

**DRAFT VALLEY VIEW HEIGHTS ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS
(SPECIAL ZONING DISTRICT #49)**

September 15, 2016

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1. Title

These regulations are to be known as the Valley View Heights Zoning Regulations (Special Zoning District #49).

1.2. Authority

These regulations are adopted under the authority of Section 76-2-101, MCA and Section 76-2-107, MCA.

1.3. Purpose

The purpose of these regulations is to implement the development pattern for Valley View Heights consistent with the adopted Valley View Heights Neighborhood Plan and Development Pattern and the policy recommendations of the Lewis and Clark County Growth Policy and the Helena Valley Area Plan. Additionally, these regulations are intended to:

- a. Accommodate and protect the use of low-density, single family dwelling units and associated agricultural land uses;
- b. Promote groundwater protection and conservation;
- c. Limit increases in traffic on the road network to the capacity of those roads;
- d. Limit increases in the demand for rural fire protection services based on the limitations of those services;
- e. Preserve the rural-residential character of the area;
- f. Enhance the aesthetic character; and,
- g. Protect public health, safety, and welfare.

1.4. Applicability

These regulations apply to the creation of parcels of land and to uses of land and structures within the Valley View Heights Zoning District as established on the official Valley View Heights Zoning District Map attached as Exhibit A.

1.5. Compliance Required

No parcel of land shall be created and no uses of land or structures shall be conducted unless in conformance with these zoning regulations.

1.6. Conflict with Other Laws & Severability

Whenever the requirements of these regulations are in conflict with the requirements of other lawfully adopted rules, regulations, or resolutions, the most restrictive, or that imposing higher standards, shall govern. If a court of competent jurisdiction holds any word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph, section, or other part of these regulations invalid, the remaining regulations will remain in effect, and be construed as if the invalid portion was never a part of the regulations..

1.7. Vested Rights

A vested right is the right to proceed with the creation of one or more new parcels of land in compliance with previous regulations or approvals. For subdivisions or exemptions from the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act and the Lewis and the Clark County Subdivision Regulations, a vested right to proceed with the creation of one or more new parcels of land shall be established by obtaining a letter of sufficiency for a subdivision application, or concept approval for the use of an exemption from subdivision review by the Survey Review Committee, prior to the date of adoption of these regulations. Vested rights terminate when a subdivision approval period expires without the applicant submitting a complete application for final approval or when the concept approval period expires for the proposed subdivision exemption.

1.8. Continuation of Nonconforming Parcels and Uses

All parcels and uses of land that exist at the time of adoption of these regulations continue in conformance with all local, state, or federal laws and regulations. Expansions of non-conforming uses are expressly prohibited.

1.9. Private Agreements

Adoption of these regulations does not nullify easements, covenants, and similar private agreements, but where any such agreement imposes requirements less restrictive than those adopted herein, the requirements of these regulations apply.

1.10. Interpretation

The language of these regulations must be read literally. These regulations are no more or less strict than stated. In the event a question arises concerning any provision or the application of any provision of these regulations, the Zoning Administrator shall be responsible for such interpretation and will look to the overall purpose of these regulations, the Lewis and Clark County Growth Policy, and the Helena Valley Area Plan for guidance. Any person who disputes the interpretation of the Zoning Administrator, may appeal the administrator's decision using the procedure in Section 3.2, Administrative Appeals.

1.11. Requirements Minimum

All requirements of these regulations shall be interpreted as the minimum necessary to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare. These regulations are designed for consistency with the Lewis and Clark County Growth Policy, the Helena Valley Area Plan, and the Valley View Heights Neighborhood Plan and Development Pattern, and should be interpreted to achieve their goals, objectives, policies and strategies.

2. ZONING DISTRICT AND MAP

2.1. Zoning District

The following zoning district and its boundaries, as shown on the official Valley View Heights Zoning District Map (Exhibit A), are established:

- a. Valley View Heights Zoning District.

2.2. Zoning District Map

The Valley View Heights Zoning District Map is adopted by reference as part of these regulations. The most recently adopted, official copy of that map shall be maintained for public inspection at the office of the Zoning Administrator.

2.3. Zoning District Boundaries

When definite distances or boundaries are not shown on the Valley View Heights Zoning District Map, the following rules apply:

- a. Boundaries indicated as approximately following the right-of-way or centerlines of roads, highways, trails, pathways, or alleys shall be construed to follow such rights-of-way or centerlines.
- b. Boundaries indicated as approximately following municipal limits shall be construed as following those boundaries.
- c. Boundaries indicated as approximately following platted lot lines shall be construed as following such lot lines.
- d. Boundaries indicated as approximately following centerlines of lakes, streams, rivers, canals, irrigation ditches or other bodies of water or other physical features shall be construed as following such centerlines.

Any person who disputes the location of a zoning district boundary, as interpreted by the Zoning Administrator, may appeal the administrator's decision using the procedure in Section 3.2 a., Administrative appeals.

2.4. Zoning District Regulations

a. Minimum Parcel Size

1. The minimum size for new parcels of land in the Valley View Heights Zoning District is ten (10) acres, except as provided in Section 2.5., Cluster Development.
2. In the case where parcels of any size exist at the time of adoption of these regulations, the boundaries between parcels may be relocated to result in one or more parcels with less than the minimum parcel sizes stated in Section 2.5.a.1., provided that there is no net increase in the number of developable lots.

b. Land Uses

The following uses of land are expressly allowed in the Valley View Heights Zoning District:

1. Accessory uses;
2. Agriculture;
3. Single-family dwellings;
4. Group homes;
5. Home day cares; and,
6. Home occupations.

All other land uses are expressly prohibited. Only one (1) single-family dwelling or group home is allowed on each parcel.

c. Space and Bulk Standards

Minimum building setback from property lines and road right of way: Twenty-five (25 ft.) feet.

Maximum building height: Thirty-five (35 ft.) feet and also two and one-half (2.5) stories.

Maximum lot coverage: Twenty-five (25%) percent.

2.5. Cluster Development

The purpose of this section is to encourage alternative design techniques that efficiently make use of land and water resources, protect environmentally sensitive areas, natural features and soils of agricultural importance, and promote cost savings in infrastructure development and maintenance. Clustering development allows for the creation of lots smaller than the minimum lot sizes established in these regulations in order to minimize or eliminate the need to create new roads to provide physical and legal access.

- a. The minimum size of each new parcel to be developed in a cluster development is five (5) acres.
- b. The maximum number of lots in a cluster subdivision is determined by dividing the acreage of the parent parcel by the minimum lot size established in Section 2.4.a.1.
- c. Excess land beyond the amount needed to establish a new cluster lot may be retained with a reconfigured lot containing an existing house site, be preserved as open space, or be maintained for agricultural use as in Figure 1 below:

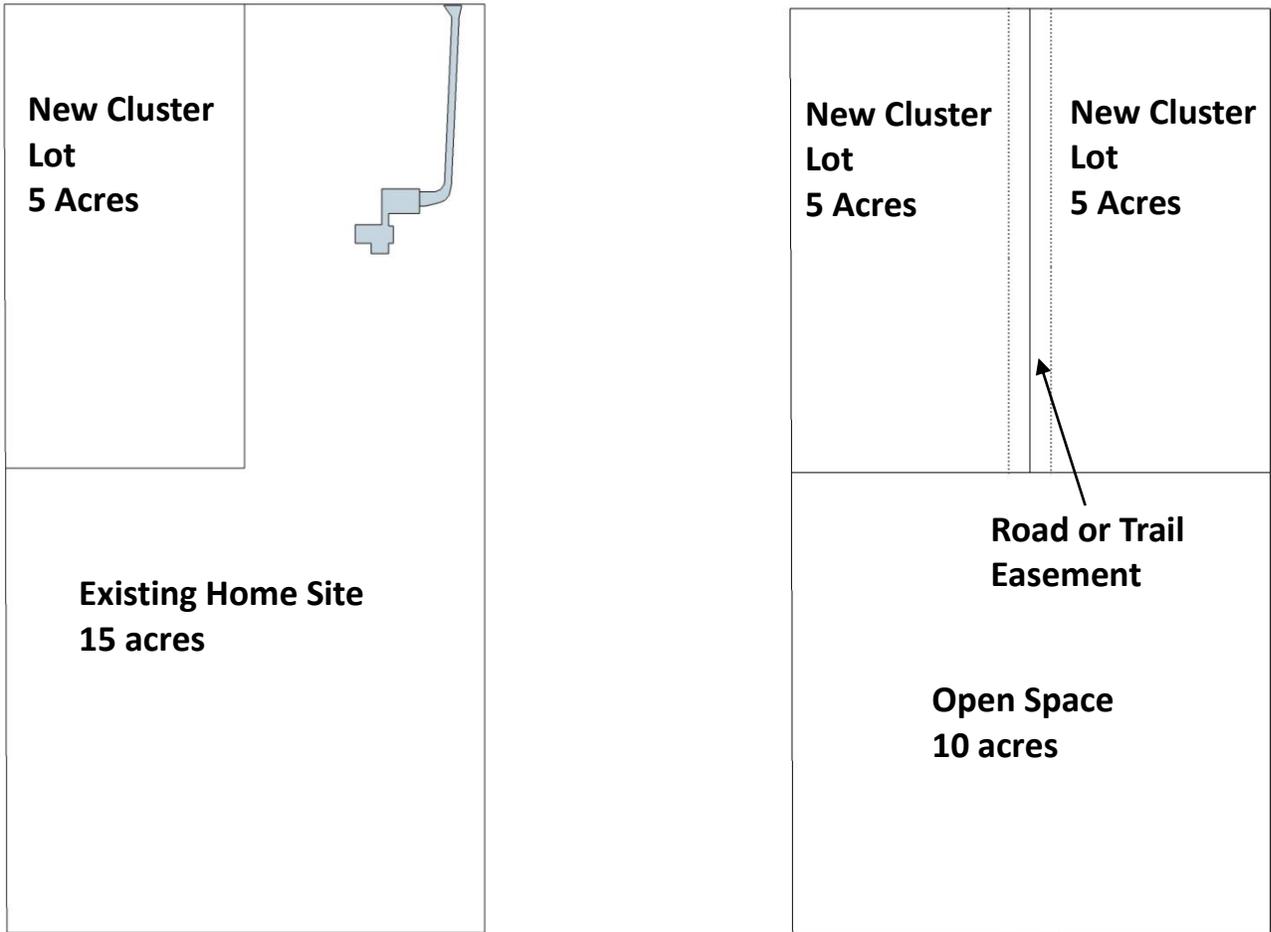


Figure 1 – Excess land in a cluster development may be retained with an existing house lot or placed in separate open space provided that an access easement is provided to the open space and the open space is limited against further development by a revocable covenant.

d. The land preserved in open space must:

1. Be maintained on a long-term basis through a revocable covenant prohibiting further subdivision, division, or development of the open space parcel. Revocation of said covenant requires approval by the Lewis and Clark County Board of County Commissioners (County Commission). Revocations may be considered if zoning and/or development constraint conditions no longer require density to be limited on the subject property;
2. Be accessible via a road and/or trail easement filed with the Lewis and Clark County Clerk and Recorder;
3. Be identified on a final subdivision plat or certificate of survey (for exemptions from subdivision), with the final subdivision plat or survey including a copy of or a recording reference to the revocable covenant;
4. Include a plan for ongoing use and maintenance as open space, agriculture or other specified use(s) that includes provisions to manage vegetation and noxious weeds and

that may be amended by the County Commission in consultation with parties owning title to the land;

5. When present, include environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, streams, floodplains or riparian areas, agricultural soils (prime farmland), wildlife habitat, rare, threatened or sensitive plants, or scenic resources such as hillsides or forested areas; and,
6. Be located adjacent to the one or more lots to be developed.

2.6. Park Dedication Requirement

Given the minimum lot size of ten (10) acres and the minimum lot size for cluster development lots of five (5) acres, no park land is required for development in the Valley View Heights Zoning District as provided in Section 76-3-621(2), MCA and Section XI. R. 2 of the Lewis and Clark County Subdivision Regulations.

2.7. Exemption from Requirements for Environmental Assessment and Review of Impacts

As provided in Section 76-3-609(2)(d), MCA and Section III. A. 2 of the Lewis and Clark County Subdivision Regulations, first minor subdivisions in the Valley View Heights Zoning District are exempt from the requirements for completion of an environmental assessment and for review for impacts on agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, local services, the natural environment, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and public health and safety.

3. ADMINISTRATION

3.1. Variances

Variances provide relief for landowners who, due to some unique characteristic of their property, would suffer unnecessary hardship if these regulations were strictly enforced. Variances may be granted, but only as provided here.

- a. The applicant shall submit a complete and sufficient application form, the required supporting materials including a narrative evaluating the variance request under the review criteria (Section 3.1.f), and the required application fee with the Zoning Administrator.
- b. The Zoning Administrator shall determine whether the application form and supporting materials are complete and sufficient. When an application is determined incomplete or insufficient, the Zoning Administrator shall provide written notice to the applicant indicating what information must be submitted for the review to proceed.
- c. When the application is determined to be complete and sufficient, the Zoning Administrator shall schedule a public hearing on the agenda of next available meeting of the Lewis and Clark County Planning and Zoning Commission (Planning and Zoning Commission) for which notice requirements can be met and providing thirty-five (35) working days for processing of the application materials. Notice shall be published at least once in a newspaper of general circulation and mailed to all adjacent landowners at least fifteen (15) days prior to the public hearing. Notice shall, at a minimum, include the nature of the request and the time and place of the public hearing.

- d. The Zoning Administrator shall prepare a report that describes the proposed variance, its site, its context, and an evaluation of the request under the variance criteria in Section 3.1.f.
- e. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall conduct a public hearing on the proposed variance. At that public hearing, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall review the particular facts and circumstances of the proposed variance and develop findings and conclusions in support of its decision.
- f. Review Criteria. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall make a recommendation to approve a variance only upon finding that:
 - 1. The need for a variance results from physical limitations or unique circumstances related to the lot or parcel on which the variance is requested;
 - 2. The failure to approve the variance will result in undue hardship because without a variance, strict compliance with the terms of these regulations will limit the reasonable use of the property and deprive the applicant of the rights enjoyed by other properties similarly situated in the district;
 - 3. The alleged hardship has not been created by action of the owner or occupants;
 - 4. Approval of the variance will not have a substantial adverse impact on neighboring properties or the public; and,
 - 5. Granting of the variance will observe the spirit of these regulations and provide substantial justice.
- g. Conditions may be attached to the approval of any variances if:
 - 1. They are clearly designed to ensure compliance with one or more specific requirement of these or other adopted regulations;
 - 2. They are directly related to the anticipated impacts of the applicant's proposal; and
 - 3. They are roughly proportional to the anticipated impacts of the applicant's proposal.
- h. The decision on a variance shall be referred by the Planning and Zoning Commission to the County Commission with its recommendation(s) for approval, approval with conditions, or denial.
- i. The County Commission shall make its decision on the variance request following its standard procedures.
- j. The Zoning Administrator shall notify the applicant of the decision by the Board of County Commissioners.

3.2. Administrative Appeals

A determination of the Zoning Administrator may be appealed to the Planning and Zoning Commission using the following procedure:

- a. The applicant shall submit a properly completed notice of appeal and supporting materials to the Zoning Administrator within thirty (30) working days after the determination was issued.

- b. The Zoning Administrator shall place a public hearing on the appeal on the agenda of the next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting for which these notice requirements can be met, and at which time will permit its proper consideration. Public notice shall be published at least once in a newspaper of general circulation and mailed to all adjacent landowners at least fifteen (15) working days prior to the public hearing. Notice shall, at a minimum, include the nature of the decision being appealed and the time and place of the public hearing.
- c. The Zoning Administrator shall prepare a summary report that includes the determination and the surrounding circumstances, and forward it to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- d. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall conduct a public hearing on the appeal following the procedure established in the Commission's bylaws. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall decide whether the determination being appealed is in compliance with these regulations, and affirm, modify, or overturn that determination accordingly. The Planning and Zoning Commission's decision shall be in writing and contain a summary of the facts relied on as the basis for its decision.
- e. The Planning and Zoning Commission Chairperson shall notify the applicant of the Planning and Zoning Commission's decision within ten (10) working days after it is made.

3.3. Appeals to Court of Record

Any person aggrieved by any decision of the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Board of County Commissioners may, within thirty (30) working days after such decision or order, appeal to the district court as provided in Section 76-2-110, MCA.

3.4. Amendments

Any person may petition for the amendment of the Valley View Heights Zoning District Regulations. The amendment procedure shall be as provided here and in Section 76-2-107, MCA. Amendments may also be initiated by the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Zoning Administrator, in which case steps a.1, a.2, and a.3, are not required.

a. Amendment Process for Zoning Regulations

- 1. The applicant shall submit a complete and sufficient application form, the required supporting materials, including a narrative evaluating the amendment request under the review criteria (subsection 3.4. b.), and the required application fee with the Zoning Administrator.
- 2. The Zoning Administrator shall determine whether the application for and supporting materials is complete and sufficient. When an application is determined incomplete or insufficient, the Zoning Administrator shall provide written notice to the applicant indicating what information must be submitted for the review to proceed.
- 3. When the application is determined to be complete and sufficient, the Zoning Administrator shall schedule a public hearing on the application for a zoning text amendment on an agenda of the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting for which notice requirements can be met, and providing thirty-five (35) working days for processing of the application materials.

4. The Zoning Administrator shall publish notice of the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation at least fifteen (15) working days prior to the Planning and Zoning Commission's public hearing.
5. The Zoning Administrator shall prepare a report that describes the proposed amendment and how it complies, or fails to comply, with the amendment criteria contained in Section 3.4.b, Amendment Criteria.
6. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall conduct a public hearing on the proposed amendment. At the public hearing, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall determine whether the proposed amendment meets the amendment criteria. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall review the particular facts and circumstances of the proposed amendment and develop findings and conclusions that support its recommendation for approval, approval with modifications, or denial.
7. The Zoning Administrator shall convey the Planning and Zoning Commission's recommendation and public comments to the County Commission and place a public hearing on the agenda of the next regular meeting for which notice and posting requirements can be met, and at which time allows for its proper consideration.
8. The County Commission shall conduct a hearing on the proposed amendment. After the public hearing, the County Commission shall review the proposals of the Planning and Zoning Commission and make any revisions or amendments that it determines to be proper.
9. At the conclusion of the amendment process, the Zoning Administrator shall notify the applicant of the decision within ten (10) working days.

b. Amendment Criteria

Zoning amendments shall be made:

1. Consistent with the Valley View Heights Development Pattern;
2. In accordance with the Lewis and Clark County Growth Policy and the Helena Valley Area Plan;
3. To secure safety from fire and other danger;
4. To promote public health, safety, and general welfare; and
5. To facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements.

c. Amendment Process for Zoning Map Changes

The boundary of the Valley View Heights Zoning District shall not be amended except through the process outlined in Section 76-2-101, MCA.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1. Accessory Use** – A use, building, or structure that is incidental and subordinate to and customarily found with a principal use.

- 4.2. Agriculture** – The science and art of farming, work or business of cultivating the soil, producing crops and raising livestock. Agriculture includes horticultural production of flowers, fruits, vegetables, and ornamental plants.
- 4.3. Cluster Development** – Cluster development means a subdivision with lots clustered that is designed to concentrate building sites on smaller lots in order to reduce capital and maintenance costs for infrastructure through the use of concentrated public services and utilities, while allowing other lands to remain undeveloped.
- 4.4. Creation of New Parcels of Land** – The creation of new parcels includes but is not limited to lots or parcels created through court order (Section 76-3-201(1)(a), MCA); mortgage exemption (Section 76-3-201(1)(b), MCA); the reservation of a life estate (Section 76-3-201(1)(e), MCA); condominium declaration (Section 76-3-203, MCA); family transfer (Section 76-3-207(1)(b), MCA); agricultural exemption (Section 76-3-207(1)(c), MCA), and subdivision review (Section 76-3-101, MCA).
- This term does not include cemetery lots, (Section 76-3-201(1)(d), MCA); lease or rental for farming and agricultural purposes (Section 76-3-201(1)(f), MCA); lots created in a location where the state does not have jurisdiction (Section 76-3-201(1)(g), MCA); or lots created for rights-of-way or utility sites (Section 76-3-201(1)(h), MCA). *Also see Parcel of land.*
- 4.5. Develop or Development** – Commercial, industrial or residential use or any combination thereof. This term does not include land to be used for agricultural production or open space.
- 4.6. Group Home** – A community residential facility housing eight (8) or fewer residents as provided for in Section 76-2-412, MCA, and licensed by or registered with the State of Montana, including a youth foster home, a kinship foster home, a youth shelter care facility, a youth group home, or a community residential facility as defined in Section 76-2-411, MCA.
- 4.7. Home day care** – A facility which provides daily care and supervision of five (5) or more but not exceeding twelve (12) children or handicapped, disabled or elderly adults, not related by blood or marriage, and not the legal ward of the attendant adult(s) that is registered with an appropriate state agency.
- 4.8. Home occupation** – Any use conducted entirely within a dwelling and carried on by the members of the family occupying the dwelling, which use is clearly incidental and secondary to the dwelling for dwelling purposes and does not change the character of the dwelling.
- 4.9. Lot coverage** – The percentage of a parcel of land that is covered with buildings.
- 4.10. MCA** – Montana Code Annotated, the laws of the State of Montana.
- 4.11. Parcel of land** – An individual tract of record, 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 Lewis and Clark County Clerk and Recorder office. The terms parcel and lot are used interchangeably in these regulations.
- 4.12. Parent parcel** – The original tract or tracts of record from which new parcels are created.

4.13. Person – Any individual, corporation, governmental agency, business trust, estate, trust, partnership, association, two or more persons having a joint or common interest, or any other legal entity.

4.14. Utility Sites – Parcels of land specifically designed and used to provide a public or quasi-public service subject to special governmental regulations. Such services would typically include, but are not limited to, water tanks, electrical substations, and communications facilities.

4.15. Zoning Administrator – The Director of the Lewis and Clark County Community Development and Planning Department, or designee, who is responsible for interpreting and carrying out the provisions of these regulations.