

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Project Name:	Auction of Warm Springs Store parcel at the Montana State Hospital
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer 2011
Proponent:	Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)
Location:	4.6 +/- acre parcel in the SW1/4SW1/4 Section 18, Township 5 North, Range 9 West. The parcel is west of the Interstate 90 frontage road, east of the railroad right-of-way, and north of the entrance road to the Montana State Hospital.
County:	Anaconda-Deer Lodge

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

DPHHS proposes to sell at auction an approx. 4.6 acre parcel that is currently the site of the Warm Springs Store, along with a water line easement across MSH property for a water distribution line providing service to the subject property. The water service has been in place for many years.

DPHHS proposes to reserve a sewer line easement across the sale parcel for the existing and potential future sewer lines that cross the property from the State Hospital to the sewage lagoons on the east side of the Interstate.

The store owner currently leases the parcel from the State. The sale would proceed under authority of 77-2-301, 302 & 321, MCA.

The proposed action was requested by the current lessee of the subject property, who operates a bar and convenience store on the site. The lessee proposes (should he successfully purchase the site) to expand his commercial operations by building a 10-20 unit motel adjacent to the existing operations.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

DPHHS will give notice of the availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment and conduct a 30-day public comment period.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

Development of the parcel will be regulated by applicable federal, state and local regulations.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

1. Action: DPHHS will sell the parcel at public auction.
2. No Action: DPHHS retains the site of the proposed property.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Soils are composed primarily of silty clay loam. The landform comprises stream terraces and outwash plains, with slopes of 0 to 4 percent. No compactable or unstable soils are known to exist on the subject property.

Soil conditions will likely not impair use of the subject property for commercial building construction. The proposed sale of the subject property and water line easement will not affect soil quality or any unusual geologic features.

The proposed property is not in a designated flood way or flood plain.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

The proposed property is on the MSH water and sewer service. There are no surface or groundwater rights or resources associated with the proposed property. The water line is an end distribution line for a water system developed by the State for the Warm Springs facility. The water is delivered from the City Of Anaconda water system via a main trunk line. The immediate water line serving the proposed property also serves some minor buildings used in conjunction with the State Hospital. This line is old and is in need of replacement. The State has been in extended negotiations with the Burlington Santa Fe Railway concerning permission to replace the line where it underlies the railroad bed.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

The sale of the proposed property will not result in any effect to air quality.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

A Natural Heritage Program query did not identify the presence of any rare plants in the Township occupied by the subject property. (The Natural Heritage Program report is available upon request from DNRC's Trust Land Management Office.)

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The proposed property is not considered to have any significant habitat value for wildlife, birds, or fish species. The property is developed and has been operating as a store and bar for many years.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The proposed property is an intermontane upland, mesic site. Mixed grasses and sagebrush predominate. The parcel has been developed for many years, so existing native species are disturbed or have been replaced by exotic species.

A Natural Heritage Program query identified eight animal species of concern that occur in the Township occupied by the subject property. (The Natural Heritage Program report is available upon request from DNRC's Trust Land Management Office.) However, these species are not believed to occur at the subject property, and the property is not considered to have any value as habitat for such species.

Two plant species of concern are identified in the Township by the Natural Heritage Program. These are the Annual Indian Paintbrush (*Castilleja exilis*) and the Mealy Primrose (*Primula incana*). Both species occur in wetland and riparian areas and would not likely be found on the subject property.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontologic resources.

It is unknown if Antiquities (as defined by the State Antiquities Act) are present on the subject property. DPHHS has contacted the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). At SHPO's request, DPHHS will contact the SHPO immediately for a site investigation should DPHHS discover cultural materials at any time during the sale process.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The proposed property is not of aesthetic or scenic value. The property proposed for sale has a store/bar parking lot and several dilapidated buildings including an abandoned mobile home. The sale will make the parcel available for redevelopment which could lead to a potential increase in the intensity of commercial use on the site. Sale and redevelopment would likely lead to a positive visual improvement of the parcel.

Redevelopment could lead to an increase in traffic and noise. The amount of potential change is unknown.

Development of the property will be regulated by applicable federal, state and local regulations.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

Demands on land, water, air and energy will not be impacted by the sale of the parcel. The sale could lead to additional development on the parcel that in turn would require additional water and energy usage. Existing utility services may sufficient to meet additional demand. The cost of water and sewer system improvements to meet the service demand of any additional development on the parcel will be the responsibility of the property owner. Water and sewer system improvements, as well as development in general, will be regulated by applicable federal, state and local regulations.

The sale and potential resultant development of the parcel would affect the neighboring Montana State Hospital. Expected development on the site is likely to have a net positive impact on the Hospital's operations and on ability of clients and client's families to obtain accommodations and other services close to the Hospital.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

None.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

The sale of this parcel will not pose a threat to human health and safety. Development of the property will be regulated by applicable federal, state and local health and safety agencies having various authorities to protect human health and safety.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The sale of this parcel could result in additional commercial activity on the site.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The sale of the parcel will have minimal impact on the quality or distribution of employment.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

The ~~proposed~~ sale of the parcel could result in an increase to the local tax base and tax revenues if it is sold to an entity that is not tax exempt. Sale to another tax exempt entity would result in no change to the local tax base or tax revenues.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

The proposed sale of the parcel may result in additional development on the parcel that could lead to additional traffic. Existing roads are sufficient to manage any likely increase to traffic. No additional governmental services should be needed.

The Department Of Public Health & Human Services has no need to retain this commercially developed parcel for its own purposes and in light of the Department's legislated responsibilities does not desire to continue the commitment of administrative and other resources to the management of this commercial development as an aspect of the Warm Springs property for the State Hospital.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

The proposed property would be subject to Anaconda-Deer Lodge County and State regulations concerning water and sewer systems and property development. The county's regulations do not affect the sale of the parcel, but may directly affect its use and further development.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

This parcel is not located near a wilderness or recreational area, so the sale of this parcel will have no effect on recreational and wilderness activities.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

It is not expected that the proposed sale of the subject property would affect population distribution or density, or require additional housing since the increased work force is readily available among residents of the nearby communities.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

The sale of this parcel will have no effect on the social structures or mores.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The sale of this parcel will have no effect on any unique cultural qualities or human diversity in the area.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

Sale of the parcel would be at public auction. Minimum bid would be set by the State Board of Land Commissioners in consideration of the appraised value of the property.

The Department Of Public Health & Human Services has no need to retain this commercially developed parcel for its own purposes and in light of the Department's legislated responsibilities does not desire to continue the commitment of administrative and other resources to the management of this commercial development as an aspect of the Warm Springs property for the State Hospital.

Sale of the parcel and the potential development that would occur once the property is privately owned, may lead to additional development interest in the Warm Springs area. The amount of developable land is extremely limited however, and would result in upward pressure on the value of the remaining state land along the frontage road adjacent to the subject property. The results may be long-term positive effects to the local economy and to DPHHS's income from its property in Warm Springs though infrastructure impacts may have to be addressed.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Ethan Stapp	Date: April 5, 2011
	Title: Planner, DNRC Real Estate Mgmt Bureau	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative No. 1 – Action: Dept of Public Health and Human Services will sell the subject property at public auction under provisions of 77-2-302 and 77-2-321, MCA.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

Not Applicable

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name:
	Title:
Signature:	Date: