(s) and might consult with other County staff. The examination will be completed within 30 calendar days of submittal.
	
<b>Fourth Step: Determination on Exemption Application</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">If exemption is found to comply with statute and regulations, the subdivision administrator <u>will advise the landowner and the County Clerk and Recorder that the applicable documents may be filed, which includes filing fees and other applicable fees.</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">If the subdivision administrator finds the proposed use of the exemption does not comply with statute and the regulations, the administrator will advise the landowner and the County Clerk and Recorder of the decision in writing.</p>
	
<b>Fifth Step (if necessary): Appeal of Subdivision Administrator's Decision</b>	If the landowner disagrees with the subdivision administrator's determination, they can appeal the decision directly to the County Commissioners. The Commissioners will hold a public hearing to consider the facts of the matter and will render a decision on the proposed exemption.

**\*The specific steps in the review of exemptions may vary depending upon the type of exemption proposed. Please refer to the County Subdivision Regulations, state statute and discuss any questions with the Prairie County Subdivision Administrator.**