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DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

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THOMAS L. JUDGE, GOVERNOR

2701 PROSPECT

STATE OF MONTANA

April 21, 1980

HELENA, MONTANA 59601

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your information and review is a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the West Plaza Shopping Center in Glendive, Montana. This statement was prepared in accordance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act (Title 75, Chapter 1, MCA) and the rules and regulations pursuant to that Act (Title 60, Chapter 2, Part 2, ARM). This statement was transmitted to the Governor's Office and the Montana Environmental Quality Council on April 21, 1980.

The Montana Department of Highways will receive any written comments on this Impact Statement until May 22, 1980. All comments received by that date will be considered in the event a Final Statement is prepared.

You may address any questions regarding the Statement to Les R. Reichelt, Environmental Coordinator, Montana Department of Highways, 2701 Prospect Avenue, Helena, Montana 59601 (449-3156).

Sincerely,

Homer G. Wheeler
Homer G. Wheeler, P. E.
Assistant Administrator -
Engineering Division

33-HGW:mg

PLEASE RETURN

YOUR COMMENTS ARE IMPORTANT

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS
2701 PROSPECT AVE.
HELENA, MONTANA 59601

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MT 59601
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Building, Room 2, Helena, MT 59601
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Office, Helena, MT 59601
Rick Graetz, Box 894, Helena, MT 59601
Friends of the Earth, Attn: Ed Dobson, Box 882, Billings, MT 59103
Sierra Club, Upper Missouri Group, Attn: Jack Schmidt, Box 515,
Helena, MT 59601
The Wilderness Society, 4260 East Evans Avenue, Denver, CO 80222
Ed Musser, Dawson County Planner, Box 811, Glendive, MT 59330
Dawson County Planning Board, Box Nielsen, Chairman, P. O. Box 281,
Glendive, MT 59330
Mar-Mon Developers, 8000 S. Cole Road, Boise, Idaho 83709
Ranger-Review, 119 W. Bell St., Glendive, MT 59330
Montana-Dakota Utilities Co., L.R. Erikson, Division Manager, 113 West Towne,
Glendive, MT 59330
Glendive Area Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture, P.O. Box 930,
Glendive, MT 59330
Montana-Dakota Utilities Co., Robert E. Wood, Public Affairs, 400 North
Fourth Street, Bismark, North Dakota 58501
KXGN Radio and Television, 210 S. Douglas, Glendive, MT 59330
KGLE Radio, Glendive, MT 59330

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
LIST OF FIGURES	1
I. INTRODUCTION	2
II. PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT	2
III. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION	3
A. Location	3
B. Type of Development	6
C. Permits and Approvals Required	7
D. Natural Environment	8
E. Man-Made Environment	9
F. Social Environment	10
IV. PROBABLE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION	13
A. Natural Environment	13
1. Wetlands, Vegetation, and Wildlife	13
2. Floodplain	13
B. Man-Made Environment	14
1. Transportation	14
2. Utilities	17
3. Air Quality	17
4. Noise	17
5. Energy Use	18
6. Storm Drainage	18
C. Social Environment	18
1. Population	18
V. ECONOMICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT AND COSTS	19
A. Primary, Secondary, and Cumulative Impacts	19
B. Potential Growth Inducing or Inhibiting Impacts	20
C. Economic Benefits and Costs	20
D. Environmental Benefits and Costs	21
E. Short-term vs. Long-term Costs and Benefits	21
VI. ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS	22
Literature Cited	24

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Site Location	4
2. Site Development	5
3. Traffic Counts Near the Site	15

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
WEST PLAZA SHOPPING CENTER

I. INTRODUCTION

The developer of West Plaza has requested access to Bell Street and I-94 business loop, both of which are under the jurisdiction and maintenance of the Department of Highways.

Pursuant to Montana Environmental Policy Act, Section 69-6504(b)(3), Administrative Rules of Montana 16-2.2(2)-P2000 DP. SEQ. 18-2.2(2)-P210 ET. SEQ., the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared by the Montana Department of Highways (DOH) concerning a driveway approach permit pursuant to Department of Highways - Powers and Duties, Title 60, Chapter 2, Part 2, MCA.

II. PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The purpose of the draft environmental impact statement is to transmit information concerning proposed governmental action and alternatives to that action to public officials, project sponsors, and interested citizens. A primary function of the draft EIS is to facilitate the transmittal of information concerning environmental impacts which may have been discussed inadequately or erroneously in the draft EIS to the lead agency from other governmental agencies and interested citizens. This process also provides an opportunity for the reviewer to bring to the attention of the lead agency any issue of potential environmental concern which should be explored prior to the issuance of a final environment impact statement.

III. DESCRIPTION

A. LOCATION

Mar-Mon Developers from Boise, Idaho, propose to build a shopping center in Glendive Montana. The shopping center would be located at the southwest corner of the Bell Street and U.S. Highway 16 intersection (Fig. 1). The area involved in the development is 15.8 acres.⁵

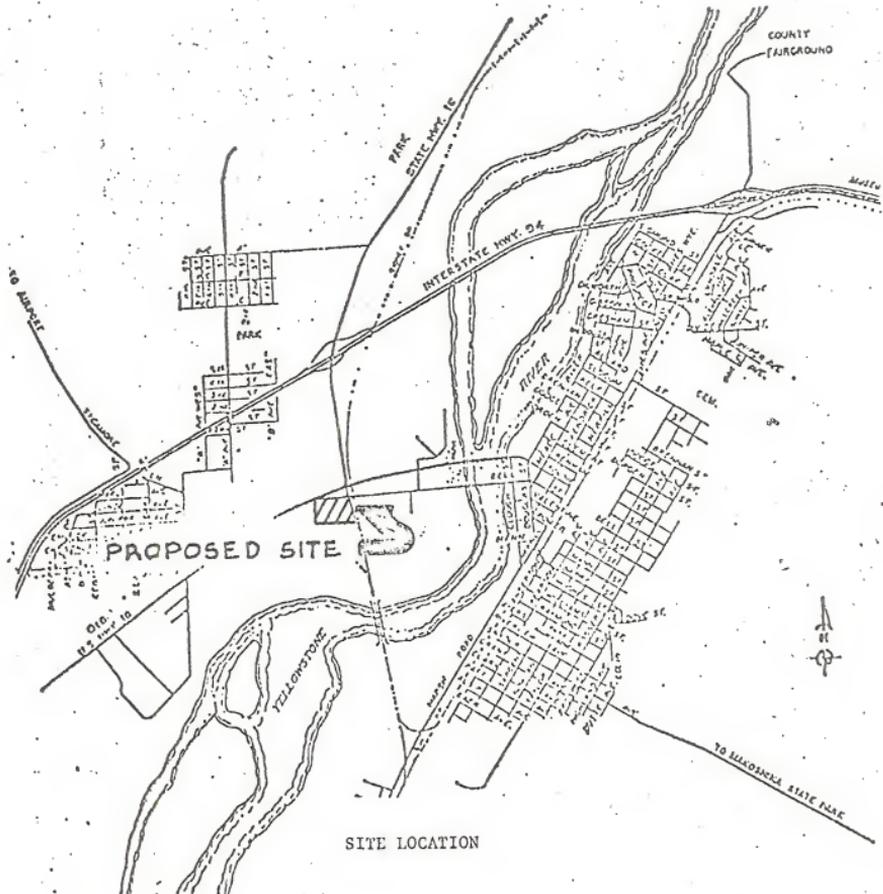
There are three proposed access points, all along the northern edge of the property. These approaches are shown on Figure 2.

The land use surrounding the site is primarily industrial and commercial. The property immediately east of shopping center is owned by the Burlington Northern Railroad (BNRR) There is a 200 foot right-of-way between the eastern property line of the shopping center and the railroad tracks. The property west of the site is presently occupied by a small drinking establishment. South of the shopping center is a BNRR branch line and beyond that is the Yellowstone River. Across Bell Street and the I-94 business loop there are light commercial and small manufacturing activities.

The site is in Dawson County and within the Glendive city limits. The area is zoned commercial and is presently an undeveloped parcel of land.

FIGURE 1

MAP OF GLENDAVE, MONTANA.



SITE LOCATION

B. TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposed shopping center will be called the West Plaza shopping center having about 121,555 square feet with parking for 928 cars (7.6 spaces/1000 square feet). During the first phase of construction, three separate buildings would be constructed totaling 112,425 square feet. Two other buildings, 4330 and 4800 square feet, may be built at a future date.

One large building, 40,800 square feet, will house a K-Mart Department Store. Another structure will have 68,025 square feet and will have three large stores and room for an additional 11-16 shops. One other small store, 3,600 square feet, will be constructed.

Based on national estimates, the center, when fully operational will provide 250 to 350 full and part time jobs.⁵

The proposed site is within the Glendive city limits; therefore, sewer and water service will be provided by the city. A sewer line runs through the property and is available to the developer and appears adequate to handle the needs of the development.⁷ A natural gas line is also located on the property and is available to the developer. Currently there is no central water system serving the property but plans are being made to bring the city water system onto the site. A 12 inch water main is currently located in the Ford car lot located east of the development site. The developer feels an 8 inch water line is all that is necessary for the shopping center, however, the water line will probably be extended as a 12 inch main.

The city sewer system is already on site with a 12 inch line running through the northwest corner of site. The Glendive area has two public sewage disposal systems; the city system and a special district in West Glendive. The city system is composed of a collection system with a 78 acre, three cell sewage lagoon. There are three small and one large lift stations. It is estimated that the present lagoon will serve a population of 7800 persons.²

The proposed mall would be served by the West Glendive sewage lagoon. The original lagoon was built in 1959, it was 23 acres. In 1967 the lagoon was enlarged to 31 acres and is situated on a 43 acre site. It has a capacity for processing the waste of approximately 3100 persons.² The sewer treatment plant is currently operating at capacity. The City of Glendive has indicated that planned growth should not be deterred because of the sewer treatment plant capacity problems. Currently a study is being done to determine what to do about the sewer treatment situation.⁷

Law enforcement services and fire protection will be provided by the Glendive City Policy and the Glendive Fire Department. The mall will be heated with natural gas and electricity supplied by Montana Dakota Utilities. Solid waste disposal will be provided by a private contractor.

C. PERMITS AND APPROVALS REQUIRED

Development of the West Plaza Shopping Center will require the following permits and approvals:

1. Department of Highways (DOH)

The mall will require driveway approach permits from the Department of Highways. A permit application for 3 access points has been submitted by the project developers. The DOH Maintenance Division will be responsible for the issuance of the driveway approach permits.

2. Department of Health and Environmental Sciences (DHES)

The DHES will have review responsibilities for the storm water runoff and a general review responsibility for the adequacy of water services provided.

3. Local and County Governments

The City Building Department must issue a building permit and plumbing permit. The city will also inspect the mall construction to ensure compliance with various building codes.

D. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The shopping center is to be located on the north side of the Yellowstone River just south of the I-94 business loop. The soils on the site are of the Trembles - Havrelon Association. These are level to undulating, deep, fine sandy loams and silt loams underlain by sandy loam and silt loam substrata, on low terraces and floodplains. No known fault zones pass through the site.

Vegetation consists of grasslands that are annually mowed and bailed for livestock consumption. Many large cottonwood trees line the east side of shopping center site.

The Yellowstone River passes approximately 900 feet south of the site. The river provides a warm water fisheries and other forms of recreation for the people of Glendive and the surrounding area.

No unique or endangered animal species are known to inhabit the site. Most wildlife found in the area consists of game birds, song birds, raptors, waterfowl, white-tailed deer, skunks, and possibly raccoons. The climate of Glendive is influenced by continental weather patterns. Average annual temperature is 48.3° F and average annual precipitation is 14.03 inches. Prevailing winds are west-northwesterly.⁴

E. MAN-MADE ENVIRONMENT

The site is surrounded by primarily commercial development and some residential development. Casitas del Rio is a mobile home park located east of the site but is separated from the shopping center by the Sidney branch of the Burlington Northern Railroad. The Circle branch of the BNRR and one residence lies south of the development between the proposed mall site and the Yellowstone River.

The I-94 business loop is a principal arterial. It is the major east/west transportation route in the area. Bell Street is a minor arterial also servicing the east/west transportation route.

F. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Glendive, the "Gate City" of Montana, lies thirty miles from the State's eastern border.²

In the 1800's there was considerable activity in the area. For the most part the early white men were explorers, adventurers, trappers, and traders.²

In anticipation of the arrival of the railroad, a town was built south of Glendive Creek, so named in 1856 by Sir George Gore, but the actual railroad construction did not conform to early plans and curved south to the present city site. The early town was deserted to move to the platted town site established by the Yellowstone Land and Colonization Company. That company was formed by Major Merrill, Henry Douglas, J.W. Raymond, J.W. Kendrick and others. The new town was Glendive.²

The first train reached Glendive on July 5, 1881. Glendive was a division point for the railroad. The year before there were 180 persons and by the arrival of the train there were 1200 - 1500 residents.²

An irrigation project started in 1904 was nearly complete in 1910. It provided irrigation for some 66,000 acres in Montana and North Dakota. Dawson County's second venture was in the 1930's. The combination of irrigation and improved dryland farming techniques provides for a continuing growth trend. All of this growth was stimulated by various federal land programs, railroad land sales and promotion, and our country's eastern population desire to find a better life.²

After World War II, Glendive moved rapidly ahead. In 1946, Montana-Dakota Utilities Companies established a new production and transmission division for all of its natural gas properties and made Glendive its headquarters. The decade of the 1940's brought a 16 percent increase in population.²

The 1950's were ignited by the discovery of oil. The boom that accompanied this discovery caused housing shortages, brought 53 new businesses into the city in three years, and school enrollments made dramatic increases. It was during this era that development jumped the Yellowstone River and West Glendive got its start.²

As the community moved into the 1960's, both new and old issues came to the forefront. The Glendive Community Hospital was founded by a group of local citizens in 1964. During this same period further improvements were made to the high school. Dawson College moved from the high school into its own campus which is located south of town.²

Energy service to the area is provided by Montana - Dakota utilities. Both electricity and natural gas are available at the site. Mountain Bell provides telephone service to the area.

The town of Glendive is located in the center of the Williston Oil Basin. Also Glendive is the focal point for the distribution of electric power in eastern Montana and western North Dakota. The Montana Dakota Utilities Company power plant is interconnected with eight major company plants and with the Bureau of Reclamation electric transmission system.³

Air quality in the area is good. The winds keep the air mixed and topography discourages inversions from developing.

The noise levels are quite low. Noise levels are higher near the I-94 business loop.

There are no man-made hazards obvious on the site.

Recreation opportunities in the area are varied. Sightseeing, boating, and fishing are provided by the Yellowstone and Redwater Rivers. The plains and prairies offer hunting for big game animals, upland game birds, and waterfowl (in the ponds and rivers).

Makoshika State Park offers a panoramic view of the badlands where the land formations offer a strange and unique scenery for the visitor. Agate and fossil hunters find Makoshika State Park and the Yellowstone River ideal locations.

The estimated population of the Glendive area is approximately 10,000. By 1990 the population of Dawson County is expected to reach somewhere around 12,600 people.³

Public services such as fire and police protection are provided by the city. These two agencies were contacted and both indicated there would be no problem with providing service to the proposed mall.

There are two baseball fields located on the proposed mall site; however, there are plans to replace these by constructing additional baseball fields in other areas of the city.

IV. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

A. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Wetlands, Vegetation, and Wildlife

The site of the proposed project does not contain wetlands. Vegetation on-site is predominantly grasses. Several large cottonwood trees line the east edge of the site and many of these trees will probably be removed during construction. The only wildlife that regularly inhabit the site are song birds and small mammals. These species will be displaced once construction of the new mall begins. When the facility a complete and new landscape vegetation provided, some of the birds and small mammals may return but most will have been eliminated or relocated to less developed habits.

2. Floodplain

The site for the proposed mall lies below the 100 year flood plain. The site is protected on the south and east by the railroad grade; however, the floodplain is 5 feet above the top of the railroad grade. This portion of the Yellowstone River is prone to ice jams and subsequent flooding is more severe than run-off caused floods.

The flood plain designation is currently being questioned by various parties. The developers do not foresee any problems with the flood plain designation and feels confident the railroad grades would protect the site from any flooding.

B. MAN-MADE ENVIRONMENT

1. Transportation

National shopping center studies have indicated that shopping centers generate traffic at a rate of between 40-55 vehicle trips per 1000 square feet per day. The developers have used 18 trips per 1000 square feet per day. Considering that Glendive and the surrounding area is not as populated as most areas that contain shopping centers, a trip generation rate somewhere between 18 and 40 trips per 1000 square feet per day is probably realistic. This would put the trips generated at approximately 3,402 vehicle trips per day that would be generated by the shopping center.

The latest traffic averages are as follows: Montana Highway #16 between I-94 business loop to the Interstate exchange, 4,690 vehicles per day average for 1979 and 4,260 per day average for 1978. I-94 business loop east of the shopping center site 9,240 vehicles per day average for 1979 and 8,380 vehicles per day average for 1978. I-94 business loop west of the site 8,530 vehicles per day average for 1979 and 8,420 vehicles per day average for 1978⁵ (Figure 3). Most of the traffic generated by the mall would use the I-94 business loop west since this highway comes from the largest area of Glendive. The other two routes would also see increased use.

The I-94 business loop, a four-lane highway, provides a level of service such that the additional traffic is not anticipated to create traffic problems once traffic is safely on or off the four-lane. However the increased turning movements must be safely accommodated as well as the queuing, accelerating, and decelerating movements.

There is one railroad crossing on the I-94 business loop and Bell Street. One round trip per day to the Sidney area is made on this railroad line.

Three approaches are proposed into the mall site. The middle and east approaches may have problems if they are approved as they are now designed. The middle approach leaves very little room for traffic waiting to get onto the I-94 business loop. The eastern approach has a problem with visibility. Automobiles approaching from the east on Bell Street can not be seen until they are at the railroad crossing which is 90 to 100 feet east of the approach. The Bell Street bridge is quite narrow (20' curb to curb) and will have problems if traffic increases much more than existing traffic (approx. 2000 ADT). The height clearance of 15'6" is adequate for normal traffic. Most of the problems with the approaches and bridge may be eliminated if Bell Street were terminated at the west side of Ford Street. This is the street that goes by the Ford dealership. Significant changes in Bell Street should be coordinated with officials of the local units of government.

A major intersection is likely to develop at the junction of the business loop and Route 16 requiring signalization at some future time.

Revisions and improvements for traffic access into and out of the shopping center will be resolved before the Department of Highways issues the driveway approach permit. The permit will contain the necessary conditions to handle traffic, including payment for improvements or revisions due to the proposed development.

2. Utilities

The site is currently supplied with electricity, telephone, natural gas, and sewer. Since the site is within the city limits of Glendive, the sewer and water will be provided by the city. A sewer hookup approval was granted the developer on February 5, 1980.

3. Air Quality

Air quality in the Glendive area is considered quite good. There are no point sources of pollution and the traffic is not heavy enough to be a pollution problem. Air quality in the vicinity of the mall may be slightly worse than in surrounding areas due to the increased traffic; however, the impact on air quality will be insignificant.

4. Noise

The major noise generators that affect the Glendive area include automobile traffic, railroad traffic, and residential mechanical equipment. At the proposed mall site, automobile and truck traffic on the I-94 business loop and railroad traffic represents the major noise sources.

The construction activities will produce the most significant noise levels associated with the proposed project. However, this noise source will cease when construction is completed.

Noise generated by the proposed project will unavoidably intrude upon existing ambient noise levels. The current ambient noise levels in the immediate area of the site will increase slightly with an increase in traffic volumes to and from the site. There are no critical receptors in the area (e.g. hospitals).

5. Energy Use

During construction of the project an indeterminate amount of electrical energy and fuel will be consumed. The operation of the completed facility will also involve two kinds of energy consumption. Direct consumption will result from the use of electricity for power, lighting and air conditioning, and the use of natural gas for heating the buildings.

The vehicular trips generated by the mall's customers and employees will consume an undeterminable amount of energy in the form of fossil fuels.

6. Storm Drainage

The surface runoff water will be treated to separate oils and grease and be disposed of in a manner that will meet the requirements and approvals of the City of Glendive. The drainage of the runoff water will not adversely affect any existing drainage course or any downstream property.⁵

C. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Population

The estimated present population of Glendive and the outlying areas within 30 miles is 11,388.⁴ Population growth over the next twenty years will occur in Glendive and its environs. Population is expected to decline in the small towns and communities in the area.¹

There will be some impact caused by the development. Based on national estimates the center will employ 250 to 350 people. It should be assumed that most of the new jobs created will come from the existing labor

force in the area. The basis for this assumption is, the nature of retail sales employment does not require technically or highly trained personnel and will tap the "second family job" market.

A development analysis conducted by the developer indicated the shopping center will generate approximately \$60,000 a year in property tax.⁶ There will be some additional costs to the city in the form of police and fire mention levels of service protection. Construction of the mall will not decrease the level of fire and police protection currently being provided to the city.

The development will require the services of various construction trades from outside the Glendive area which will be an economic benefit to the community.

A local survey conducted by the Dawson County High School Senior Distributive Education Class indicated that 36% of the people in Glendive shop in other towns and cities. The new shopping center will provide the people of Glendive with a greater selection of goods and services.⁶

V. ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS AND COSTS

A. Primary, Secondary and Cumulative Impacts

1. Primary - The construction of the West Plaza Shopping Center will bring an immediate increase the shopping opportunities in Glendive. Also many new jobs will be available to the residence.

2. Secondary - Secondary impacts which will come from the development will be the increase in competition among businesses which may result in lower

prices for consumers. The new jobs will provide additional income that can be spent in Glendive which will benefit the entire business sector.

3. Cumulative - The cumulative effect of the shopping center development will be the increase in traffic along each street leading to the shopping center. The new shopping center, as mentioned before, will be a source of employment and provide a potential for population growth. To what extent this population growth will be is difficult to accurately assess. It is felt the population gain will be insignificant.

The development will provide some degree of improvement to valuation of the property and thereby increase the tax base.

B. Potential Growth Inducing or Inhibiting Impacts

The proposed West Plaza Shopping Center can be viewed as growth inducing if new businesses are brought into the area in addition to the businesses already in Glendive. If these businesses come from other areas of Glendive, the development can be considered growth inhibiting.

C. Economic Benefits and Costs

1. Benefits

- (a) An increase in tax revenue for Glendive
- (b) For consumers, a greater selection of goods and services
- (c) Increased job opportunities during and after construction of the proposed shopping center

(d) Decrease the transportation and lodging costs incurred by shoppers traveling to distance cities to do their shopping

2. Costs

(a) There may be some negative effects on the existing businesses in Glendive if they do not meet the competition of the new businesses in the shopping center.

D. Environmental Benefits and Costs

1. Costs - There will be some increase in noise and air pollution because of the increase of traffic in the area. This impact should be insignificant.
2. Benefits - Unknown

E. Short-Term vs. Long-Term Costs and Benefits

1. Short-Term Costs and Benefits

Benefits - The work generated by the construction will benefit local building materials supplies, contractors and laborers.

Costs - During construction there may be an increase in noise and air pollution. Even though these conditions will never be like they were before construction, they will be less after construction is finished.

2. Long-Term Costs and Benefits

Benefits - The proposed development will increase the tax revenue and jobs available in Glendive while providing consumers with a

greater selection of goods and services. The downtown area may become upgraded if money is spent on remodeling, advertising, etc. in order to successfully compete with the proposed shopping center. Costs - The shopping center development could adversely impact similar businesses in Glendive if the established businesses do not adjust to the new competition.

VI. ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

The Department of Highways could do one of the following - - - Deny the road approach application - - - Approve the road approach application as proposed - - - Approve the road approach application with conditions.

1. The Department of Highways could chose to deny the road approach application.

The Department of Highways has not purchased access rights and does not at this time contemplate doing so, therefore, denial of the road approach application could have a number of possible consequences. Some of the main consequences are as follows:

- a. The developer would not build.
- b. The developer would build but would seek access through adjacent property. If successful, this action could result in heavy concentrations of traffic at undesigned and unplanned locations (assuming people shop as the developers had planned)

which could adversely impact the I-94 business loop and/or Bell Street, as well as the neighbors property and business.

The costs to cure possible problems arising from these actions would fall, to a large extent, on the public rather than the developer.

- c. The developer, lacking access through adjacent land, could initiate legal action against the Department of Highways either to force access as he desires or claim an inverse taking of a property right by a public agency without just compensation. The Department of Highways would, as in lb above, lose considerable control over the actions of the developer resulting in more costs to the public and less desirable access arrangements.
2. The Department of Highways could chose to accept the application unconditionally as presented.

This action could act to deny the Department of Highways the right to review, to modify, and/or inspect any of the accesses and their probable influence on traffic flow or safety related to I-94 business loop, Bell Street and the approaches as well as other streets in the area.

If changes were needed after completion of the shopping center or if traffic control devices were required in the future that could have been foreseen now, the costs and adverse impacts would quite likely

become a public expense.

3. The Department of Highways could chose to accept the application on a conditional basis.

This action would allow a through review by the Department of Highways and provide the option to require the necessary changes and/or to include the necessary traffic control devices and design needs that may have inadvertently been overlooked as in item 2 above.

Costs for any of the improvements that were truly caused by the development or developers actions could then be paid for the developer and be constructed in an appropriate manner either under the supervision of the Highway Department or by the developer with department approval all as a condition of the permit for access.

Alternative action 3 is hereby recommended.

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