

Rural Amsterdam/Churchill

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The landscape of Rural Amsterdam/Churchill contributes to the rural and small town character of the area, and has been identified by residents as one of the most important features of the community. Preserving the rural and agricultural landscape that occupies the majority of rural Amsterdam/Churchill is a primary goal of this plan. Agricultural lands, operations, canals and ditches, riparian corridors and wetlands will be protected using the following policies:

- 4.1 Land Use Map**
- 4.2 Right to Farm**
- 4.3 Protection of Agricultural Land and Lifestyle**
- 4.4 New Residential Development**
- 4.5 Flexibility of Uses**
- 4.6 Connections**
- 4.7 Natural Assets**
- 4.8 Open Lands Board**

Policy 4.1 Land Use Map

Adopt a land use map designating a rural area outside the Town Core that extends to the boundaries of the planning jurisdiction. New development in the rural portions of the Amsterdam/Churchill area will be a lower density than the downtown core. Opportunities will be provided for increasing base density through clustering techniques provided by the development standards adopted to implement this plan.

Policy 4.2 Right to Farm

Rural Amsterdam/Churchill is primarily an agricultural area. One of the primary purposes of the Community Plan is to encourage and protect the agricultural land and lifestyle that makes the area so desirable for residents. Development in Rural Amsterdam/Churchill shall not interfere with existing agriculture operations, including the normal operation of dairies, feedlots, potato cellars, and other agricultural activities that may, at times, be perceived as a nuisance by inhabitants of nearby residences. This policy states that non-agricultural landowners accept and are aware that standard agricultural and farming practices can result in smoke, dust, animal odors, flies and machinery noise,

and that standard agricultural practices feature the use of heavy equipment, burning, chemical sprays and the use of machinery sometimes 24 hours a day.

Policy 4.3 Protection of Agricultural Land and Lifestyle

The importance of agricultural land and lifestyle has been a clearly identified value by the residents of Amsterdam/Churchill. Standards will be adopted protecting canals and ditches and requiring setbacks to existing operations and by adopting development standards promoting agriculture and setting clear standards on new development.

4.3.1 Protect water conveyance facilities by requiring new subdivision and commercial construction to contact applicable water users and/or water conveyance facility's authorized representatives and mitigate any adverse impacts to the water conveyance facility.

The Amsterdam/Churchill community and Gallatin County will adopt zoning standards to:

- Require new development adjacent to a water conveyance facility to contact the appropriate water users and/or water conveyance facility's authorized representatives prior to approval;
- Require acknowledgment by the water users and/or water conveyance facility's authorized representatives that contact has been made, along with any comments or conditions they require to mitigate impacts;
- Prohibit channeling of stormwater or snowmelt runoff, water from dewatering practices, or other water originating from within the boundaries of the development into a water conveyance facility without express consent of the applicable water users and/or water conveyance facility's authorized representatives;
- Establish a water conveyance facility non-interference setback;
- Require agreement by applicable water users and/or water conveyance facility's authorized representatives prior to alteration of a canal or ditch;
- Require new subdivision to design development to minimize impacts to agriculture and water conveyance facilities.

4.3.2 Avoid conflicts between uses by requiring an open space buffer between existing agricultural operations and new subdivision.

Preserving agricultural operations and lands is one of the Guiding Principles of this community plan. Increased development adjacent to existing agricultural operations can result in conflicts due to smells, noises, and hours of operation. To mitigate the immediate effects of potential land use incompatibility, zoning standards will be drafted requiring new residential development to provide an open space buffer next to existing agricultural operations.

4.3.3 Recognize the right to farm and ranch in the Amsterdam/Churchill area.

Agricultural operations are abundant throughout rural Amsterdam/Churchill. This policy states that non-agricultural landowners accept and are aware that standard agricultural and farming practices can result in smoke, dust, animal odors, flies and machinery noise, and that standard agricultural practices feature the use of heavy equipment, burning, chemical sprays and the use of machinery early in the morning and sometimes late into the evening.

Policy 4.4 New Residential Development

Agricultural lands and operations will mainly be protected by directing growth into the core of Amsterdam/Churchill and by adopting a residential density and development pattern in Rural Amsterdam/Churchill that matches the historical development pattern of the area.

4.4.1 Adopt development standards setting a base density for new residential development in Rural Amsterdam/Churchill.

Agriculture in rural Amsterdam/Churchill needs room to operate. Spraying fields, raising dairy cows, growing potatoes, driving farm equipment on county roads, and running cattle all require a landscape that is primarily devoted to those uses. In community meetings kicking off the planning process, community members identified agricultural land and lifestyle as one of the values the planning process should protect, and that value has become one of the guiding principals of the plan. Given the agricultural nature of the area, the overall density of new residential development in rural Amsterdam/Churchill shall be one lot per 160 acres.

4.4.2 Allow greater density in return for clustering development in a historic development pattern.

Historically, rural Amsterdam/Churchill has seen limited residential development consisting of small lots clustered near existing roads and in existing farm clusters. This historic pattern will be protected by development standards allowing higher-density development in return for a clustered development pattern which protects existing agricultural lands. Those development standards will allow for new development of one lot per 80 acres if the additional residential lots are clustered.

4.4.3 Allow exceptions to the density requirements for commercial uses.

Many agriculture uses in rural Amsterdam/Churchill have commercial or industrial components. Opportunity exists for potatoe wholesaling

operations, fertilizer operations, or even agri-tourism ventures that support agriculture in the area but are not strictly agriculture themselves. Given this blurred line, density for new commercial uses in rural Amsterdam/Churchill shall be exempt from the density requirements of the development standards designed to implement this community plan.

4.4.4 Allow exceptions to the density requirements for subdivision exemptions and employee housing for agricultural operations.

Many agricultural operations in rural Amsterdam/Churchill employ extended family or workers who live on the farm. In order to allow these types of operations to continue, uses such as family transfers and employee housing for agricultural operations shall be exempt from the development standards designed to implement this community plan.

4.4.5 Allow landowners to transfer development rights between properties in Rural Amsterdam/Churchill.

In order to allow landowners to maximize property value while also retaining the agricultural landscape of Rural Amsterdam/Churchill, the development standards designed to implement this community plan will allow landowners to transfer development rights between properties.

4.4.6 Allow participation in Gallatin County's Transfer of Development Credits Program.

In the event that a Transfer of Development Credits Program is established by Gallatin County at some point in the future, the development standards designed to implement this community plan will allow the sale of development credits to growth areas in other parts of the County.

Policy 4.5 Flexibility of Uses

Adopt Development Standards Allowing a Maximum of Flexibility for Uses While Exempting Agricultural Uses.

4.5.1 Exempt agricultural uses from all development standards.

Protection of agricultural uses is the primary objective of this chapter. Development standards will apply to all uses except agricultural uses.

4.5.2 Allow maximum flexibility for new non-agricultural uses.

The development standards adopted to implement this community plan will not list out permitted uses. Instead, all uses will be allowed with the exception of a minimum number of uses which will require a public

hearing.

4.5.3 Require high-intensity uses to hold a public hearing.

Certain high-intensity uses, such as gravel pit operations and commercial uses generating a high volume of traffic, will be required to hold a public hearing and possibly meet specific conditions to mitigate their impact on neighboring properties.

4.5.4 Prohibit sexually-oriented businesses, bars, and gambling establishments.

Community members stressed the need to protect the small-town values of the Amsterdam/Churchill area. The development standards designed to implement this plan will prohibit sexually-oriented businesses, bars, and gambling establishments in Rural Amsterdam/Churchill.

Policy 4.6 Connections

Adopt standards protecting natural assets in the area. The natural environment is one of the primary values of residents of the Amsterdam/Churchill area. It shall be the policy of Rural Amsterdam/Churchill to protect and maintain the natural assets of the area, such as wetlands, groundwater, and wildlife habitat. This policy will be pursued using the following strategies:

4.6.1 Coles Corner??

4.6.2 Trail Connections.

Cameron Bridge Road??

Policy 4.7 Natural Assets

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4.7.1 Adopt standards requiring minimum setbacks to watercourses and wetlands.

The Gallatin County Subdivision Regulations currently require setbacks of 150 feet to all other watercourses as a condition of subdivision approval. Adopting development standards would extend these setbacks to all existing lots in Rural Amsterdam/Churchill and would provide significant protection to riparian and wildlife resources, as well as avoid

potential floodplain issues.

Policy 4.8 Open Lands Board

The Mission of the Gallatin County Open Lands Board is to work with the County Commissioners and the citizens of Gallatin County to preserve natural lands and encourage the economic viability of agriculturally productive lands. This is accomplished through voluntary programs, which ensure the protection open-space lands, either in perpetuity or for a term of years; and through the identification or establishment of funding sources, tax measures or other incentives.

The Amsterdam/Churchill community is committed to exploring options provided by the Open Lands Board and tools, such as conservation easements, that can be used to preserve agricultural land.

Agriculture: The term "agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof" includes, but is not be limited to, the cultivation and tillage of the soil, dairying, the production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of any agricultural commodity including timber, viticulture, apiculture, or horticulture, the raising of livestock, fur bearing animals, fish, or poultry, and any practices performed by a farmer or on a farm as incident to or in conjunction with those farming operations, including preparation for market, delivery to storage or to market, or delivery to carriers for transportation to market.

Also includes the on-site sale of farm produce as well as postharvest crop activities, generally defined as establishments primarily engaged in performing services on crops, subsequent to their harvest, with the intent of preparing them for market or further processing. Including, but not limited to, activities such as crop cleaning, sun drying, shelling, fumigating, curing, sorting, grading, packing, and cooling.

Does not include uses categorized as industrial, including, but not limited to, uses such as slaughterhouses and ethanol plants.