

BIGFORK AREA
LAND USE PLAN

AN ADDENDUM TO THE
FLATHEAD COUNTY MASTER PLAN

ADOPTED BY THE
FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION NO. 933A
AUGUST 16, 1993

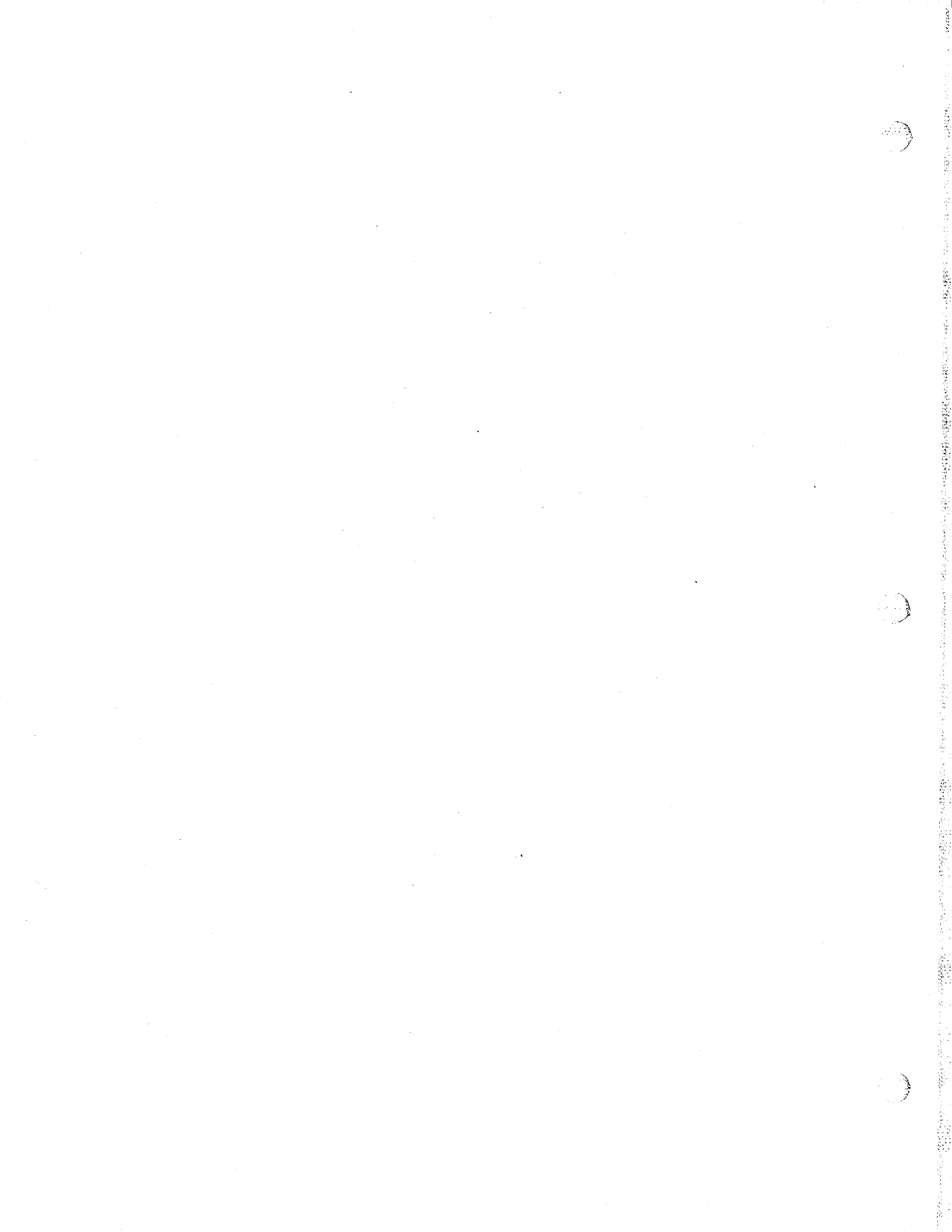


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TO: Flathead County Commissioners,
Flathead County Planning Board,
Flathead Regional Development Office,

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From: The Steering Committee for Bigfork Planning Area

Date: Plan submitted for review March 11, 1992.

The Steering Committee, representing the land area within High School District 38 and Grade School District 4, request that you review the enclosed proposal and accept the plan in its entirety. The stated goals and policies reflect responses to the survey with a 60% or greater concurrence by the community.

The Land Use Plan for the Bigfork Planning Area as described herein is proposed to become a particular part of the Flathead County Master Plan. Since we do not yet have access to the new Zoning Regulations and revised zoning categories currently being developed by the Flathead Regional Development Office, we wish to reserve the right to actively participate in conforming the Bigfork Area Plan to the revised Zoning Ordinances.

This plan does not stifle growth. In fact, some would say it permits too much growth. It does accommodate compatible growth. It will deter incompatible development.

The Committee believes this document makes the most sensible use of the land in the Bigfork area, given the constraints of present use and existing parcels. The committee has tried to be faithful to the expressed public interests in preserving open spaces and limiting commercial sprawl.

The Committee recommends a specific plan be prepared directed to the "Bigfork Village" area alone. The purpose of a specific plan is to "Provide For Harmonious Development" and to "Reduce Traffic Impacts."

The following are the specific plan goals:

1. It shall be a goal of the Bigfork Village Specific Plan to achieve a unique, identifiable, commercial and residential center around the Bay and inlet that provides a distinct cultural and physical unity in a manner that acknowledges and takes advantage of the Swan River, Flathead Lake and the surrounding mountain views.
2. It shall be a goal of the Bigfork Village Specific Plan to develop a community that provides uses and services to residents, visitors and employees of the Bigfork Planning District in a healthful, esthetic and safe environment.

The Committee plans to continue to work to refine this document. The Committee recognizes that the County's time limit precluded full articulation of regulations and other components of a plan that would address the Bigfork area concerns. Nevertheless, the unanimous request of the Committee is that the County adopt this Zoning Plan as quickly as possible.

STEERING COMMITTEE

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Lee Leivo -- water and sewer district

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Members of the Bigfork school system and Superintendent's office

GENERAL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Ron Knight -- Chairperson
Ann Hewitt

Elna Darrow

Bob McClain

Names listed above have participated in committee decisions and provided the research and information from which those decisions were made during 1991-1992. The names listed do not include those who provided input at numerous public meetings.

INTRODUCTION

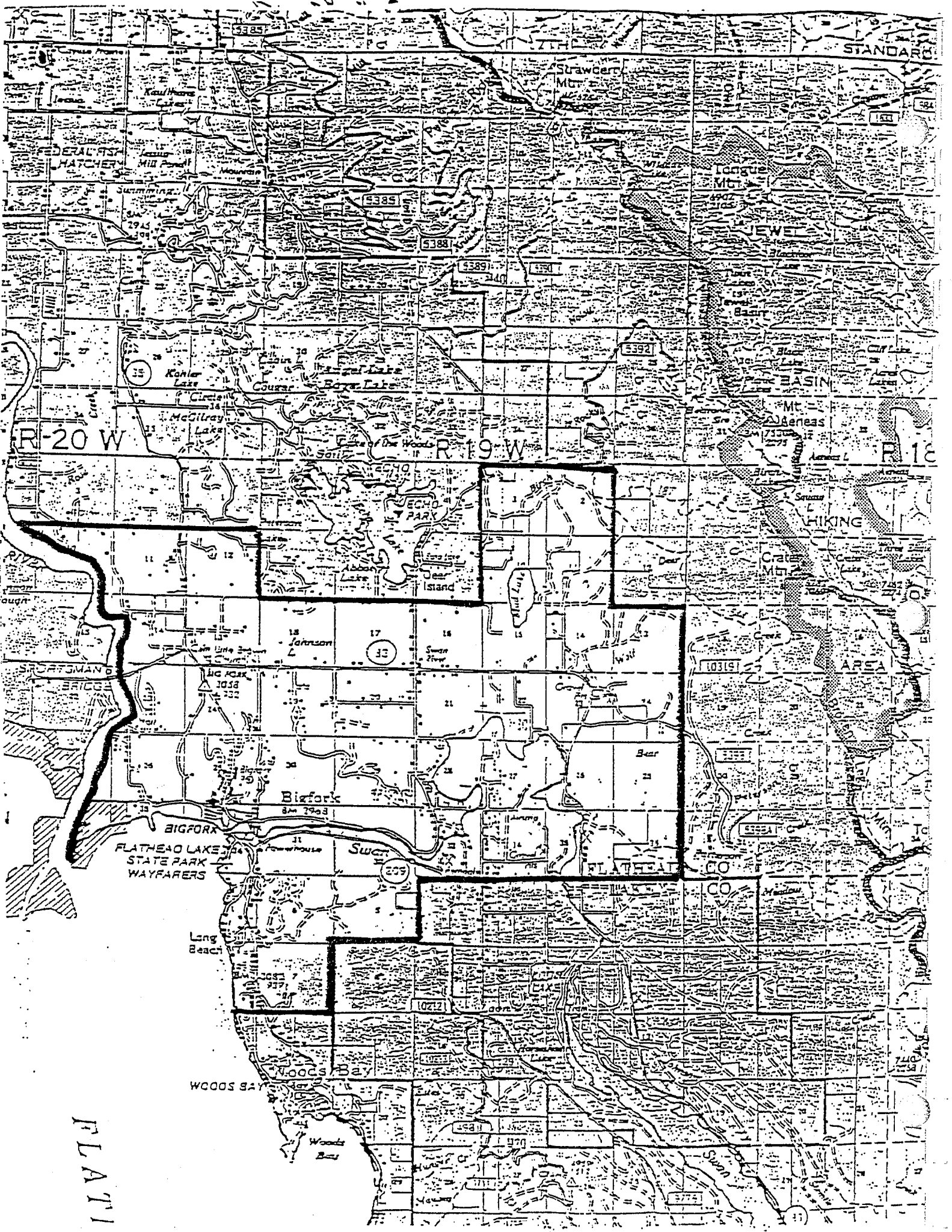
ESTABLISHMENT OF BIGFORK PLANNING DISTRICT

The flourishing growth seen in the Flathead Valley and Bigfork area within the last few years prompted a group of concerned citizens in 1991 to form an ad hoc committee to investigate the attitude of the community towards developing a Land Use Plan and zoning districts to cope with the anticipated future growth.

Members of both the Bigfork Chamber of Commerce and the Bigfork Development Company spearheaded the initial research required of the residents within the planning area to substantiate present land use and the desires of the community. In February of 1991 two organizational meetings were held in an effort to survey the community and determine the need or desire for zoning. Steve Herbaly, director of FRDO, attended those meetings and stated the need for Bigfork to expedite a plan. The unanimous response from these initial meetings, attended by over 35 people, was that we need to pursue a plan and start now. It was decided that the plan must have extensive local input and representation if it was to be acceptable. It was also decided that the area should include School District 38 and 4. It was agreed that if small areas within the proposed districts did not wish to participate in the Bigfork Plan, their withdrawal would be accepted. Subsequently, Echo Lake homeowners established a separate planning area in Echo Lake vicinity; the area north of Riverside Road withdrew to participate with the Creston Planning area; and the Swan Hill neighborhood established their own planning area. All other lands remain a part of the Bigfork Planning District. Land in Lake County that bordered the Bigfork area was not included. An effort is underway to coordinate the Bigfork's Area Plan with a Lake County plan.

As a result of the initial meetings, a steering committee was formed to pursue the task at hand. Volunteers were solicited from three categories: 1. Business: agriculture, retail, recreation, etc. 2. Community associations: Bigfork Chamber, Masons, Development Company, Fire Dept. etc. 3. Neighborhoods: East Shore, Ferndale, Lake Hills, Eagle Bend, etc. The committee has completed two surveys of the entire Bigfork Area. Each survey was mailed to 2600 property owners by the Flathead Regional Development Office. 1400 of the property owners lived in the immediate area, 600 elsewhere in Montana, and 600 live outside Montana, including foreign countries. The rate of return on the second long detail survey was 25%.

Survey results were strongly in favor of zoning. The Committee has, therefore pursued a 14 step plan to establish zoning for the Bigfork Area by March of 1992. Goals and Policies were developed from community input substantiated by the results of the surveys. Survey results are enclosed.



FLATHEAD

PROGRESSION SCHEDULE FOR THE PLANNING PROCESS

1. Information meetings, form steering committee. Feb-March '91
2. Solicit local and land owner input with a questionnaire. May-June '91
3. Advertise information to the public, request response. March '91
Held first public meeting to discuss zoning May '91
4. Compile information, select equal area representation. March-Sept '91
5. Hold series of community meetings, sub committee meetings to address specific needs. Sept-Dec '91
6. Prepare a draft of committee reports. Sept-Dec '91
7. Compile maps, graphics and statistical data. Sept 91-Feb '92
8. Mail detailed survey. Dec-Jan '92
8. Prepare a draft of goals and policies. Survey results. Feb '92
9. Local public meetings to discuss the plan. Jan '92
10. Present the plan to the Flathead Co. Planning Board. March 11, '92
11. Planning Board's recommendations to Commissioners. March '92
12. Public meetings advertised. March-Apr. '92
13. Commissioners' action. April '92
14. Implementation of planning regulation. May '92