

Lawson Hills and The Villages Master Plan Development Environmental Impact Statements

Project Update – Fall 2008

The City of Black Diamond has determined that YarrowBay’s proposed Master Plan Developments (MPD) of Lawson Hills and The Villages will have sufficient impact to the natural and built environments to warrant preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for each development. The EISs are being prepared through the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) guidelines and procedures.

The Process

The City has retained Parametrix, a respected environmental and engineering firm headquartered in Sumner, to conduct the SEPA process and to prepare the EIS documents.

The first official activity was a Scoping Meeting. The meeting took place at Black Diamond Elementary School on May 28, 2008. The primary purpose of the scoping process is to identify pertinent issues for analysis in the EIS. More than 40 interested citizens attended the meeting and provided written and verbal comments. Copies of scoping comments are posted to the City’s web site.

Parametrix is currently reviewing the technical data prepared by YarrowBay and their consultants. These reports identify potential impacts to the ecosystems and community resources of Black Diamond, and will be used in development of the Environmental Impact Statements.

In some areas of both the natural and built environments, additional field work and analysis is recommended by Parametrix. This will ensure that all potential impacts are adequately identified and addressed in the EIS.

Important Dates

- May 28, 2008 – Public Scoping Meeting
 - Winter 2008 – Lawson Hills DEIS anticipated
 - Spring 2009 – The Village DEIS anticipated
-

What did we hear?

Primary issues of concern from the public and other local and state agencies centered on transportation, schools, and the natural environment.



The Alternatives

One key element of the EIS process is to identify the Alternatives for discussion within the documents. The City has developed three alternatives for consideration in each EIS:

Alternative 1 – No Action

This alternative explores what could be developed on the proposed MPD sites under current zoning, but without an actual Master Plan Development agreement.

Alternative 2 – Proposed MPD

This alternative reflects what is currently proposed by the YarrowBay Group (see sidebars). The alternative includes a 50% open space requirement and a “revenue neutral” requirement (no adverse impacts on City services) as outlined in the City’s master plan development ordinance.

Alternative 3 – Mitigated MPD

The third alternative will be drafted during the EIS process, and will reflect potential mitigation to reduce the impacts of Alternative 2. This alternative would still be considered an MPD, and as such would also have the 50% open space requirement as well as the requirement to be “revenue neutral” for City services

Outreach and Involvement

There will be several opportunities for the public to be engaged in the development of the EIS documents, including those called for as part of the SEPA process, as well as other informal updates and information gathering. Please refer to the draft public outreach plan for the YarrowBay EISs on the Web site. The plan is subject to change.

The next meeting is planned for Fall 2008, with the purpose of presenting the EIS alternatives and the preliminary impacts that have been identified. Preliminary mitigation measures will also be presented for comment. No hearing is planned as part of this informal open house. Rather, this will be a chance to see the EIS in process, provide feedback, and talk to the project team.

Lawson Hills MPD Proposal

376 Acres (main property 320; north triangle 56)

Mixed Uses to include:

- 1250 Residential dwelling units
- 190,000 SF Retail
- 200,000 SF Office
- Open Space (50%)
- 6 acre school site

Build out 2015

The Villages MPD Proposal

1170 Acres (main property 1090; north property 80)

Mixed Uses to include:

- 4400 Residential units
- 450,000 SF Retail
- 325,000 SF Office
- Open Space (50%)
- 2 school sites

Build out 2025

