

Appendix J: Supporting Documents for Rural Cluster Regulation

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A. SITE ANALYSIS

1. **Background.** The Site Analysis is performed after a preliminary meeting with the RCD Program Administrator but prior to the creation of the preliminary project sketch. The Site Analysis is performed by County Staff and cooperating partners who visit the project site.
2. **General Information.** The Program Administrator shall, to the extent possible, assemble the following pieces of general information prior to site visit.
 - General. Prepare a project summary sheet that identifies the name of landowner(s) and their contact information, the primary goals of the landowner(s), the total acreage of the subject property, the total acreage the landowner would like to include in the project, the current use of the property, and any other relevant background information that the evaluation team may find useful before visiting the property.
 - Base Maps. Prepare a map using aerial photographs or other reasonable resources that identifies: the approximate property lines, project boundaries (if different than property lines), surface water features (including irrigation ditches), roads, existing improvements, identified utility easements, TDR sending areas or conservation easements (or other dedicated open spaces) on nearby properties, and other relevant information. Also provide a USGS quad map of subject area.
 - Soils. Provide a soils map based on the Gallatin County soil survey and provide relevant soil information (agricultural classification, development constraints, etc.) for the project site.
 - Known Hazards. Determine, to the extent possible, whether hazards such as earthquake faults, landslides, mapped floodplains, electric transmission lines, high-pressure gas lines, or other known hazards are present on the site. If they are present, prepare an exhibit that outlines their approximate location on the base map.
3. **Site Visit.** The evaluation team visits the property and takes note of, or otherwise describes the following:
 - A. **Agricultural Resources**
 - How much of the property is utilized for agricultural purposes? Differentiate between rangeland and cultivated acreage if possible.
 - Is the property currently irrigated? If so, how?

- Are there any “waste areas” that are inappropriate for agricultural use but may be appropriate for residential use? If so, note the location of these areas.
- What infrastructure (buildings, farm/ranch access roads, irrigation ditches, center pivots, etc.) exists that is critical for the continuation of an agricultural operation on this property? Note the location of these items.
- Note the location of existing fence lines or other existing divisions of the agricultural unit.

B. Water Resources

- Do the surface water features on the base map appear to be accurate? Are there any surface water features that are shown on the base map that no longer exist? Are there surface water features on the property that don’t show up on the base map?
- Provide a brief description of these surface water features (are they perennial or intermittent; are they substantial or not; in terms of lateral migration, are they relatively stable or fairly dynamic; etc.).
- Does the property have water rights? What will happen to those water rights with this project.
- Describe the vegetative communities associated with these features.
- Are there any probable wetlands on the property?
- Does the landowner have any idea about how deep groundwater is at various portions of the property?
- Is the groundwater potable?

C. Vegetation

- What type of vegetation is present on the property? Map the distribution of major vegetation types such as marsh, grassland, shrub, coniferous forest, deciduous forest, etc.
- Does the vegetative state of the property appear to be stable, or in a state of transition?
- Identify critical plant communities such as stream bank or shoreline vegetation; vegetation on steep or unstable slopes; vegetation on soils highly susceptible to wind or water erosion.
- To what extent are noxious weeds present on the property? Map weed infestations if possible.

D. Wildlife and Fisheries

- Describe the species of fish and wildlife (to the extent possible) that appear to be using the property?
- Map the portions of the property that appear to be used most heavily by fish and wildlife.
- Can the landowner provide any insight into trends of wildlife use?
- Are any of these fish and wildlife species protected?

- To the extent possible, (with landowner or other assistance) identify any winter range, calving areas, travel/migration corridors, nesting sites, spawning areas, etc.

E. Topographic or Geologic Concerns

- Identify and map slopes that appear to be in excess of 15%, gullies, ravines, and other areas of topographic interest that don't show up on the USGS quad map.
- Identify obvious geologic hazards such as unstable or subsiding areas, areas susceptible to rock or land slides, etc.
- Does the landowner have any knowledge of any additional unusual soil, topographic, or geologic conditions?

F. Access

- Describe the primary access road (the road leading to the property). Does it appear to be built to County standards? Does it appear to be in relatively good condition? Is it a dirt, gravel, or paved surface?
- Do current levels of traffic on the primary access road appear to be light, moderate, or heavy? (Administrator to try and get most recent traffic county from Road Department).
- Does the primary access road appear to be insufficient to meet current traffic levels?
- With the addition of traffic from the proposed development, are there any obvious safety hazards that would be added to the primary access road?

G. Fire Hazards

- Are there any special precautions that need to be taken when developing this site to mitigate obvious wildfire hazards?
- If necessary, have the landowner work with the appropriate fire district to complete the Wildfire Risk Assessment worksheet and return to the Program Administrator.

H. Adjacent Land Uses

- What are the adjacent properties used for?
- What is the dominant land use within ¼ mile of the project site?
- Is it possible to link open spaces or cluster new development adjacent to existing development?

I. Cultural Resources and Values

- Are there any historical structures on the property?
- Will development of the property be classified as hillside or ridgeline development?
- Is it likely that homes would silhouette against the skyline when viewed from neighboring roads?

J. Areas most appropriate for development

- Are there developable sites on the property within 750 feet of the primary access road? Does it make sense to develop those sites or are there other portions of the property that make more sense to develop?

B. EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Primary Criteria (100 Points Total)

- a. **Agriculture.** The extent to which the proposed project mitigates anticipated impacts to the following agricultural resources:
- Important agricultural soil.
 - The extent to which continued agricultural use of the land is viable, suitable and sustainable, both on its own and within the context of surrounding land uses.
 - Will the property be cross-fenced? If so, what impact will that have on continued agricultural use of the property?
 - The impact the design of the project is anticipated to have on adjacent agricultural operations.
 - The ability of farmers and ranchers to continue moving agricultural machinery and/or livestock along commonly used routes as a result of increased vehicle traffic associated with the project.
 - The availability of adequate water resources and/or water rights that are adequate to maintain agricultural uses.
 - Other impacts on agriculture

20 Points Possible: _____

- b. **Agricultural Water User Facilities.** The extent to which the proposed project mitigates anticipated impacts to existing agricultural water user facilities:
- Does the project site contain agricultural water user facilities on which other croplands depend and with which the conversion of the project site to a residential use will interfere?
 - Is proposed development adequately setback from ditches and canals?
 - Does the proposed development adequately provide maintenance easements for agricultural water user facilities?

10 Points Possible: _____

- c. **Local Services.** The extent to which the proposed project mitigates anticipated impacts to the following local services:
- Law enforcement
 - Fire protection (Response time, distance for water supply, etc.)
 - Education
 - Road maintenance (Does the proposed project place additional demands on the subject road network that the existing infrastructure cannot safely support without improvements.)
 - Water and sewer supply
 - Utilities

- Other identified local services

15 Points Possible: _____

d. **The Natural Environment.** The extent to which the proposed project mitigates anticipated impacts to the following natural resources:

- Native vegetation
- Riparian vegetation
- Wetlands
- Quality or quantity of surface water resources
- Quality or quantity of groundwater resources
- Existing surface runoff patterns
- Noxious weeds
- Existing terrain
- Regulatory floodplains
- Other relevant components of the natural environment

20 Points Possible: _____

e. **Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat.** The extent to which the proposed project mitigates anticipated impacts to the following wildlife and wildlife resources:

- Areas of significant wildlife habitat or critical wildlife areas
- Wildlife and wildlife habitat as a result of human or pet activity
- Established wildlife movement corridors
- Will new barriers to wildlife movement (fencing, etc.) be established as part of the development of the proposed project?
- Fisheries and existing riparian habitat
- Other components of wildlife and wildlife habitat

20 Points Possible: _____

f. **Public Health and Safety.** The extent to which the proposed project mitigates anticipated impacts to public health and safety by:

- Situating development where it isn't prone to natural hazards such as: flooding, snow or rock slides, high winds, wildfire, excessive slopes, geotechnical hazards, etc.
- Situating development where it isn't prone to man-made hazards such as: high voltage power lines, high pressure gas lines, nearby industrial or mining activity, high traffic volumes, lack of fire protection, inadequate traffic safety, etc.
- Providing adequate access to the proposed homesites.
- Providing a fire protection package adequate for the scope of the project and site characteristics.

15 Points Possible: _____

2. **Rural Cluster Criteria** (100 Points Total)

a. Connectivity of open space corridors.

- Where the project is not adjacent to any existing development restricted land, but the project establishes the first permanently protected open space in the vicinity of the project (5 points)
- Where the open space created by the subject project connects with existing development restricted land on one or more adjacent properties (10 points)

Points: _____

b. Distribution of open space within the project.

- Where open space is contained within multiple residential lots and residential development is restricted by building envelopes, or where the open space allotment for the project is contained both within residential lots and on separate open space tract(s) (5 points)
- Where all of the open space for a project is contained within a single lot (8 points)
- Where the open space is a separate tract of land with no development allowed (10 points)

Points: _____

c. Easement holder

- Where the required conservation easement is held by Gallatin County (0 points)
- Where the required conservation easement is held by a land trust (10 points)

Points: _____

d. Amount of open space (Calculated to the nearest whole number by normal means of rounding).

- Where a project provides 90% open space (0 points)
- Where a project provides between 91% and 92% open space (5 points)
- Where a project provides between 93% and 95% open space (10 points)
- Where a project provides between 96% and 98% open space (15 points)
- Where a project provides greater than 98% open space (20 points)

Points: _____

- e. **Distance of development nodes(s) from existing public roads.**
- Where all new residential building sites are greater than 2500 feet from existing public roads (0 points).
 - Where all new residential building sites are between 1001 and 2500 feet from existing public roads (3 points).
 - Where all new residential building sites are between 751 and 1000 feet from existing public roads (5 points)
 - Where all new residential building sites are between 501 and 750 feet from existing public roads (7 points)
 - Where all new residential building sites are within 500 feet of existing public roads and dust control measures have not been taken (8 points).
 - Where all new residential building sites are within 500 feet of existing public roads and dust control measures have been taken (10 points).

Points: _____

- f. Number of development nodes for new residential development.
- Where a project with 15 or more lots creates three separate development nodes (5 points).
 - Where a project with 10 or more lots creates two separate development nodes (10 points).
 - Where a project restricts all development to a single node (15 points).

Points: _____

- g. **Site Analysis**
- Up to 20 points may be awarded based on the extent to which the project mitigates impacts to the resources identified by the site analysis. For projects with more than 16 lots/units, points in this section are awarded based on the environmental assessment.

Points: _____

- h. **Cultural Values.**
- Up to 5 points may be awarded based on the extent to which the project:
- Maintains a sense of rural character and tradition.
 - Maintains a sense of community identity or continues to serve as a community buffer.
 - Preserves historical structures or features
 - Is generally compatible with the neighborhood and surrounding land uses.
 - Avoids hillside or ridgeline development

Points: _____

3. Bonus Points. Bonus points may be used by projects scoring 120 points or greater to receive additional density. A score of less than 120 points is an indication that the project does not comply with the intent of the RDC Program and needs to be redesigned, thus bonus points are not applicable to projects scoring less than 120 points.

a. **Management of Open Space** (Maximum of 5 points)

- 5 points shall be awarded where the landowner completes a farm/ranch plan with the Natural Resource Conservation Service; **or**
- Up to 5 points may be awarded where an open space management plan, acceptable to the County Commission, is submitted with the preliminary plat application.

Points: _____

b. **Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment** (Maximum of 10 points)

- Where a project provides either central water or central sewer (5 points).
- Where a project provides both central water and central sewer (10 points).

Points: _____

	Maximum Points Possible	Points Earned
Primary Criteria	100 points	
Rural Cluster Criteria	100 points	
Bonus Points	15 points	
Total Points	215 points	