

Conifer/285 Corridor Area Plan

Hazards Chapter – Pre-draft

Mitigation of hazards in the Conifer/285 Corridor mountain community is critical to the protection of life and property. Wildfire awareness and mitigation efforts are imperative. Protection of life and property from hazards needs to be considered in examining development locations. In addition to the possible loss of life or property, the failure to recognize hazards can have environmental consequences.

The Hazards policies concern risks to human life, both for residents and for emergency personnel. Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Department and the Board of County Commissioners should stringently enforce current safety recommendations for all proposed development.

Floodplain Policies

1. Small impoundments under 10 feet, not regulated for safety by the State Division of Water Resources, should be examined by the County and/or the State to determine if a potential flood hazard exists.

2. A community floodplain hazard mitigation and alternatives study should be done for existing uses in the floodplain to find reasonable ways to reduce the hazard area. The following issues should be addressed in the study:
 - a. Human safety, including an early-warning system and emergency planning;
 - b. Land use options, including open space park or pasture;
 - c. Financial options, public and private;
 - d. Property value; and
 - e. Community and county responsibilities including the health and safety of residents.

Wildfire Hazard Policies

The major portion of land in the Conifer/285 Corridor Area Community Plan area is in severe or moderate wildfire hazard areas. Past fire control efforts, lack of grazing and forest management have resulted in dense, even-aged, closed crown forest conditions, increasingly susceptible to disease and insect attack, wind throw, and large, stand-replacing fires. It is a question of when, not if, a *wildfire* will strike any particular area.

Several forest fuel types warrant special attention. These fuel types, both live and dead, present serious problems for fire protection on any slope. Such fuels include, but are not limited to, scrub oak, spruce, fir, Lodgepole pine, and Ponderosa pine.

There are severe limitations on fire protection in rural areas. Most firefighters are volunteer and not present at the fire stations, response time may be quite long, water and equipment are limited, access may be difficult or impossible. Not every home can be defended, often for

some or all of the following reasons:

- a. Volunteer fire protection limitations;
- b. Difficult and impossible topography;
- c. Lack of defensible space;
- d. Substandard and limited access roads;
- e. Limited water supply; and/or
- f. Poor forest health.

1. There are five fire districts that provide service to this area, the Inter-Canyon Fire Protection District, the Elk Creek Fire Protection District, the North Fork Fire Protection District, the Indian Hills Fire Protection District and the West Metro Fire Protection District. Each of these districts has created a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). These Plans are a valuable resource for mitigation techniques for specific neighborhoods and specific roads. These Plans should be reviewed for mitigation strategies that can be implemented when new development is proposed. Some of the strategies especially applicable to rezonings and special uses are:

- a. Thinning of vegetation along access roads.
- b. Completing Shaded Fuelbreaks along primary evacuation routes, main roads, and secondary evacuation routes throughout the Plan Area.
- c. Forest thinning
- d. Construction of cisterns and/or emergency water supplies.
- e. Evaluation of secondary evacuation or emergency access routes. Options for completing these connections should be considered when development proposals occur near these road segments. Substandard road templates should be considered when providing emergency access.
- f. Designation of helicopter dip sites.
- g. Designation of community safety zones.

Specific locations for each of these mitigation strategies are called out in the CWPP's.

2. Design and construct homes in a fire safe manner, using appropriate construction materials and design methods. Fire-resistant construction materials are recommended, i.e., stucco, rock, brick, metal, tile or concrete roof, etc.

Radiation Policies

There is concern about health-endangering amounts of radiation in ground water and soil, which results from natural radioactive deposits and other sources, e.g., mine tailings.

1. Water used for human consumption should not exceed safe levels of radioactive isotopes. The County should develop a program to encourage owners of private wells to conduct tests and apply remediation measures to achieve the same standards as public water supplies.

2. If an air test shows presence of radon, mitigation measures should be taken. Following this, well tests for measurement of radioactive isotopes should be conducted to determine if

mitigation is required.

3. Because of the high risk for the existence of radon gas, all new construction should incorporate passive design to prevent radon infiltration into occupied areas and include provision for active mitigation when testing indicates a need. These designs should meet federal health standards and state specifications for radon gas.

4. The above information should be publicized so that the public can be made aware of these hazards.