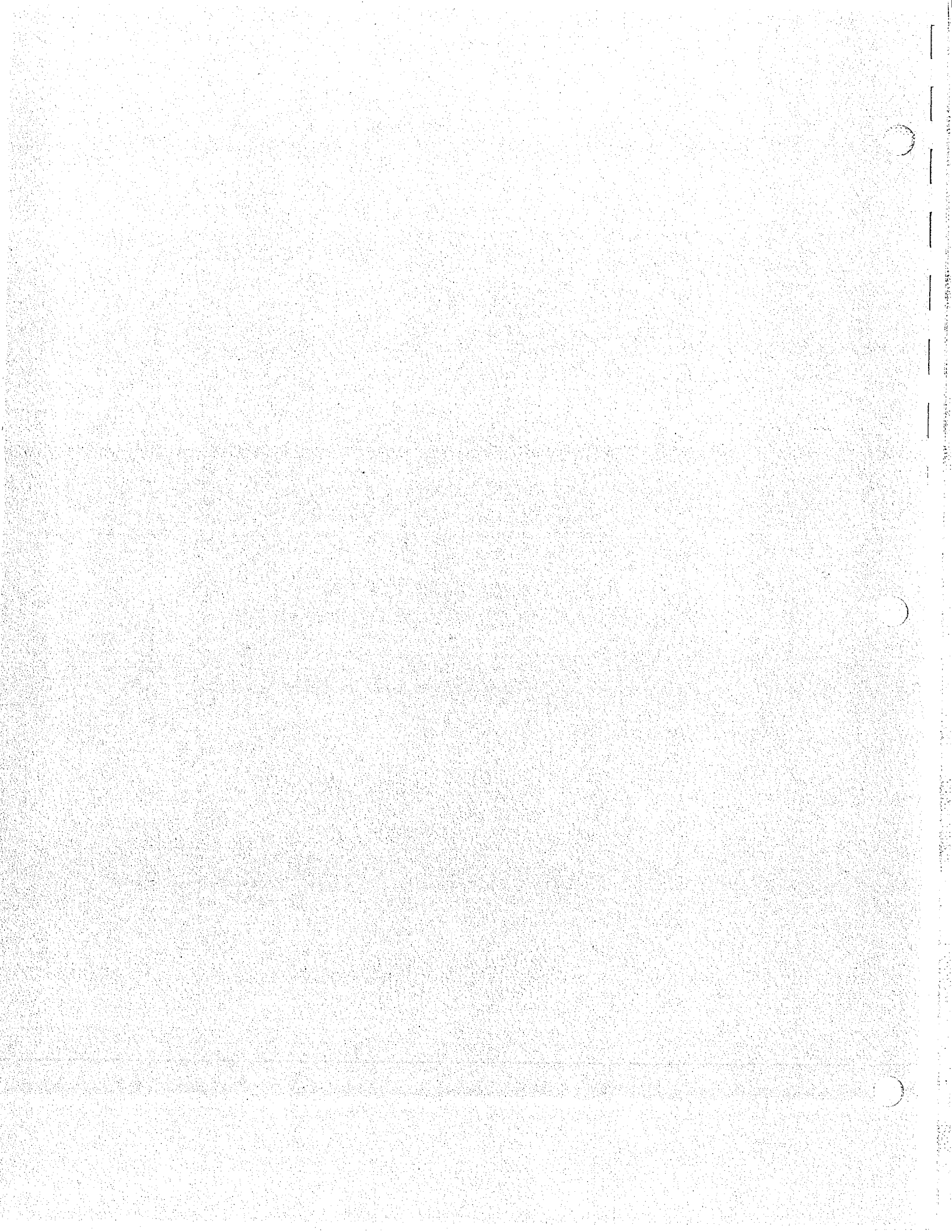


# **LAKESIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

**AN ADDENDUM TO THE  
FLATHEAD COUNTY MASTER PLAN**

**ADOPTED BY THE  
FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**RESOLUTION NO. 1068A  
NOVEMBER 22, 1995**



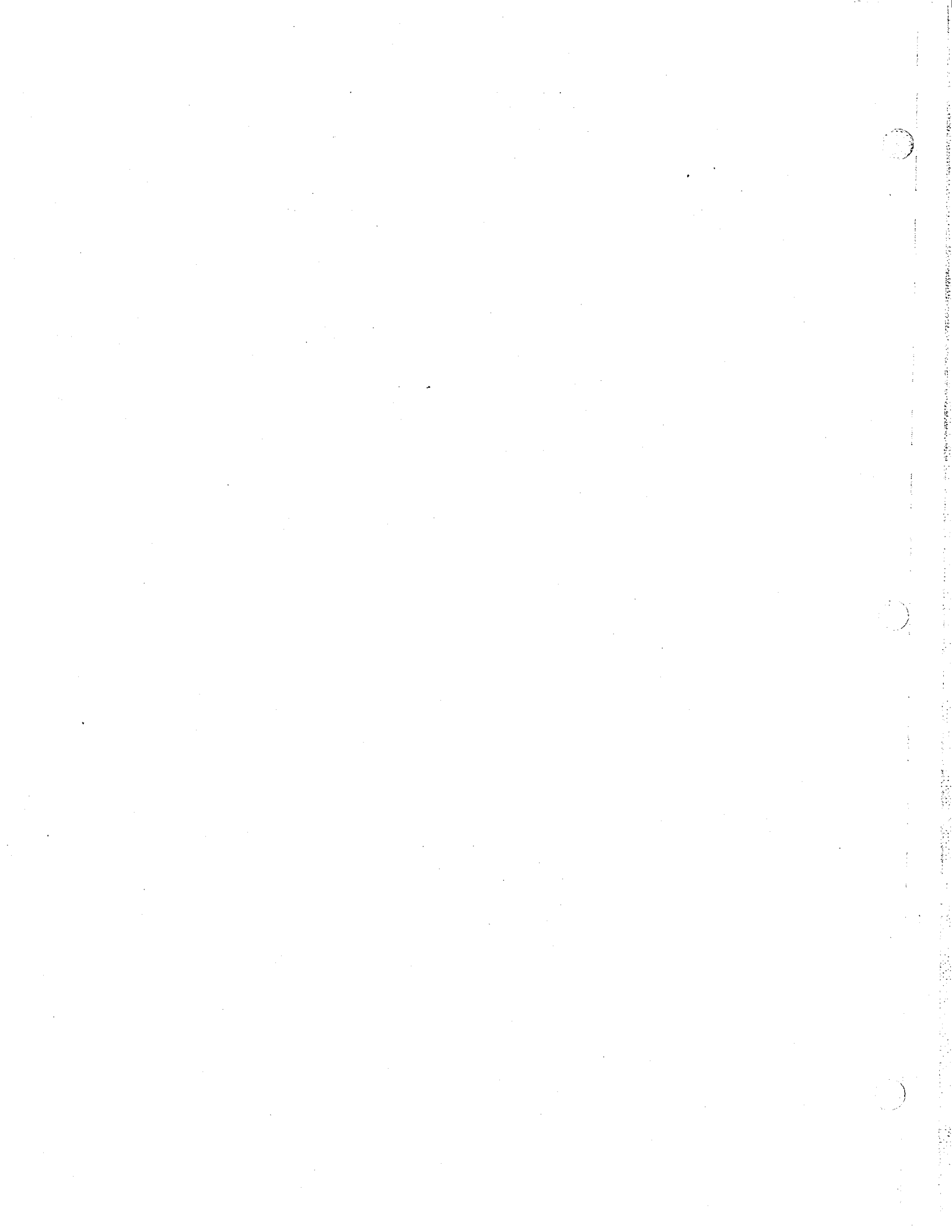
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### Steering Committee:

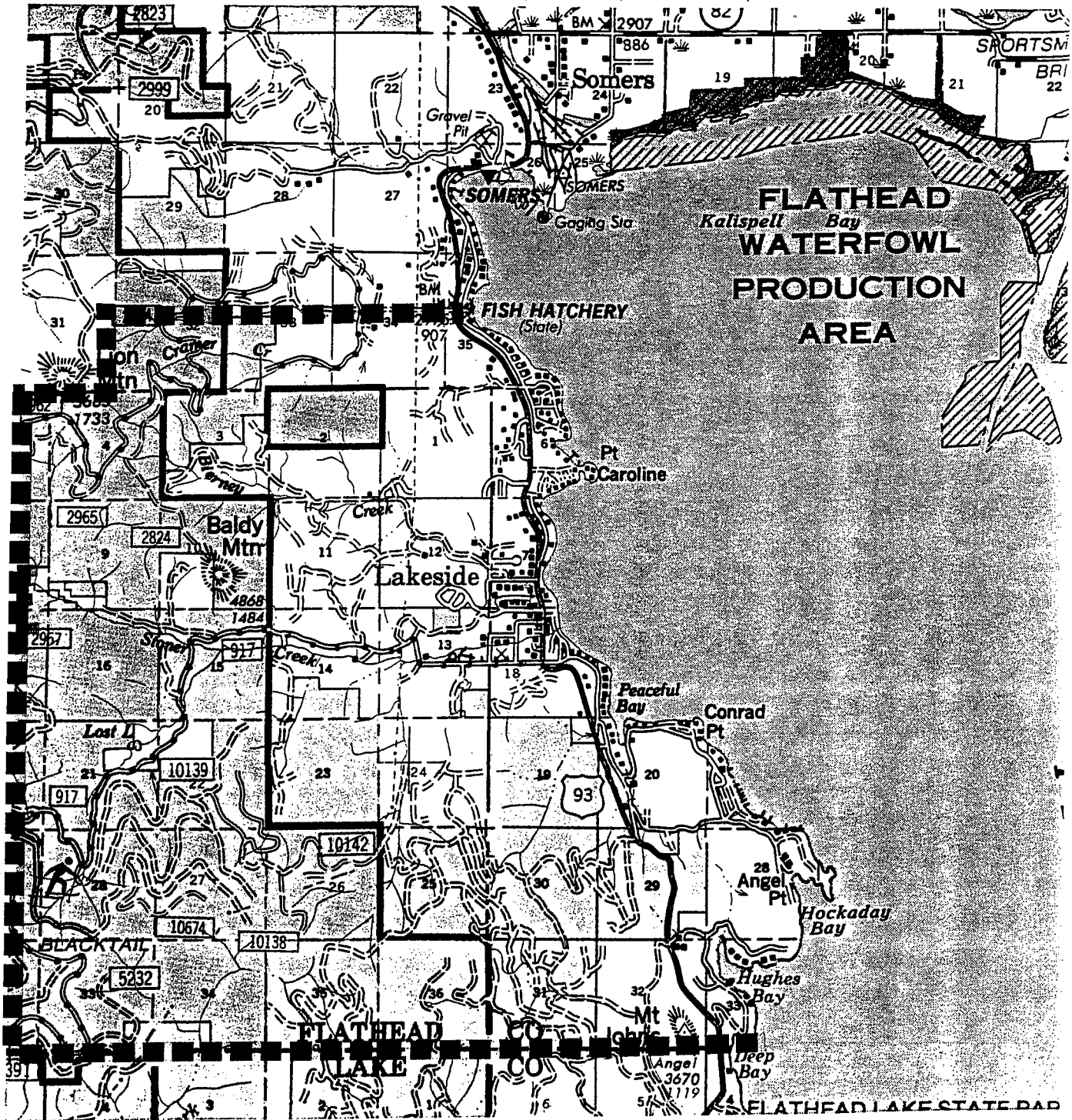
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|------------------|------------------|----------|
| Chairman         | David Thornquist | 844-3395 |
| Vice-Chairman    | Art Thompson     | 844-2806 |
| Treasurer        | Dave Robinson    | 844-3945 |
| Secretary        | Cliff Bennett    | 844-2133 |
|                  | Bill Baird       | 844-2529 |
|                  | Jim Blankenship  | 844-3037 |
|                  | Bob Stolzenbach  | 844-2540 |
| Utilities        | George Thompson  | 857-3409 |
| Roads & Highways | Dave Casteel     | 844-2014 |

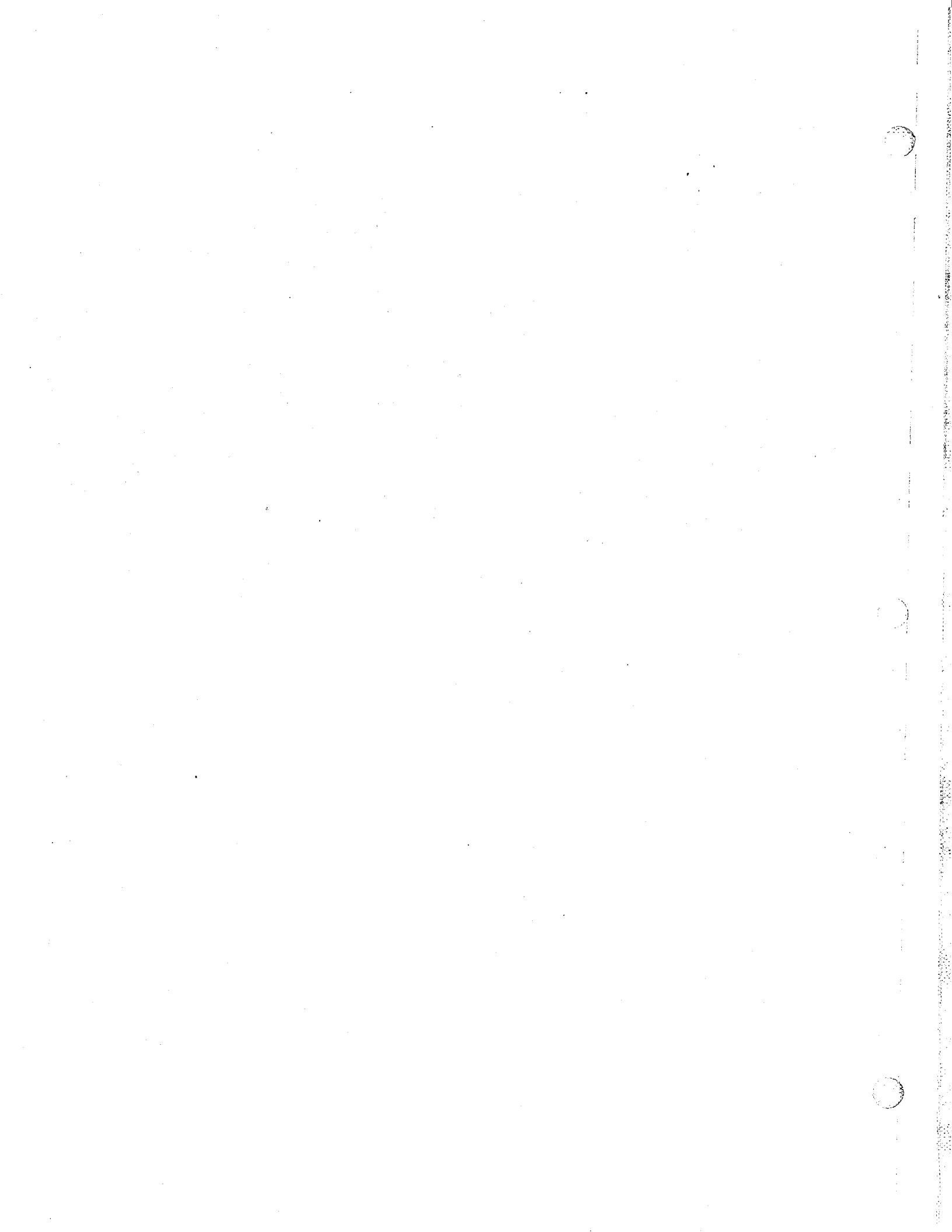
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LAKE SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

PLAN BOUNDARY





# LAKESIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

## I. INTRODUCTION

Lakeside is a unique community: Outstanding homes, lake and mountain views, recreational and life style options, favorable climate, nearby urban services via U.S Highway 93, and Glacier Park International Airport.

### A. WHY IS PLANNING IMPORTANT

Historically, with no local governmental entity or community voice, and with no specific neighborhood plan to guide growth, development has been accommodated in a reactive manner. That is, either accepted by neighbors and the community, or objected to for various reasons after-the-fact. The Lakeside community lacks a forum for public hearings to air community concerns and issues.

Currently, only a sketchy, dated neighborhood land use plan exists for the Lakeside Community. It is in the form of an addendum to the existing County Master Plan, based on a 1976 Westshore Chamber of Commerce effort and a simple survey. The County-wide Master Plan was updated in 1987 but no attempt was offered or made to update or expand upon the Lakeside Community plan.

Development since 1991 has sharply increased (approximately three times the County-wide rate of 4% during the past three years based on housing starts and utilities). There is a noted shift from mostly resort/vacation homes to increasing numbers of bedroom community single-family homes with workers commuting daily to other areas of the valley. This has exposed problems and limitations of the existing County-based controls. With growth and change, neighborhood concerns have increased. Recent examples include the construction of a prominent water tower north of Lakeside, commercial float-plane activity on private waterfront next to a public access, increased demands on the existing service districts, diminishing developable commercial space in Lakeside and the concern that strip development and the spread of billboards will dominate the highways leading to the Lakeside Business District, to name a few.

For homes, most available waterfront and view properties have been developed and re-developed, driving real estate prices to unprecedented levels. Few multiple or moderate income homes have appeared. The greatest increase in housing starts came from four major subdivisions in or near Lakeside. The increase in lakefront development has mainly occurred within the boundary of the sewer district established in 1987. In light of all these changes, the value of property has spiraled upwards since 1991.

Change appears inevitable, but the community needs to have a voice in the change. Growth, if it is to occur, must be planned and guided. A neighborhood plan for the Lakeside area appears to be the vehicle to do this.

## **B. RELATIONSHIP TO OVERALL COUNTY PLAN:**

The neighborhood planning process is vital, in that the current County Master Plan continues to be very broad in nature and is not able to recognize or address the uniqueness of the Lakeside community and its environs and its clear need for coordinated planning for development and lakeshore preservation.

Given these factors, a grass-roots, citizen-initiated planning effort has been undertaken resulting in the preparation of this neighborhood plan. Similar efforts have already been conducted in the North Fork, Bigfork and the Canyon where neighborhood plans have been prepared and adopted as amendments to the County Master Plan. A consensus-based neighborhood plan for Lakeside adopted as an addendum to the Flathead County Master Plan will bridge the gap between the general County Plan and the specific neighborhood needs of Lakeside. Implementation can follow with the assistance of some form of Community Council or appropriate Advisory Committees representing geographic areas or particular types of concerns, e.g. utilities, roads and highways.

## **C. NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN BOUNDARIES:**

Boundaries of the planning area are flexible, but initially for convenience correspond to the Postal ZIP code 59922 (Lake County line to Spring Creek, lakefront to USFS boundary).

The area contains about 1500 postal customers, and close to 1800 property owners. It surrounds the Lakeside business community logically bounded by Political Hill to Northernaire Motel north and south along the highway, and from lakefront east, through YWAM west along Blacktail Road.

The planning area lends itself to sub-areas: 1) lakefront, 2) highway corridor, 3) existing business community, and 4) forested off-lake foothills.

## **II. PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

### **A. STEERING COMMITTEE:**

Informal coffee-table conversations among a diverse group of local full-time and seasonal residents and property owners expressed considerable concern about the negative effects of rapid growth, and the serious concern that the Cooperative Planning Coalition (CPC) planning process undertaken by the County was apparently ignoring Lakeside completely along with Flathead Lake itself. This led to the formation of a Steering Committee early in 1994. The committee originally consisted of 12 individuals who, with the help of 6-8 others at various times, were primarily responsible for the preparation of this Neighborhood Plan.

The Steering Committee held six community meetings from February 8 to July 16, 1994, held an additional 12 Steering Committees and several subcommittee meetings, prepared, circulated and tabulated a community wide survey, prepared the draft plan document and conducted a final community meeting on November 8, 1994.

Several news articles have appeared in Tom Donovan's "Westshore News" published at the Lakeside Grocery and in the Daily Interlake.

Staff from the Flathead Regional Development Office have participated on several occasions by request and have been of great assistance, particularly with the plan format outlines, strategic suggestions, technical assistance and appropriate participation in the community meetings.

Private donations assured the costs of maps, mailings, posters, meeting space, paper supplies and printing. No formal consultant was used as with the Canyon Plan or the County-wide planning process nor was the need perceived necessary or affordable.

## **B. COMMUNITY MEETINGS:**

The steering committee realized immediately that if a planning process was to occur, the community as a whole had to be involved and it had to be kept informed. In light of this, a total of six informational meetings were held at the Lakeside Chapel. Below is a listing of each meeting held followed by a summary of the meeting:

### **MEETING #1 - FEBRUARY 8, 1994**

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENTS**

120 Attendees

There was a review of prior plans that affected Lakeside area including the 1979 and 1987 County Plans plus other current planning efforts: CPC Master Plan Update in process, Lake County zoning models, etc. Emphasis on potential missed opportunities if no effort for Lakeside is undertaken.

Discussion took place of need for planning from various perspectives, examples from this region and elsewhere. Also a presentation of current status of sewer and water districts and Chamber of Commerce. Emphasis was placed on need for planning to accommodate growth and need for citizen participation.

Multiple questions and answers with many participants in discussion indicated the interest level is very high.

Conclusion: To proceed with plans for the process with confidence of enthusiastic public support.

## **MEETING 2 - MARCH 1, 1994**

### **PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES AND METHODOLOGY**

60 Attendees

This meeting laid out the outline for the Neighborhood Plan. The Neighborhood boundaries of the plan were established and the goals and objectives were expressed. Each outline item was explained and discussed.

Conclusion: The establishment of a Neighborhood consisting of Spring Creek Road as the north boundary, the County line as the south boundary, Flathead Lake as the east boundary, and National Forest Service property as the west boundary. A Steering Committee was formed by volunteers, as well as subcommittees for utilities, roads, and backup support group.

## **MEETING #3 - APRIL 19, 1994**

### **TECHNICAL INFORMATION FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT REPRESENTATIVES, STATE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT AND COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT**

65 Attendees

Technical presentations occupied the bulk of the meeting. The County CPC Master Plan update was discussed. It was emphasized that the County Plan continues to be non-specific for the Lakeside area.

Larry Brazda, State Department of Transportation, discussed the status of the State Highway Programs for the Lakeside area. He reported that no upgrades of lighting, signs, roadway, or frontage roads were planned for the foreseeable future unless the funds for such activity were generated locally. A speed study may be possible in order to address the speeding issue through the Lakeside business community, however, quite often such studies indicate the need to increase speed limits based on prevailing speeds. Jim DuPont, Flathead County Sheriff's Department, emphasized under-staffing and budget limitations. The Department's long range plan promises some improvements. Carol Shoemaker, Montana Highway Patrol, reported limited staff and funding with no prospects for improvement. Routine patrol of Lakeside or a major presence in the community was not likely. Marc Pitman, Flathead County Road Department, addressed County road issues. He stated that his department had no plans for major road construction, reconstruction or new pavement in the Lakeside area. He was having enough trouble keeping up with potholes, maintenance, and emphasized needs for citizens reporting road problems.

Conclusion: Lakeside area is not on anyone's high priority list for needed or anticipated road or highway improvements or law enforcement assistance or services. Recommendation was made for ongoing study and appropriate recommendations by a planning committee.

#### **MEETING #4 - MAY 3, 1994**

#### **INFORMATION FROM ALL UTILITY COMPANIES AND PLUM CREEK TIMBER**

55 Attendees

The emphasis of the meeting was on reports from utilities and public service agencies. CPC update and Steering Committee activities were reported.

Jerry Sorensen, Land Planner for Plum Creek, discussed the long range plans for Plum Creek Timber lands in the Lakeside area. He said the Company has no immediate plans that would affect the Lakeside area directly such as land trades or land sales.

A panel presentation was made by Larry Bekkedal, Pacific Power and Light; Norm Arnold, PTI Communications; Jack Kovacich & Bob Warner, Montana Power Company; Jim Heim, Lakeside Sewer District; Phil Lauman, Lakeside Water District; and Dale Lauman, Flathead County Solid Waste Board. Current status of services and future plans for growth were reported. An excellent question and answer session with participation from many attendees took place.

Conclusion: Power, natural gas, and telephone plans appear adequate for growth. Water, sewer, and solid waste capabilities apparently approaching capacities with a clear need for plan expansion.

Recommendation was for public education and support for needed service expansion via the existing water and sewer districts and solid waste board to be facilitated by a community study committee.

#### **MEETING #5 - MAY 24, 1994**

#### **"DOWNTOWN" AND BUSINESS CONCERNS**

45 Attendees

The meeting began with progress reports from each committee and an update on finances was reported. Tom Jentz, FRDO, reported on the progress of the Canyon Neighborhood Plan, noting its adoption by the County Commissioners and he updated the group concerning the efforts to update the Flathead County Master Plan. Both projects continue to be relevant to the Lakeside effort. The emphasis of this meeting was on the Lakeside business community.

Larry Jochim, Flathead Bank of Bigfork, reported on the prolonged experience of planning in Bigfork, suggesting how some pitfalls might be avoided. Local concerns were expressed by Lauralee Brown, Bayshore Motel, Gloria Weikert of Lakeside Resort Motel, Dave Thornquist of Woods and Water Realty, Sharon Finney of the Chamber of Commerce, and Bob Herron of Herron Insurance. Heavy traffic, inadequate street illumination and pedestrian problems were of significant concern. Hope was expressed for some public access to the lakefront, preferably with an associated park. Concerns were expressed about whether the planning process would have assurance of making things better for the community.

Plans for the questionnaire to be developed and mailed to all property owners in the planning area were announced and discussed.

Conclusion: Major concerns were evident regarding lack of public lake access; highway problems including speeding, need for street illumination, and a traffic light, etc.; lack of available property to develop on the highway for commercial use and lack of accessibility for potential commercial expansion off or back from the highway (surface streets). All are considered critical for study, recommendations and action.

## **MEETING #6 - JULY 19, 1994**

### **SURVEY RESULTS**

54 Attendees

The community-wide survey results were summarized and presented by Dave Thornquist and Art Thompson.

Plans for a draft neighborhood plan document to be prepared for presentation to the Flathead Regional Development Office and County Commissioners, after prior review and approval by the Steering Committee, and a general meeting in approximately one (1) month. Opportunity for additional public comment will occur in at least one community meeting prior to hearings by the County Planning Board as part of the process.

Conclusion: Solid support for the process to date was demonstrated and the need to continue to the stage of a plan acceptable to County authorities.

### **Summary of Meetings:**

The conclusions of the public meetings indicated solid public support for the planning process and the development of a neighborhood plan. The development of methods to facilitate improvements in local roads; Highway 93, law enforcement, impacts from anticipated growth, development of additional public lake access, and off-highway surface street access for business space were all urged.

To this end various committees for ongoing study and recommendations were recommended on subject areas such as: Roads and Highway, Law Enforcement, Utilities and Public Services, Lake Access, Parks & Parking and Business Expansion.

### C. COMMUNITY SURVEY

A survey was developed by consensus of the Steering Committee with assistance from the FRDO staff based on perceived problem areas identified in community meetings. Emphasis was on questions with a high likelihood of positive community interest and potential for support if change was desired. Also questions were focused on issues perceived as ones that the community could in fact do something about.

The survey was mailed on June 21, 1994 to all property owners identified in the mailing list obtained from the Flathead County Clerk and Recorder's office.

A total of 1768 surveys were mailed out. As of July 18, 1994, 361 were returned. This was an excellent response rate of 20%. Many believe that statistical significance can be expected with 10% return on surveys of this type.

Technical problems associated with answers were minimal. A majority of the questions were answered by many respondents, but various sections on some returned forms were not answered, thus percentage calculations related to total return would be of limited value.

Questions answered were used in the tally; answers omitted were not counted.

In addition to the tally, multiple comments were volunteered which were tallied if possible, and considered very valuable by the reviewing team during the process of accomplishing the tally.

#### Survey Conclusions:

1. In response to the question "Do you feel a locally initiated effort should be continued to assure that the desires of the Lakeside area residents are incorporated in the (countywide) plan?", 313 respondents answered "yes", while only 4 "no".
2. Responses to the question "What areas are of the greatest concern to you in the future that should be addressed in the plan?", the following stand out of the list of 22 options listed:

|   | High          | Medium | Low |
|---|---------------|--------|-----|
| Highway corridors                               | 171           | 66     | 26  |
| Garbage collection<br>& solid waste             | 153           | 54     | 33  |
| Development code items--see following paragraph |               |        |     |
| Road maintenance                                | 161           | 69     | 24  |
| Schools   | 133           | 52     | 46  |
| Public utilities                                | 116           | 80     | 33  |
| Business appearance                             | 113           | 66     | 21  |
| Signs   | 112           | 58     | 56  |
| Recreation facility                             | 105           | 76     | 37  |
| Housing   | 105           | 76     | 37  |
| Public parks                                    | 104           | 72     | 48  |
| Other   | less than 100 |        |     |

3. Development code issues in the questionnaire were:

|                               |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Land use                      | Open space      |
| Waterfront/lakeshore          | Billboards      |
| Construction design standards |                 |
| Building heights              | Lot size limits |

This group received a strong priority indication of concerns with "High" or "Medium" ranking by a total of 1,548 responses, averaging 221 for each item (High range 133-214, average 164; medium range 26 to 68, average 57). This contrasted sharply to a total of only 268 "Low" priority responses (range 19 to 70, average 38).

Specific questions relating to development revealed the following responses:

- a. Clear preference that the lakeshore remain primarily single-family was indicated by 289 yes vs 35 no.
- b. Split opinion exists on specific types of development: Townhouses 139 yes vs 146 no; Marinas 189 vs 109; Motels/hotels 149 vs 134, Restaurants 211 vs 112; Other commercial 126 vs 117.
- c. There was a clear affirmative response for a height limitation on commercial development 298 yes vs 23 no. Fire-fighting limitations are one problem expressed by the VFD/QRU. (The steering committee also felt that emphasis should be placed to include appearance, shading of neighbors, and obstruction of view in order to more fully address problems created by excessive building heights. It has also been subsequently suggested that a graduated height restriction might be used, low at lakefront, progressively higher away from shoreline, and applied to both residential and commercial development.)

- d. 288 favored a density/minimum lot size on the lakeshore vs 36 no.
  - e. 247 vs 83 favored a minimum lot size for lands outside the Lakeside County Sewer District, with a majority favoring one acre.
  - f. Desirability of areas being set aside for multi-family development was split 148 to 148.
4. Some other expressed needs were:
- a. Public access to Flathead Lake, plus parks. Of the 40 possible elements suggest as possibly to be included in the Lakeside Plan, 34 responded to the need for public lake access, all others receiving 1-9 each. (It has subsequently been suggested that a small segment of State Highway property north of Lakeside Marina adjacent to the boat ramp might be negotiated for use as a public beach.)
  - b. Commercial site locations: On-highway favored by 126, off-highway on new surface streets by 140 vs 69 for the highway corridor outside the business district, plus 45 for anywhere in the planning area.
  - c. 298 favored the development of some community theme vs only 23 opposed.
  - d. 18 responses requested to "leave Lakeside as it is", and 5 requested to "allow development to happen by itself".
  - e. Indication for added "Business & Professional" categories were limited: Doctor 91, Pharmacy 51, Legal, Dental, Hardware, Gifts, Small business, and Supermarket all received less than 20.
  - f. Of note "To limit Lakeside growth" received only 4 votes.

**In Summary:** The principal needs expressed for planning correspond to the items of concern and need as expressed above. A "Development Code" based on the locally prepared "Neighborhood Plan", and divided into each of the four logical geographic sub-areas of Lakeside would provide relief to many of the concerns expressed in the questionnaire responses.

Existing zoning in the Conrad Point, Peaceful Bay and Caroline Point areas would be unaffected and easily incorporated in the Plan. Highway concerns, service concerns, lake access and parks, commercial space, and community theme areas lend themselves to an "Advisory Committee" format on an ongoing basis.

**D. FINAL COMMUNITY MEETING - NOVEMBER 8, 1994, LAKESIDE SCHOOL  
CONSIDERATION OF FINAL DRAFT DOCUMENT AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS.**

78 attendees

History of the development of the Lakeside Neighborhood Plan over the prior 9 months including the six prior community meetings, committee work, community survey , and preparation of the "Final Draft" document were reviewed by Steering Committee Chairman Dave Thornquist. Emphasis was placed on the comprehensiveness of the study, the inclusion of all public input, and the active indications of support from the community for the process. It was also made clear that the Plan document itself is not intended, nor in a form to propose solutions, but to identify and review perceived problems and define issues in various categories.

Tom Jentz led a general discussion of the Plan document for all the attendees, going over each section in sequence, and responding to questions.

Following this general discussion, the attendees were separated into seven groups, each with a facilitator for more detailed review of the Plan, and a rough draft of Recommendations. On completion, each facilitator highlighted the concerns from each group to all. The items brought forward were in some cases technical problems on the language of the draft documents, errors or omissions, inappropriate emphasis , and a very few new ideas for inclusion. These all have been corrected by editorial change in the final Plan and especially in the recommendations as finalized.

Of more major importance was a unanimous shift in the recommendation from the request for "Advisory Committee" status before the Commissioners, to the " Community Council" form of representation as now found in Lolo and Seely Lake, Missoula County. This was because of the desire for elected, rather than appointed membership, and also for the feeling that it would represent more "official" standing with County authorities. There was no indication for support of incorporation.

Additionally, there was general discussion favoring significant improvements for Ben Williams Park, and for an early and in-depth study of possible community uses for the Lakeside School, should its disposition by the School District make this feasible. John Briggs, representing YWAM, spoke to this organization's commitment to active involvement with Lakeside on a long-term basis: to the fact that they need additional facility space, and expressed a willingness to consider joint-use with the community if appropriate.

Finally, by an overwhelmingly majority of the entire audience , it was recommended to proceed with submission of the Lakeside Community Plan and its Recommendations to the Planning Board and Commissioners at the earliest possible date after the editorial corrections were complete to the satisfaction of the Steering Committee and interested public without a subsequent formal meeting or multiple reprinting of the Plan in final form.

### **III. NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **A. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

The Lakeside neighborhood is a long narrow area 2-4 miles wide and 7 miles long. For purposes of looking at current land development patterns, the Lakeside Neighborhood can be generally divided into four somewhat distinct but overlapping areas: The business district of Lakeside, the lakefront development, the Highway Corridor and the timbered foothills back from the lakefront. More sub-areas with particular characteristics may need to be considered.

#### **Lakeside**

Lakeside is an unincorporated community. It is a placename without real boundaries. It has long served as both a quiet resort and as a bedroom community for Kalispell and other parts of Flathead County because of its beautiful setting. Today, the boundaries would best be described as Political Hill on the South, the Northernaire Motel to the north with Flathead Lake on the East and the YWAM (Youth With A Mission) Base on the west.

No "Lakeside" townsite is recorded. However, "Chataqua" was platted in 1900. The original site surrounded the Red School House, now a residence, and most of the original streets are now abandoned except for Craven Street. Stoner Landing provided the nucleus for the present site, which was platted in 1908 as "Lacon" by Gordon H. Adams.

The "Lakeside" name was unofficially used in the 1920's until the town of Lakeside in Roosevelt County was abandoned and the name vacated. The residents of "Lacon" requested and received the name of Lakeside. The post office was established in 1946.

In past years, Lakeside hosted an Air Force radar base. The radar facility was placed to the west on top of Blacktail Mountain on Forest Service Land. This facility has been converted to other uses. The base itself was located on Blacktail Road on the western outskirts of Lakeside and contained a residential officers complex, dorms and administration buildings. This facility was sold in the late 1980's and is currently owned and operated by YWAM as a training facility for short term Christian missionary work.

The business heart of Lakeside exists as a strip along or just off US 93 South which includes a marina, motels and RV parks, lounges, casinos, post office, mini-storage, grocery, deli's, real estate offices, car wash, bank, restaurants, law and dental offices, video outlets, beauty and barber shops, electronics service, gift shops, gas stations/convenience stores, frame shop, auto repair, travel and insurance agencies, laundromat and several churches.

Other small businesses are mainly home-based and located throughout the planning area, generally without highway exposure except for seasonal fruit stands.

Despite no zoning in the business area, some covenants exist which limit use, water runoff, and building heights. Compliance is enforced for subdivision review, shoreline and Health Department regulations, Army Corps of Engineers, and State Electrical Code. Little limiting effect on development is evident.

The lakeshore area does contain two public boat launches with limited or no parking, the commercial marina mentioned above, and a motel all lying north of Adams Boulevard. The remainder of land south on Lakeside Boulevard is single family residential. A public boat dock owned and managed by Flathead County provides the only real public access to the Lake. This area is tremendously busy in summer months. The area is further congested by the lack of any off-street parking and the narrowness of Lakeside Boulevard which offers no on-street parking.

The remainder of the Lakeside area is almost entirely single-family in nature. The core of the community contains older housing surrounded on the north and south by new residential subdivisions.

**Issues:**

- Lack of room for additional commercial expansion as land along US 93 becomes developed.
- Lack of any internal road system or road paralleling US 93 to accommodate expanded commercial development or alternative access.
- Limited public lake access.
- Lack of adequate parking and facilities at the current public dock.
- Desire to create a commercial theme for future Lakeside development.

**Lakefront Development:**

The Lakeside neighborhood contains approximately 13 miles of Flathead Lake frontage. The entire developable frontage has been split into lots or tracts with the vast majority of these containing single-family residences. Because of demand for lakefront lots, marginal lots or tracts once considered unbuildable because of access or terrain problems are now being sold and developed. Additionally, lots with smaller or older homes are being re-developed with the

existing house replaced by a new structure. Lakeside Sewer serves lots from Conrad Point north to Mission View Terrace. Within this area there is only limited zoning (Caroline Point, Peaceful Bay and Conrad Point are zoned) and with the presence of public sewer, there is no real limit to density for the majority of the area. To date, along North Lakeside Boulevard otherwise unusable tracts of land have been converted into single-family lots and there has been a trend toward subdivision of existing lots into one or more smaller lots to accommodate additional housing, both of which tend to alter the fabric of the neighborhood.

**Issues:**

- Strong desire to maintain the primarily single-family nature of the lake front.
- Need to establish minimum lot sizes, building heights and setbacks along lakeshore to limit density. (All residences should be appropriately set back from the waterfront and neighbors to avoid blocking sunlight and adjoining views, to minimize manmade impacts, to preserve the natural aesthetics of the lake, and to meet sanitation requirements for water quality protection.)

**Highway Corridor:**

Highway 93 runs through the middle of the Lakeside Neighborhood. This highway connects the Lakeside area with the outside world and serves as the major transportation link. In contrast though, it also serves as an enticement to commercial strip development and indiscriminate placement of billboards, two issues that were identified in the neighborhood survey. At present, there are few billboards and not many commercial businesses outside of Lakeside proper along the highway corridor.

Some sentiment was expressed to re-explore the idea of a foothill by-pass highway route as had been proposed in the past, despite the obvious unlikely financial feasibility and unfavorable timing.

**Issues:**

- Survey indicated strong concerns about the highway corridor and a desire to restrict billboards.
- Possible reconsideration of highway by-pass for Lakeside.

**Timbered Foothills Back From Lake:**

This area encompasses the bulk of the Lakeside neighborhood. Development patterns include moderate to large tracts (1 - 20 acres in size). Development west of Highway 93 is generally on the larger tracts served by individual septic systems with the greatest density along established roads like Bierney Creek and Blacktail Mountain. Development on the east side of the highway is smaller tracts in size. Lakeside sewer services this area as far south as Peaceful Bay and Conrad Point with the remaining outlying areas utilizing private septic system.

Development is almost exclusively single-family housing. Many are view lots of the lake but some are timbered tracts in the foothills offering privacy and seclusion. Corporate timber lands (Plum Creek) account for approximately 3840 acres of this land and such areas are currently managed for timber production. Because such land is privately owned, it can not be assumed that these lands will remain in timber production indefinitely.

**Issues:**

- Lack of suitable road access, wild fire hazards and difficult terrain slows development potential west of US 93.
- Uncertainty of status of Plum Creek Corporate lands, whether they will remain in timber production, be traded out or possibly sold for development.

**B. LAKESIDE COMMUNITY WATER RESOURCES**

The Lakeside community gets its potable water from many sources. There are 10 or more public water systems, many private wells, and many of the lake front properties draw water from the lake. Each public water source has its problems and will, under the Clean Water Act, be required to correct or treat the water before using. With increased population and building of structures in close proximity, fire flows and fire hydrants are becoming increasingly desirable and necessary. The small size of building lots allows for intensive landscaping consuming large quantities of water for maintenance. To address these problems, the community needs to plan an area-wide distribution system with adequate storage tanks and properly sized mains. These can be constructed in increments as funding is available through bonding, water development grants and loans, and community block grants. The County will be instrumental in helping to create this district and in securing funding.

**C. LAKESIDE COUNTY SEWER DISTRICT**

The Lakeside County Sewer District began operation in August, 1987. Since that time it has been steadily expanded, and through an inter-local agreement with the Somers Sewer District will be treating waste water from Somers when that project is completed (Spring 1995).

The Sewer District is run on a fiscally sound basis. This year the District was able to retire approximately one-third (1/3) of its bonded indebtedness. This will result in lower interest payments per year.

Presently, approximately two-thirds of the treatment capacity has been allocated. Today there is about 60,000 gallons per day capacity available for future sewer hookups.

The Sewer Board intends to continue hookups for lakefront property as a priority in the use of excess capacity. This is in keeping with the original purpose of the formation of the District.

As the Lakeside area grows, the availability of sewer hookups will diminish. The Lakeside County Sewer Board is cognizant of this fact. It is taking steps right now to find how best to accommodate future expansion.

#### **D. SOLID WASTE/GREEN BOXES**

The future of the green boxes, which we all visit on a regular basis, is under review and their future is uncertain at best. Options to consider include:

1. Consolidated, manned, and fenced box sites with limited hours at a site remote from Lakeside.
2. Homeowner transport of solid waste to the County landfill.
3. Commercial pickup and hauling.
4. Creation of a separate solid waste district to serve Lakeside.

Concerns if the green boxes go are:

1. Added expenses to homeowners and/or inconvenience.
2. Will our roadsides, empty lots, fields and forests become cluttered with refuse?

An Advisory Committee is needed to represent the Lakeside community on these concerns. Considerable verbal expression of the need for local recycling depositories has been heard.

#### **E. SCHOOL DISTRICT**

In 1993-94 the Somers-Lakeside School District enrolled approximately 485 children in kindergarten through eighth grade. (For Grade 9-12 students travel by school bus to Kalispell.) There are two campuses: the South School in Lakeside is home to only the 1st and 2nd grades; the Somers facility, which has been nearly doubled in size for the 1994-95 school year, houses kindergarten and grades 3 through 8.

If the recent rate of enrollment increase continues, additional classes would be required within the next few years. But in the absence of demographic projections, the extent and timing of any expansion is unknown.

The Steering Committee has speculated on the consequences of closure and disposition of the Lakeside School as it might impact the community and what opportunities such an event might offer for alternative public use of all or a portion of the property. These might include but not be limited to: library, parking, surface road extension parallel to the highway, playground, community center (or performing arts facility relating to YWAM needs), or possible park swap with the Ben Williams site.

State-wide and County-wide the issue of consolidation of school districts is currently attracting serious attention and would, if implemented, surely have some as yet undetermined impact on the District.

In any event, the District's planning must include a decision on the future of the Lakeside campus. The buildings are old and in frequent need of repair. And it is surely more costly and less effective to maintain two campuses than one. Should the decision be made to abandon this site and locate all grades in Somers, it would be hoped that the School Board would communicate and coordinate with the community of Lakeside through this planning committee.

#### **F. QRU AND FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The Lakeside Quick Response Unit and the Somers Volunteer Fire Department provide emergency services to the Lakeside area. It was the feelings of these agencies that the only real impact to either department would be an increase in calls which both departments feel they could properly handle. The increase in motor traffic will be a negative factor in response time. There was an additional concern raised that too rapid growth might exceed available volunteer personnel and training capacities.

The agencies recommended that all roads both current and future be clearly signed, and easily accessible to emergency vehicles and that all addresses are clearly marked. Also that "tall" buildings be prohibited, as there is no ladder truck (3-story and 35' maximum). In the event that the community would grow to such proportions as Bigfork, it may be necessary for the QRU to become a transport agency, thus eliminating the volunteer status of the organization, and forcing it to run as a business with paid personnel, and likely would be in need of some governmental funding in addition to the current voluntary support. This would be particularly true of acquisition of expensive capital equipment for expansion and replacement.

#### **G. LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Present law enforcement is conducted by the Sheriff's Department and Highway Patrol. Both represent a thin presence in the Lakeside area, as in the rest of the County, due to limited manpower and vehicles. Fortunately, three Sheriff's officers live in the Lakeside area, and are able to respond under some circumstances when available in the vicinity. Otherwise, generally there are only a total of four deputies on patrol in the County. Given this information, the Sheriff's Department does not provide routine patrolling. Typically, manpower is only available to respond to emergencies and at best response times will be slow because of the travel times.

There is a reported increase in property crimes in the Lakeside area. Also highway safety is a concern due to speed and lack of signals, free roaming livestock, limited signage and crosswalks, caution lights and street lights. There is no indication from the Sheriff's Department or Highway Patrol of a likelihood of any increase in manpower, patrolling, etc. from the current situation in Lakeside in the near future. Appropriate studies of traffic, speed and other hazards, plus possible creation of a "Herd District" for livestock control may have to be undertaken.

## **H. ROADS AND HIGHWAYS**

At the neighborhood meeting with the State and County Road Departments and the Lakeside Planning Group, we were told that there are no improvements planned for the immediate future from either department.

It is of great interest to all of the Lakeside people to get the roads and illumination improved and to control the speed of the traffic through Lakeside. Our flashing amber light at Adams and Highway 93 seems to do absolutely no good at all. The possibility of a traffic light was discussed. We were informed that if Lakeside people wanted a traffic light there, then all costs would have to be raised locally. A traffic speed study was discussed and Highway Department personnel indicated that a speed study could be conducted, however there was a possibility that the study might conclude that the speed limit through Lakeside may actually be raised.

The possibility of left hand turn lanes was also discussed. Highway officials indicated that adequate right-of-way may not be available to install such left hand turns lanes.

One concern of many Lakeside residents is the amount of traffic on Highway 93 and the number of people crossing Highway 93 at the Adams Street crossing. A discussion was held on the possibility of improving and constructing other streets to the west of Highway 93 and the traffic would then be reduced as the people visited the off-highway businesses. It was also discussed that the present County roads are in great need of repairs and possibly need widening in some areas in order to maintain and to create safety for pedestrians. There are a number of County roads and streets that are continually full of pot holes and low areas where the roads have been severed for utility work and then not properly repaired. Finally, there was a lot of concern as to what could be done to Lakeside Boulevard South, around the public dock area to insure safety and what could be done about the parking problems in that area.

A committee appointed to perform such studies and possibilities would be a great help in the Lakeside area.

A final issue in relation to highways involves storm drainage, or the lack of such facilities along the Highway 93 right-of-way. As new development occurs along the right-of-way, the storm water runoff issue becomes more aggravated. The Highway Department officials generally indicated that a storm sewer was not being considered at this time, first because of the enormous expense to construct it and secondly because of the problem of disposing of the storm water once collected. The Highway Department indicated that a more appropriate method would be to address each property on a case by case basis emphasizing on-site retention and disposal. Unfortunately, this method does not offer any coordinated solutions for the problems that now exist today.

## **I. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION**

Limited local community organization exists in Lakeside: Lions Club, men's and women's clubs. These appear unlikely to become a voice in the public process of local government, though a supportive role through promotion and facilitation of communication is very likely.

In contrast, the recent re-activation of the Chamber of Commerce can be a strong force in many ways for the Lakeside community, especially facilitating and reinforcing the implementation of the Neighborhood Plan.

The constituted boards of the Fire, Water, Sewer, and School districts will be unaffected by the planning effort as they proceed with their appropriate activities.

Lakeside's rapid growth and other concerns that resulted in the planning effort represent a significant perceived need to develop a mechanism for expanded self-determination for this community. Of necessity, this needs to be some form of local organization responsive to community needs, be politically viable, and with the ability to influence decisions at higher governmental levels which impact Lakeside in some fashion.

Apparent options are:

1. Status quo
2. Planning Advisory Committee
3. Community Council
4. Incorporation

1. Status quo: This means no coordinated planning at the local level of roads, highways, land use, and various services to accommodate growth.

It does allow for individual and group input to the County planning process including public hearings, zoning petitions, and direct contact with the Commissioners, though this has usually been in a reactive manner. Most residents have not done this, and generally are unfamiliar with who to contact and how to be heard.

There is wide lack of confidence that County government will be adequately responsive to local concerns.

The result is attention to Lakeside only when some event or development occurs that is threatening to neighbors.

All considered, status quo is not a preferred option, and leaves Lakeside without much of a voice in its own destiny; in fact, occasionally at the short end of other County priorities.

2. Planning Advisory Committee: This would be appointed by the Commissioners to serve as a local voice in land use issues. It would be advisory only.

3. Community Council: This body would be elected locally, with or without a member appointed by the Commissioners.

It would also be advisory only, but would probably meet regularly in public session, have ongoing committees for study and recommendations, and be recognized at the County level as the voice of Lakeside, meeting with the Commissioners as necessary.

Lolo and Seely Lake in Missoula County have experience with this form of local influence in the planning process for their own communities.

Minimal expense and no tax increase would be anticipated. It would be easy to establish, and very likely to be favorably received at the County level. It may well provide some easy transition to eventual incorporation as this becomes desirable.

This or the prior option appear to be favored.

4. Incorporation: This is allowed as a "Town" under Montana Law (Local Gov't, Sec 7-2-4101 through 4107) requiring only 300 signatures within a defined geographic boundary, which results in a census by the County and a subsequent local election. If approved by the voters, one of several forms of Town Government is chosen, usually "Mayor/Council".

Once accomplished, the advantages are: local officials, taxing authority in several categories, and shifting of some portion of County taxes to the Town. An increase in total taxes may occur, and it may be hard to retain adequate unpaid council members. However, existing service districts can remain unaffected.

There are 10 communities of similar size to Lakeside in the State. Population range is 1500 to 1900. Tax revenue for '93 in these Towns ranged from \$93,000+ to \$230,000+, the major portion of which would have gone to the County in the absence of an incorporated Town. Lakeside also may be eligible to use the "Resort Tax" as with West Yellowstone and others.

It may be premature to expect any political viability of this option, nor an appropriate choice to consider. However, it could be the way to fix our own streets, improve our highway margins, develop our own strategies in land-use and avoid haphazard development.)

With any of the options, it seems apparent that an enhanced role for the recently reformed and reinvigorated Chamber of Commerce, and consideration of the development of an Economic Development Corporation similar to that in Bigfork would be very desirable.

#### **IV. NEIGHBOR PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A. Based on the information contained in the foregoing, that this document and these recommendations be adopted as the Lakeside Neighborhood Plan.
- B. That the Flathead County Master Plan include the Lakeside Neighborhood Plan as an addendum.
- C. That the Commissioners develop appropriate administrative procedures by formal resolution giving legal standing to a Lakeside Community Council as advisors to the Commission in matters relating to the Lakeside Neighborhood.
  - 1. The Community Council shall contain no less than 5 residents, elected with term limits.
  - 2. That this Council meet regularly in public forum; and that they appoint appropriate subcommittees to study issues of community concern, and make recommendations to the Council as a whole.
- D. Issues to be addressed by the Community Council or similar organization should include, but not be limited to, the following concerns expressed in public meetings and survey during the Neighborhood Plan development process:
  - 1. Park improvements to Ben Williams, and public access to Flathead Lake; new sites; plus parking problems & traffic congestion at existing locations. Seek assistance from Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the State Highway Department.
  - 2. Highway and surface street problems, safety, signs, sidewalks, illumination and signal lights and crosswalks; new off-highway commercial and professional street frontage; street signs and house numbers; potential impact of highway widening.
  - 3. Development of a Lakeside community theme with architectural committee and sign code. (Suggested "rustic" or "nautical" themes.)
  - 4. Coordination with all utility and service districts within Lakeside Neighborhood boundaries to accommodate orderly growth, with public education and support (water, sewer, solid waste, QRU, and fire). Work to retain green box sites locally with appropriate limitations and rules, segregation for recycling.
  - 5. Law enforcement liaison, support and education. (Suggestion has been made to establish a Neighborhood Watch program).
  - 6. Community organization development: enhance Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Corporation, business expansion, coordination with existing service clubs.

7. School District liaison, education and support; coordination on ultimate disposition of Lakeside School facility and site; student safety and extra curricular youth activities.
8. Investigate and establish a Herding District comparable to Horse District.
9. Investigate the possibility of obtaining foundation or government grants or donations to accomplish acquisition of suitable public lake access sites.
10. Investigate the feasibility of an executive size golf course.

E. That implementation of the Lakeside Neighborhood Plan be accomplished through the development and implementation of a Land Use Development Code that considers the following:

1. Recognition of the four logical areas for planning purposes: Lakefront, Highway Corridor, Existing Business Community, and Forested off-lake foothills. Additional sub-areas may need recognition.
2. Recognition of existing zoned areas: Conrad Point, Peaceful Bay, and Point Caroline.
3. Grandfather or acknowledge all existing land uses; and provide for present and future cottage industries, bed and breakfast establishments, home occupations, and other development that would not unnecessarily interfere with neighboring uses, sun exposure, or view. (Some workable definition of various types and levels of "commercial business" will need to be developed.)
4. Set density standards (not lot sizes) for the unique different sub-areas above, to include appropriate criteria for sewerred vs non-sewerred properties within those sub-areas. Review and modify current Flathead County Lake and Lakeshore Protection Regulations for the lakefront sub-area as necessary.
5. Set general height limitations and setbacks from property lines as appropriate to various sub-areas.
6. Development of appropriate sign ordinances and prohibition of billboards.