

# Amsterdam/Churchill Town Core

## 3

The Town Core of Amsterdam/Churchill should continue to serve as the community center and be the residential, religious, service, social, and cultural center of the surrounding area. This goal will be implemented using the following policies:

- 3.1 Land Use Map
- 3.2 Phased Expansion of the Town Core
- 3.3 Residential Neighborhoods
- 3.4 Commercial Neighborhoods
- 3.5 Connections
- 3.6 Recommended Speed Controls
- 3.7 Community Water
- 3.8 Sewer District
- 3.9 Lighting
- 3.10 Agricultural Uses and Land

### *Policy 3.1 Land Use Map*

Adopt a land use map designating a core growth area around the communities of Amsterdam and Churchill. Generally, the boundaries of this area are shown on the Town Core map attached to this plan. New development in the Amsterdam/Churchill area will be focused within this core to allow for natural extension of the existing townsite.

To preserve the rural character, the agricultural resources, and small town nature of the area, and to reduce conflict between new residential development and existing agricultural operations in the area, the majority of new growth will be focused into the Town Core where existing growth is already located rather than throughout rural Amsterdam/Churchill.

As the core develops over time, a phased growth process, as depicted on the attached map, will allow for annexations into the core. Policy 3.2 details criteria

for allowing development of Phase II parcels.

Map 3.1 shows the potential growth areas within Phase I of the Town Core; following are descriptions of each of those areas.

**Category A: Existing subdivision and COS development.** Much of the Town Core has already been developed in subdivisions over the past 40 years. Most of these subdivisions are residential in nature and have their own covenants. The majority of existing development consists of single-family homes, with a small number of multi-family dwellings existing throughout the Town Core. Additionally, the retirement home, related housing units, three churches, Manhattan Christian School, and Amsterdam School are located in the heart of town.

There are places within these areas of existing development that could allow future redevelopment. Development standards written for this area will reflect the generally single-family nature of the existing developed area, with options available for some multi-family units, such as mother-in-law apartments and housing around the retirement home. Development standards written for this area will also clearly allow individuals to work from home, as long as those home occupations do not change the character of existing neighborhoods by introducing greater traffic or noise than is customary.

**Category B: Mixed Use and Commercial Development.** There are a small number of commercial operations in existence in the Town Core, generally clustered around major intersections. These include the Churchill Branch of the Manhattan Bank, Churchill Equipment, Danhof Chevrolet, the Amsterdam Store, and other small commercial operations. Areas of future commercial will be designated along the north side of Amsterdam Road between Camp Creek and Churchill Road. Additional areas of potential future mixed use and commercial development will be designated west of the Amsterdam Road/Camp Creek Road intersection. Design standards will be adopted requiring parking lots and access roads to be located along the rear of any new development in this section to prevent strip commercial. Additionally, a canal runs through this property, and any development shall work with the canal company to mitigate any adverse impacts.

**Category C: Ecton Ranch.** The Ecton Ranch is a 348-acre property between Amsterdam and Churchill. The property currently has an approved preliminary plat for the Amsterdam Village project, a large mixed-use project designed to provide commercial development in the northeastern corner of the property south and west of the Churchill Bank, grading to residential development with substantial open space (approximately 50% of the development) on the remainder of the property. Steep slopes leading down to Camp Creek form the western edge of the property. While this property does have an approved preliminary plat, the planning process has identified several transportation connections (detailed in Policy 3.5) that should be made on this property if development plans change in the future. Additionally, the future land use map designates this property as "planned unit development", to reflect both the existing approval and the community's desire for a development providing creative, mixed-use

development near the Churchill Bank and the intersection of Amsterdam Road and Churchill Road as well as around the \_\_\_ Church, and substantial open space and park space with residential development on the remainder of the property. Should the currently-approved development plans change, the development standards and this plan will encourage a similar style of development as currently approved for the Amsterdam Village project.

**Category D.** This property is located east of the Churchill North subdivision and north of the Manhattan Christian School. This parcel is suitable for a large-lot development pattern (1/2-acre parcels) similar to Churchill North, with options for limited multi-family. Development standards written for this category will be similar to those in Category A. The Valley Ditch is located in the northwest portion of the property and new development shall mitigate any impacts on the ditch. As described in Policy 3.5, Kunje Road should be extended along the northern and eastern boundaries of this property to provide a route around the outside of the Town Core for both emergency service vehicles and general traffic. This road extension will take pressure off interior subdivision roads of Churchill North and this parcel, as well as provide access to Phase 2 properties.

**Category E.** This area is located west of the Amsteram Road/Camp Creek Road intersection. A development pattern similar to that of Category C (the Ecton Ranch) is considered appropriate, and any future zoning will reflect this pattern. Specifically, commercial and mixed-use development is appropriate for the area immediately contiguous to the intersection. Development standards similar to those described in Category B will be written to encourage a pattern of commercial development that adds to the small-town feel of the area and provides for safe and efficient access to Amsterdam Road. Future residential development, interspersed with abundant open space, is appropriate farther away from this intersection. Care will need to be taken to avoid any potential flood plain issues with Camp Creek.

**Category F.** This area lies adjacent to Camp Creek behind the existing HR Vandykens subdivision #2 and below the bluffs bordering the Ecton Ranch property. There is limited access to Camp Creek Road. This property is appropriate for low-density development providing a buffer to Camp Creek. As with property described in Category E, care will need to be taken to avoid the flood plain of Camp Creek.

**Category G.** This area lies between Godfrey Canyon Estates and developed Churchill to the north and provides an important opportunity to connect these two areas. A draw lies between the two properties in this area, and any road connections will need to be designed to provide safe access across. Policy \_\_\_ provides more detail on any connections provided by development in this area. Currently, there is an existing business on this property; development standards written for this area will grandfather this business, as well as provide opportunities for expansion that is compatible with the existing residential areas around it. New residential development shall be compatible with the Godfrey Canyon Estates development immediately to the south, with 8,000-10,000 square-foot lots considered appropriate.

## Policy 3.2. Phased Expansion of the Town Core

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As the area designated as the Town Core builds out over time, other immediately adjacent parcels, identified on the Future Land Use Map as "Phase II", have been designated for potential Town Core development. Before these parcels become annexed, the following criteria shall be met.

**3.2.1 Contiguous to existing development.** Phase II property may be annexed into the Town Core if it is contiguous to existing, platted development.

**3.2.2 Capacity of community services.** Phase II property may be annexed to the Town Core if approved by service providers and there are adequate public facilities to service the development. Adequate public facilities include:

- Capacity of the Churchill Sewer District to annex new property. The District's system will be considered adequate to service the annexed property if there is verified sufficient capacity to accommodate expected and ultimate peak flows from the proposed development, or if the capacity is expected to be provided within a designated timeframe to service the proposed development. This information shall be demonstrated prior to annexation of any Phase II property into the Town Core.
- Capacity of the Amsterdam School to serve the expected increase in students caused by an annexation. The number of anticipated students shall be calculated using the most recent statistics for Gallatin County used by either the Amsterdam School, the School Superintendent's office, or the most recent data provided by the US Census Bureau.
- Availability of water. It is the policy of this community plan to require major subdivisions within the Town Core to provide a community water system, rather than individual wells.
- Connection to a road network with the capacity, or designed to have the capacity, to handle the proposed increase in traffic. Interior subdivision roads alone shall not be considered adequate road connections for Phase II property; any annexations shall be required to connect to collector roads with adequate right-of-way and capacity to carry the increased traffic.
- Fire and emergency service capacity. See Policy \_\_ for a description of policies applicable to adequate fire and emergency service capacity.

If there are not adequate public facilities to service the new development allowed by the annexation, the annexation (and subsequent amendment to zoning) shall not be allowed until those deficiencies are addressed.

**3.2.3 Access to a collector road.** Phase II property may be annexed if it is

served by a collector road. Property only served by an interior subdivision road must obtain access by a road meeting collector standards prior to any annexation.

### ***Policy 3.3. Residential Neighborhoods***

The Amsterdam/Churchill community and Gallatin County will use development standards to protect the character of its existing residential neighborhoods. Additionally, Amsterdam/Churchill and Gallatin County will promote safe, walkable neighborhoods by requiring sidewalks, curb and gutter, and street lighting in new residential developments.

Many of the existing neighborhoods in the Amsterdam/Churchill core have existing covenants. Development standards will be adopted reflecting the protections of those existing covenants. Additionally, those development standards will protect community values by prohibiting bars, strip clubs, and casinos.

#### **3.3.1 Adopt development standards identifying residential areas within the Town Core.**

The development standards designed to implement the Community Plan will designate land use categories that separate commercial areas of higher intensity from existing and future residential areas in order to mitigate potential land use conflicts caused by potentially incompatible uses.

#### **3.3.2 Allow residential uses and limited live/work uses, such as home occupations and home-based businesses, within delineated residential area.**

Within those areas designated as residential, commercial uses will be confined to low-impact live/work units such as home occupations and home-based businesses. Generally, those uses will be defined as uses whose primary use is residential in nature, with business uses being conducted by the resident and a small number of employees on site.

#### **3.3.3 Encourage safe, walkable neighborhoods and improve neighborhood functionality and design by requiring sidewalks, curb and gutter, and street lighting (or the "green" equivalent) in certain new residential developments.**

In order to improve the pedestrian experience and improve neighborhood design in the residential neighborhoods of Amsterdam/Churchill, major subdivisions within the core shall be required to provide sidewalks. Interior subdivision roads shall provide a sidewalk on at least one side of the road; arterial and connector streets shall provide sidewalks on both sides of the road. Additionally, curb and gutter, shall also be required in all development where the average lot size is smaller than one acre. Developments may also choose to provide a "greener" equivalent to this

requirement, provided the performance of the infrastructure is of the same quality as standard curb and gutter. New residential development may be required to join the existing lighting district currently in existence. All lighting should meet the same lighting standards described in Policy 3.4.2.

**3.3.4 Establish basic design standards for new buildings within the Town Core.**

In order to ensure that the design features that make current neighborhoods within the Town Core attractive for residents continues as the area develops, development standards adopted for the Town Core will ensure new neighborhoods have basic height limitations and setback requirements similar to those currently in existence. Additionally, the development standards adopted for the Town Core will ensure new neighborhoods are of the same quality as existing neighborhoods by requiring new structures to have permanent foundations and meet basic roof pitch requirements. Additionally, lighting standards will be established to preserve the visibility of the night sky.

### *Policy 3.4 Commercial Areas*

Designate commercial areas within the core which meet the Guiding Principles of small town and rural atmosphere.

Many Amsterdam/Churchill residents work in local businesses. The Amsterdam/Churchill community recognizes that compatible commercial businesses can add to the convenience of the community by providing jobs and services in close proximity to residential neighborhoods. The Amsterdam/Churchill community will adopt a future land use map designating commercial districts within the community corresponding with the land use categories of Policy 3.1. Additionally, the following standards will be adopted:

**3.4.1 Allow for a variety of commercial uses.**

The community of Amsterdam/Churchill recognizes that appropriate new commercial development in the Town Core is desirable. The development standards adopted to implement this plan will designate a primary commercial area along Amsterdam Road between Churchill Equipment and the Amsterdam Store. Uses allowed in the area will be light commercial, retail, office uses, and businesses serving the agricultural operations of the area. In order to keep retain the small-town character of the Town Core, standards will also be adopted preventing drive-ins and establishing sign control for new commercial uses.

**3.4.2 Require lighting standards for new commercial uses.**

Visibility of the night sky is an important element of rural

Amsterdam/Churchill. The Amsterdam/Churchill community and Gallatin County will adopt development standards ensuring that additional commercial development will meet lighting standards designed to preserve visibility of the night sky. Those standards include requiring shielded and downward-facing lighting that does not expose neighboring properties or adjacent roadways to unshielded lighting.

**3.4.3 Require landscaping for new commercial development and construction.**

Landscaping for commercial uses is an important element of retaining an attractive community. Development standards will be adopted requiring any new commercial construction (excepting agricultural construction) to plant new landscaping adjacent to roadways and neighboring properties.

**3.4.4 Require commercial solid waste areas to be screened.**

Development standards will be adopted requiring commercial solid waste areas to be screened from public roads and adjacent properties either by fencing, landscaping, or the commercial building itself.

**3.4.5 Require road mitigation of high-traffic uses.**

Many commercial uses generate as much as or more traffic than new subdivision. The development standards adopted to implement this plan will require high-traffic uses to mitigate impact on access roads. Mitigation measures could include improving road standards, paving, or stop signs or other traffic control measures.

**3.4.6 Site Design.**

The development standards and land use map will require the use of frontage roads in the rear of properties connecting structures and properties, deep lots, landscaped buffers, and other site planning tactics along the primary access road to ensure that strip development is discouraged. Additionally, the development standards will encourage parking lots and other impervious surfaces to be placed along the rear or side of structures.

**3.4.7 Adopt sign standards.**

Development standards will be adopted providing standards for the size of new signs within the Town Core. All existing signs shall be grandfathered. Specifically, standards will be adopted prohibiting blinking, flashing, or moving signs, as well as limiting the size and height of new commercial signs to that which is similar to the existing commercial signs in the Town Core.

**3.4.8 Prohibit casinos, bars, and sexually-oriented businesses.**

Development standards will be adopted prohibiting casinos, bars, or sexually-oriented businesses within the Town Core.

### *Policy 3.5 Connections*

Multiple points of access will be required to most developments. Additionally, safe, functional connections between neighborhoods, and within residential and commercial areas and public places, will be required for new development.

Benefits of safe, functional connections between neighborhoods via roads and sidewalks, paths, and trails include the following:

- Having multiple points of access to a neighborhood is important for provision of emergency services;
- Facilitating movement from one part of the community to another via local roads, sidewalks, paths, and trails can reduce congestion on arterial roads and major connectors. It also encourages walking and cycling;
- Connecting neighborhoods promotes a sense of community throughout town;
- Providing multiple connections, including sidewalks and paths, can facilitate safe movement of school children to either of the two schools in the community.

#### **3.5.1 Require Connectivity as a Condition of Development Approval.**

Commercial and residential developments must have safe, functional access for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists through the site. They must also be designed with enough right-of-way to have safe, functional connections with adjoining developments.

#### **3.5.2 Commit to exploring ways to provide a new sidewalk along Churchill Road, Amsterdam Road, and Camp Creek Road, as well as trail and sidewalk options throughout the Town Core as needs are identified.**

There are two schools and three churches within the heart of the Town Core. This policy commits the community of Amsterdam/Churchill and Gallatin County to exploring ways to provide a new sidewalk along Churchill Road, Amsterdam Road, and Camp Creek to increase pedestrian safety between these public buildings and residential neighborhoods.

Sidewalks and trails may be constructed using a combination of public grants (such as the Community Transportation Enhancement Program) and private donations, as well as required as a condition of approval for new development within the Town Core.



Additionally, as the planning process proceeds, new connections and pedestrian needs may be identified. This policy commits the community and Gallatin County to explore opportunities to provide any future trail and/or other pedestrian connections that are identified.

**3.5.3 Require a connection between Godfrey Canyon Estates and the rest of the Churchill Community to the north.**

The Godfrey Canyon Estates subdivision is physically separated from the rest of the Churchill community to the north. The Windmill Acres subdivision was granted preliminary plat approval in January 2009 and provides a trail connection between Godfrey Canyon Estates and the rest of the Churchill community to the north. If development plans change in the future, a road connection should also be provided in order to better connect areas within the Town Core.

**3.5.4 Commit to exploring opportunities for a "rails to trails" project along the old railroad right-of-way west of Camp Creek Road.**

A "rails-to-trails" project along this old right-of-way could provide a designated pedestrian pathway along Camp Creek Road that serves both as a recreational trail and also as a way for students to get to the Amsterdam School. This policy commits the community of Amsterdam/Churchill to working with landowners along these roads to potentially designate them through the rails-to-trails program.

**3.5.6 Require extension of Kunje Road to the east and south along the edge of the Town Core boundary.**

Extending Kunje Road to the east and south along the northern and eastern edges of the Town Core boundary provides a road routing traffic around the Churchill Town Core for both general traffic and emergency service vehicles that does not use the interior subdivision roads of the Churchill North subdivision. Also, extension of Kunje Road allows appropriate access to Phase II property designated to the north and east of the Town Core boundary.

**3.5.7 Require a connection between Churchill Road and Camp Creek Road across the Ecton Property.**

As discussed in Policy 3.1, the Ecton property has an approved preliminary plat. If development plans change, however, this policy requires a connection to be designed with any future development that would connect Churchill Road to Camp Creek Road and provide an alternative east/west route.

**3.5.8 Create connections, when and where possible, between Land Use Categories A, C, and G through to Churchill Road.**

There is a general lack of connections between Godfrey Canyon Estates, the majority of the Churchill community to the north, and the Ecton Ranch. Because there are two approved preliminary plats for both the Ecton Ranch (Category C) and the Windmill Acres project (Category G), obtaining connections for all of these areas will only happen if development plans change. Should plans change for these two approved developments, new connections should be made between Category G and Category C, as well as south into Godfrey Canyon Estates to the south and Category A to the north.

**3.5.9 Require new road connections to Phase II property to be built to "connector road" standards, rather than "interior subdivision road" standards.**

The "Future Land Use Map" for the Town Core shows several properties on the outskirts of the Town Core that will serve as Phase II property once the requirements of Policy 3.2 are met. In order to ensure appropriate access to those properties, new developments within the Town Core providing access to Phase II properties should construct any access roads to "connector road" standards rather than "interior subdivision road" standards.

### ***Policy 3.6 Recommended Speed Controls And Road Improvements***

Churchill Road serves two purposes in the planning jurisdiction: first, it serves as the main street through the center of the Town Core, servicing three churches, a school, and several businesses, as well as the majority of residential development in the area; second, it serves as a State Highway providing access from Norris Road to the south through to Manhattan to the north. In an attempt to reconcile these two points, this policy recommends speed controls be applied to and maintained on the portion of Churchill Road within the Town Core.

The Montana Department of Transportation states that Churchill Road could accommodate between 6,000 and 8,000 trips per day and stay within an acceptable range for a two-lane arterial street. While this is a standard ADT for most arterial streets, it is unacceptable for a road that serves as the main street of the Churchill community. In order to ensure maximum traffic safety for the Town core, the following speed controls are recommended:

**3.6.1 Install a crosswalk sign at the intersection of Amsterdam Road, Churchill Road, and Kunje Road.**

As the Town Core grows, traffic, both auto and pedestrian, will increase. In order to ensure maximum safety and protect the small town character of the area, this Plan intends to encourage safe pedestrian opportunities throughout the Town Core. In order to facilitate those opportunities, a crosswalk should be installed at the intersection of Amsterdam Road, Churchill Road, and Kunje Road.

**3.6.2 Install rumble strips at the north, east, and south entrances to the Town Core.**

While the Town Core currently has a speed limit of 25 miles per hour, that speed limit is not always followed. In order to help retain the small-town character of the Town Core, rumble strips should be placed at the north, south, and east entrances of the Town Core to ensure the appropriate speed limit is followed and help maximize safety for residents.

**3.6.3 Install "speed reduction" signs at the north and south entrances to the Town Core, as well as on either side of the Amsterdam Road/Camp Creek Road intersection.**

As with Policy 3.6.2, speed reduction signs should be placed at the north and south entrances to the Town Core, as well as on either side of the Amsterdam Road/Camp Creek Road intersection to ensure the speed limit through town is followed.

**3.6.4 Realignment of the Amsterdam Road/Churchill Road/Kunje Road intersection.**

When Kunje Road was constructed with the development of the Churchill North Subdivision, the intersection with Churchill Road did not directly align with the intersection of Amsterdam Road and Churchill Road. Primarily, this was due to the location of the Churchill Equipment property. While any relocation of the intersection will need to be approved by both Churchill Equipment and the Montana Department of Transportation, this policy encourages those discussions to take place between those entities and future developers within the Town Core as growth occurs and increased traffic uses the intersection.

**Policy 3.7 Community Sewer**

The Churchill Sewer District will continue to serve as the primary sewer provider in the Town Core.

The Churchill Sewer District has been in existence since the 19737. The system consists of three treatment ponds immediately northwest of the Amsterdam Road/Camp Creek intersection, and several collection lines throughout the existing development within the Town Core. Questions have been raised by DEQ over the past several years regarding capacity of the District to handle new hookups, as well as the possibility of a leak somewhere in the system. The District is currently going through a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) to evaluate the collection, treatment and waste disposal systems. According to a consent order with the Montana Department Of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) the results of this work will be completed by December 31, 2012. At that time the entire system will be upgraded and capable of handling existing and future

connections through the year 2032. The system will be sized according to a growth rate agreeable to the District and the existing users; and, the total number of connections is yet to be determined. The following policies will ensure that new development in the Town Core will hook up to the District and that adequate capacity is available.

**3.7.1 Study how much Current C-capacity, ~~is available.~~**

The existing system is at capacity in regards to the ability to store collected waste. Storage capacity and effluent disposal will be upgraded according to the PER. Ongoing evaluations will establish the capacity of the system and its ability to accommodate growth through the year 2032. In the interim, through 2012, the MDEQ has allowed the District a select few new connections which will be evaluated and granted according to District approval.

~~irect Recent DEQ reports have raised the possibility of a leak in the District's system. The District should conduct flow tests to determine how much wastewater is entering the system, and compare this with how much wastewater is treated annually in the lagoons.~~

**3.7.2 Require new subdivision within the Town Core to coordinate with the Churchill Sewer District.**

New development in the Town Core requiring centralized wastewater shall coordinate with the District for eventual inclusion in the District. It is desired that new subdivisions in the Town Core connect to the District's system. In the event that a new subdivision requiring central sewer precedes any necessary expansion of the District's systems, the new subdivision shall ~~ould~~ coordinate with the District to ensure any expansion of the existing system is equitably distributed among new and existing users. If a new subdivision chooses to build a separate multi-user system, the new subdivision and the District shall coordinate to ensure the systems are compatible and can eventually be included in the District.

**3.7.3 Allow development within the Town Core only when it is proven there is adequate capacity in the District's existing treatment system.**

The District's system will be considered adequate if there is proven sufficient capacity to accommodate expected and ultimate peak flows from the proposed development, or if the capacity is expected to be provided within a designated timeframe to service the proposed development.

**3.7.4 Study how to expand capacity as the Town Core grows.**

As the Town Core grows, it is likely that maximum capacity of the District's treatment system will be reached. In order to continue to

provide quality service to the District's members, the District should study how the system will be expanded as development occurs in the Town Core and hooks into the District's treatment system.

**Policy 3.8 Community Water**

The Amsterdam/Churchill community will explore the option of creating a community water district in the Town Core.

While a community sewer district has been in place since 1973~~7~~, the Town Core does not have a corresponding community water system or district. As neighborhoods within the Town Core have been developed over the past 40 years, community water systems serving each of those individual neighborhoods have been constructed. While the logistics of creating a community water district and tying those existing systems together are challenging, the Amsterdam/Churchill community recognizes the benefits such a project would bring:

- Having a single entity to address testing and regulatory issues (such as the recent arsenic issue) allows for more efficiency and could result in better overall water quality;
- A reliable fire protection system based on hydrants tied to a single entity could result in more effective fire protection.
- Better management of the groundwater resources in the Amsterdam and Churchill communities, by being able to manage the amount of water consumed and for what purposes.

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**3.8.1 Discuss the possibility of a community water system with local engineering firms in a public forum.**

Several local engineering firms specialize in helping local communities create sewer and/or water districts. In addition, there are several grant opportunities at the state and federal level that can help fund such projects. The Amsterdam/Churchill community should invite several engineering firms to present options for creation of a water district which could service the Town Core.

**3.8.2 Discuss the benefits and challenges of forming a water district with the community.**

The first major challenge in creating a public, community water system would be to form a water district. This could be accomplished by joining with the existing sewer district, though it would be

Comment [JP1]: I need to think about this a bit, ask and or get input from coworkers.

**3.8.2 Require new development utilizing Public Water Systems to stub**

**water lines to adjacent properties.**

While there is currently no plan to create a water district, new development utilizing a Public Water Supply System in the Town Core shall ~~ould~~ design and -plan its distribution system water lines according to MDEQ standards; and, in a manner which allows the distribution system to be hooked into a community system in future hookups in the event one is created.

**3.8.3 Water Rights for Public Water Systems**

The Amsterdam/Churchill community should investigate options for developing a water right bank. Water rights are required for any new wells or group of interconnected wells that pump more than 35 gpm and/or 10 acre-feet per year. Consequently, for future growth utilizing a community system and Public wells a methodology to acquire existing water rights or establish new water rights should be established. While the regulatory framework is not entirely in place, banked water rights could potentially be used for future water development.

**Comment [JP2]:** Warren and Walt. A very few brief thoughts here. I'm sure that much more, and better stated words can be put here. But it's a start.

**Policy 3.9 Lighting**

Policies regarding lighting in the Amsterdam/Churchill community serve two purposes. The first is to provide standards for new commercial lighting to protect the night sky as a way of advancing the rural atmosphere of the community and to minimize light glare and light trespass by confining light to targeted areas. The second is a desire to ensure safety in the community and retain its small-town atmosphere by ensuring that new development is adequately lit. In order to ensure both of these desires are satisfied, the following policies are adopted:

**3.9.1 Require new development to join the existing Lighting District.**

As new development occurs within the Town Core, the boundaries of the existing Lighting District should be expanded to include that development. This will require coordination between both the developer, Northwestern Energy, and Gallatin County. The expansion should not just require new development to support the existing lights along Churchill Road, but should also result in new lighting within the boundaries of the new development. All new lighting fixtures installed shall be full shielded and designed to reduce light pollution, glare, and trespass.

**3.9.1 Minimize light trespass from new residential, recreational, and commercial buildings and sites, reduce sky-glow to increase night sky**

**access, improve nighttime visibility through glare reduction, and reduce development impact on nocturnal environments by adopting standards for new lighting.**

The land use map described in Policy 3.1 designates several areas in the Town Core as commercial. In order to protect the night sky that provides much of the rural atmosphere for the community, new development should meet be consistent with the US Green Building Council and Dark Sky standards for new commercial exterior lighting. Specifically, new exterior lighting should be designed to minimize light glare and trespass on neighboring properties and utilize cutoff-shielded lighting minimizing upward-directed lighting.

### ***Policy 3.10 Agricultural Uses and Land***

The importance of agricultural land and lifestyle has been a clearly identified value by the residents of Amsterdam/Churchill. While the majority of agricultural lands will be located outside of the downtown core and will be protected by directing the majority of growth into the core, several aspects of agricultural use will still be protected within the core as the area grows.

#### **3.10.1 Protect water conveyance facilities by requiring new subdivision and 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 development 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.

#### **3.10.2 Avoid conflicts between uses by requiring an open space buffer**

**between existing agricultural operations and new residential subdivision.**

Preserving agricultural operations and lands is one of the Guiding Principles of this community plan. Increased residential 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.

**3.10.3 Exempt agricultural practices and structures from future development standards.**

**3.10.4 Exempt family transfer exemptions from any future development standards.**

**3.10.5 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.



# Rural Amsterdam/Churchill

## 4

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 have 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 key purposes of the Community Plan is to encourage and protect the agricultural land and support its favorable lifestyle. 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 landowners and residents 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. Additionally, landowners will be required to file an "agricultural resource easement" with their property when new residential construction takes place, stating they recognize they are in an agricultural area and accept the right of agricultural operations to exist and continue.

### *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 by requiring setbacks to existing water conveyance facilities and by adopting development standards promoting agriculture by setting clear standards on new development.

#### **4.3.1 Protect water conveyance facilities by requiring new subdivision and 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 landowners and residents 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.

*Rural*  
**Policy 4.4 ~~New~~ Residential Development**

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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 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 potato 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 that enhance agriculture 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 land 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 Opportunities Program.**

In the event that a Transfer of Development Opportunities 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 or rights to growth areas in other parts of the County.

## *Policy 4.5 Flexibility of Uses*

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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*

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Detailing connections between various places within the planning district is one of the primary components of the Community Plan. Additionally, all new road improvements shall consider the needs of agricultural, such as the need to move stock or equipment.

**4.6.1 Improve Amsterdam Road.**

**4.6.2 Consider agricultural when improving and connecting roads.**

Many of the roads in the planning district have very light traffic and are used primarily for agricultural uses, such as moving stock and equipment. New road construction should consider this need when improvements are being designed.

**4.6.3 Consider trail improvements within the district after adoption of the Community Plan.**

There are several trail connections that should be made within the planning district that will require an investment in resources on the part of area residents. That investment will be more fully discussed after adoption of the Community Plan. Specifically, those trail connections include a trail north out of Churchill towards Manhattan, and east out of Churchill towards the Gallatin River (preferably along Cameron Bridge Road).

**4.6.4 Create a road connection north out of Amsterdam along the**

**old railroad right-of-way to Coles Corner.**

Coles Corner, along Churchill Road north of Town, is one of the most dangerous sections of road in the Planning District. A road connection should be constructed north out of Amsterdam along the old railroad right-of-way directly north to Coles Corner to provide safer access out of town north towards Manhattan.

### *Policy 4.7 Natural Assets*

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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:

**4.7.1 Adopt standards requiring minimum setbacks to riparian areas, watercourses and wetlands.**

The Gallatin County Subdivision Regulations currently require setbacks of 150 feet to all 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*

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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.

# District-Wide Policies

## 5

- 5.1 Fire Protection
- 5.2 Schools
- 5.3 Community Decay
- 5.4 Local Water Quality District

### *Policy 5.1. Fire and Emergency Services*

Ensure continued provision of fire and emergency services.

- 5.1.1 **Explore fire impact fees.** As the community continues to grow, additional population will result in increased calls for service. As demand grows, the all-volunteer system may require partially-paid staff and new equipment. To ensure that existing residents do not bear the burden of servicing new development, the County and the Amsterdam/Churchill community will consider adoption of Fire District impact fees for the Amsterdam Fire District.
- 5.1.2 **Require addressing standards.** All new homes in the Amsterdam/Churchill planning jurisdiction shall have reflective three-inch lettered addresses with offsetting backgrounds plainly visible from the street entrance. The Gallatin County GIS Department shall participate in ensuring this policy is communicated to new homeowners in the Planning Area.
- 5.1.3 **Require sprinklers for large commercial or community structures.**

### *Policy 5.2. Amsterdam School*

The community and Gallatin County should actively explore options to help the Amsterdam School expand as new growth occurs in the Town Core.

The Amsterdam School is the only public school in the Amsterdam/Churchill Planning District. Constructed in 1962 on a 2.9 acre site, the 19,000 square foot school building provides education for grades K-6.

School enrollment has been varied over the past 10 years, but recent development approvals indicate future enrollment could grow significantly. Recent discussions have raised the following issues:

- The School District recently passed a \$1.2 million school bond. The bond was used to construct 4 new classrooms and a multipurpose room serving as a cafeteria and assembly space. All of the classrooms are now in use.
- Water for the school is provided by a well, located just east of the school building. A second well will be drilled.
- The approved Amsterdam Village preliminary plat has agreed to donate \$1,000 per lot at development proceeds. That voluntary impact fee will only be paid, however, upon approval of final plat.
- City of Manhattan Schools currently educate grades 7-8 from the Amsterdam School District. However, Manhattan will now charge a tuition for these students to be funded by permissible levy.
- The Planning District designates land within the Town Core as appropriate for new development that will create neighborhoods similar to those already in place. These new neighborhoods will, as they build out, send an increasing number of students to the School District.

In light of these issues, the following policies are suggested:

- 5.2.1 Amsterdam School District has prepared a School Facilities Inventory, as part of the planning for the Amsterdam Village development, to prepare for new students. The School District should continue this work and develop a school facilities Master Plan, including infrastructure, utilities, and service requirements projections.
- 5.2.2 Amsterdam School District should work with the Gallatin County School Superintendent to ensure an annual discussion with the Board of County Commissioners regarding the status of the school and growth in the area.
- 5.2.C Amsterdam School District should request a voluntary school impact fee from new residential development. Additionally, major subdivisions shall provide a school mitigation plan to discuss impacts on the Amsterdam School and potential solutions.
- 5.2.D New development in the Amsterdam/Churchill area should confer with the Amsterdam School District to discuss mitigation measures.

### *Policy 5.3 Community Decay Ordinance*

In order to preserve the scenic qualities and natural environment of the area, the small town and rural atmosphere, and the property values of area residents, the development standards designed to



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implement the Amsterdam/Churchill Community Plan will contain standards addressing community decay.

### **5.3.1 Draft development standards addressing “community decay”.**

The development standards intended to implement the Amsterdam/Churchill Community Plan will include standards addressing “community decay”. These standards will regulate, control, and prohibit conditions that contribute to community decay within the planning area. Interpretation of this policy shall be consistent with

“Community decay” is a public nuisance created by allowing rubble, debris, junk or refuse to accumulate resulting in conditions that are injurious to health, indecent, offensive to the senses or which obstruct the free use of property so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property.

A “Nuisance” means anything which is injurious to health, indecent or offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the free use of property, so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property. A “Public Nuisance” means a nuisance, which affects, at the same time, an entire community or neighborhood or any considerable number of persons, although the extent of the annoyance or damage inflicted upon individuals may be unequal. A nuisance does not include anything which is done or maintained under authority of a statute, nor does it include the normal operations of an agricultural or farming operation that have been in operation longer than the complaining residents and/or establishments.

Material that may constitute community decay includes, but is not limited to, bricks, concrete, wood, cardboard, paper, pallets, tires, dead animals/animal parts, dirt, demolition waste, junk vehicles, wrecked trailers, iron, metal, machine parts, appliances, and barrels. Community decay does not include normal farming, ranching or other agricultural operations, or apply to a farm, ranch, or other agricultural facility, or any appurtenances, thereof, during the course of its normal operation.

Specifically, the following standards will be adopted:

- A. Refuse, including general household trash whether bagged or loose, discarded furniture, appliances, broken toys, etc.) shall not be allowed to accumulate outside. Residents shall provide for routine garbage pickup, or otherwise ensure garbage is hauled away in a timely manner (generally within 30 days).
- B. Residents shall not engage in any activity that causes noxious odors to spread beyond the property line (examples stockpiling dead animals at a processing facility, or auto body painting). All farming and ranching activities are exempt.

### ***Policy 5.4 Local Water Quality District***

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In order to help investigate options for treating several of the arsenic issues that have arisen in the last couple of years, as well as helping individual landowners with their water quality issues, the Amsterdam/Churchill community will explore annexing into the Gallatin County Local Water Quality District.