#### Valley County Planning and Zoning

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STAFF REPORT: C.U.P. 23-41 Shabby Chic on the Cheap Event Venue

**HEARING DATE:** November 9, 2023

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

STAFF: Cynda Herrick, AICP, CFM

Planning and Zoning Director

APPLICANT / John & Diane Wiley

PROPERTY OWNER: 753 W Sunwood CT, Kuna ID 83634

LOCATION: 3 Summer Place

Parcel RP12N04E057645 located in the SW 1/4 Section 5, T.12N,

R.4E, Boise Meridian, Valley County, Idaho

SIZE: 3.8 acres

**REQUEST: Event Venue** 

**EXISTING LAND USE:** Mobile Home with Snow Roof and Outbuildings on a Rural Parcel

Diane and John Wiley are requesting approval for an event venue for weddings and other social gatherings for a maximum of 100 guests. Applicants are requesting to be open from May 1st to November 15th, annually. Hours of operation would be Thursday through Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

The existing mobile home and snow roof is approximately 1500 sqft. It would be used by quests for dressing rooms.

An individual septic system and porta-potties would be used. Caterers would be responsible to wash dishes off site. The site has electrical power provided by Idaho Power.

Fire prevention would include fire extinguishers and a hose attached to the existing well. Fires would not be allowed during events. The site would be mowed to reduce fire hazard. Some trees will be removed.

Music would cease by 9:30 p.m. and speakers would face Highway 55 to lessen impacts to the neighborhood. A contract agreement for guests is included in the application.

Access would be from Summer Place, a private road, onto State Highway 55. No parking would be allowed on Summer Place.

The 3.8-acre site is addressed at 3 Summer Place.

#### **FINDINGS:**

- 1. The application was submitted on September 8, 2023.
- Legal notice was posted in the Star News on October 19, 2023, and October 26, 2023.
   Potentially affected agencies were notified on October 9, 2023. Neighbors within 300 feet of the property line were notified by fact sheet sent October 11, 2023. The site was posted on October 12, 2023. The notice and application were posted online at www.co.valley.id.us on October 9, 2023.
- 3. Agency comment received:

Mike Reno, Central District Health, recommends denial and stated they have no record of an approved septic system on this parcel. There was an unapproved system installed and property owners were to obtain a permit and install an approved alternative system by September 1991. This did not occur. (October 10, 2023)

Steven Hull, Cascade Fire Marshal, listed requirements for the road, driveways, event tents, and fire extinguishers. (Oct. 18, 2023)

Jeff McFadden, Valley County Road Superintendent, does not believe the entrance at Highway 55 and Summer Place, a private road is wide enough to for two vehicles. If a vehicle is heading to the highway from the event venue when a vehicle is turning onto Summer Place from the highway, the vehicle on the highway will have to stop until the outgoing vehicle is out of the way. (Oct. 18, 2023)

4. Public comment received:

Linda Decker, Manager, Decker Land LLC, owns property adjacent to the proposed site. Concerns include fire prevention, music impact, access to Highway 55, and noise from the Decker Land property that might annoy people at an event. (Oct. 31, 2023)

- 5. Physical characteristics of the site: Relatively flat with conifers.
- 6. The surrounding land use and zoning includes:

North: Single-Family Residential Rural Parcels

South: Agricultural (Grazing), East: Agricultural (Timber)

West: Single-Family Residential Rural Parcels

- 7. Valley County Code (Title 9): In Table 9-3-1, this proposal is categorized under:
  - 5. Commercial Uses: Service Business and Recreation Business

Review of Title 9 - Chapter 5 Conditional Uses should be done.

#### TITLE 9 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

#### 9-5A-1: GRADING:

A. Permit Required: Grading to prepare a site for a conditional use or grading, vegetation removal, construction or other activity that has any impact on the subject land or on adjoining properties is a conditional use. A conditional use permit is required prior to the start of such an activity.

#### E. Site Grading Plan:

- 1. The conditional use permit application shall include a site grading plan, or preliminary site grading plan for subdivisions, clearly showing the existing site topography and the proposed final grades with elevations or contour lines and specifications for materials and their placement as necessary to complete the work. The plan shall demonstrate compliance with best management practices for surface water management for permanent management and the methods that will be used during construction to control or prevent the erosion, mass movement, siltation, sedimentation, and blowing of dirt and debris caused by grading, excavation, open cuts, side slopes, and other site preparation and development. The plan shall be subject to review of the county engineer and the soil conservation district. The information received from the county engineer, the soil conservation district, and other agencies regarding the site grading plan shall be considered by the planning and zoning commission and/or the board of county commissioners in preparing the conditions of approval or reasons for denial of the applications.
- F. Land Surfaces Not Used For Roads, Buildings And Parking: All land surfaces not used for roads, buildings and parking shall be covered either by natural vegetation, other natural and undisturbed open space, or landscaping.
- G. Stormwater Management Plan: Prior to issuance of building permits, the administrator must receive a certification from the developer's engineer verifying that the stormwater management plan has been implemented according to approved plans.

#### 9-5A-2: ROADS AND DRIVEWAYS:

B. Access Roads Or Driveways: Residential developments, civic or community service uses, and commercial uses shall have at least two (2) access roads or driveways to a public street wherever practicable.

#### 9-5A-4: LANDSCAPING:

- A. Purpose And General Regulations:
  - 3. General Regulations
    - d. Strip, Excavate, Remove Topsoil Or Berm Up Soil On Site: No person, firm or corporation shall strip, excavate or remove topsoil nor shall they berm up soil on a site, except to accommodate an approved building, building addition or facilitate necessary and approved site improvements. These changes must be part of the approved site grading and stormwater management plan. This subsection does not apply to sites where permitted uses exist or are proposed.
- B. Landscaping; Standards Of Design:
  - 1. Minimum Requirements: Each site to be developed under a conditional use permit shall be required to provide landscape areas equal to or exceeding the following minimum amounts:
    - a. Multi-Family Use: Each site for a proposed multi-family use shall have a minimum of thirty percent (30%) of the net site/lot area in landscaping.
    - b. Service/Commercial Use: Each site for proposed service/commercial use shall have a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the net site/lot area in landscaping.
  - 9. Mounding And Berming: All mounding and berming shall have slopes no steeper than three to one (3:1).
  - 10. Ground Cover: A minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the landscaped areas is to be planted with vegetative ground cover. Minimum size and spacing to be one gallon size plants at a maximum three feet (3') on center.

#### 9-5A-5: FENCING:

F. Conditional Use Adjoins Agricultural Uses: Where a conditional use adjoins an agricultural use where animal grazing is known to occur for more than thirty (30) consecutive days per year, the permittee shall cause a fence to be constructed so as to prevent the animals from entering the use area. The permittee shall provide for the maintenance of said fence through covenants, association documents, agreement(s) with the adjoining owner(s), or other form acceptable to the commission prior to approval of the permit so that there is reasonable assurance that the fence will be maintained in functional condition so long as the conflicting uses continue.

G. Obstruction Of Vision: Sight obscuring fences, hedges, walls, latticework, or screens shall not be constructed in such a manner that vision necessary for safe operation of motor vehicles or bicycles on or entering public roadways is obstructed.

#### 9-5B-1: NOISE:

A. Commercial Or Industrial Activity: The noise emanating from any commercial or industrial activity shall be muffled so as not to become objectionable due to intermittent beat, frequency or shrillness, and shall not exceed forty (40) decibels between the hours of seven o'clock (7:00) P.M. and seven o'clock (7:00) A.M., and sixty (60) decibels at other hours at the property line if adjacent uses are not the same.

#### 9-5B-2: LIGHTING:

#### 9-5B-7: FIRE PROTECTION:

Provisions must be made to implement prefire activities that may help improve the survivability of people and homes in areas prone to wildfire. Activities may include vegetation management around the home, use of fire resistant building materials, appropriate subdivision design, removal of fuel, providing a water source, and other measures. Recommendations of the applicable fire district will be considered.

#### 9-5F-1: COMMERCIAL USES; SITE OR DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS:

Commercial uses requiring a conditional use permit shall meet the following site or development standards, except as may be modified by a PUD:

#### A. Minimum Lot Area:

- 1. The minimum lot area shall be unlimited herein except for the provisions of subsection <u>9-5-3</u>A2 of this chapter, and except the minimum area for a ski area shall be forty (40) acres.
- 2. Frontage on a public or private road shall not be less than seventy-five feet (75') for each lot or parcel.
- 3. No frontage is required for recreation business.

#### B. Minimum Setbacks:

- 1. The minimum setbacks for neighborhood businesses shall be thirty feet (30') from front, rear, and side street property lines and ten feet (10') from all side property lines.
- 2. The minimum setbacks for service and recreation businesses shall be fifty feet (50') from rear, front, and side street property lines and thirty feet (30') from side property lines.
- 3. The minimum setbacks for area businesses shall be the same as those for neighborhood businesses. Salvage yards, auto wrecking yards, or commercial agricultural businesses shall be located not less than one thousand feet (1,000') from any residential development, civic or community service use, or other noncompatible commercial use, unless the impacts are adequately mitigated by implementation of standards as approved by the commission. The setbacks will be determined in relation to impact mitigation.

#### C. Maximum Building Height And Floor Area:

- 1. Building heights shall not exceed thirty-five feet (35') above the lower of the existing or finished grade.
- 2. The building size or floor area shall not exceed the limitations of subsections <u>9-5-3</u>A and C of this chapter and <u>title 6</u>, <u>chapter 1</u> of this code.
- 3. No building or combination of buildings may cover more than forty percent (40%) of the lot or parcel, except recreation business buildings may not cover more than one percent (1%) of the lot and agricultural business buildings may not cover more than twenty percent (20%) of the lot or parcel.

#### D. Site Improvements:

- 1. Where commercial uses are proposed on a lot or parcel having frontage on Highway 55 and a side street, the access shall be limited to the side street
- 4. Parking spaces for recreation businesses shall be provided at the rate of one per each four (4) occupants or as determined by the commission.

#### SUMMARY:

Staff's compatibility rating is a +3.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should do their own compatibility rating prior to the meeting (form with directions attached).

#### STAFF COMMENTS / QUESTIONS:

- 1. This site is within the Cascade Fire District. It is not within an irrigation district nor a herd district.
- 2. A new site plan showing setbacks is required. Parking cannot be in the setbacks. The setback from Highway 55 is 100'
- 3. Landscaping is proposed as existing trees, but you also say trees will be removed. What trees will remain on-site?
- 4. Idaho Transportation Department should review the access.
- 5. Are your lights dark-sky compliant?
- 6. Do you plan on expanding the width of Summer PL and your driveway to a minimum width of 20' in order to meet fire department requirements?

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Proposed Conditions of Approval
- Blank Compatibility Evaluation and Instructions
- · Compatibility Evaluation by Staff
- Vicinity Map
- Aerial Map
- Assessor Plats T.12N R.4E Sec. 5
- Pictures Taken October 12, 2023
- Pictures from Assessor's Report
- Proposed Site Plan
- Responses
- Septic System Handout

#### **Proposed Conditions of Approval**

- 1. The application, the staff report, and the provisions of the Land Use and Development Ordinance are all made a part of this permit as if written in full herein. Any violation of any portion of the permit will be subject to enforcement and penalties in accordance with Title 9-2-5; and, may include revocation or suspension of the conditional use permit.
- 2. Any change in the nature or scope of land use activities shall require an additional Conditional Use Permit.
- 3. The issuance of this permit and these conditions will not relieve the applicant from complying with applicable County, State, or Federal laws or regulations or be construed as permission to operate in violation of any statute or regulations. Violation of these laws, regulations or rules may be grounds for revocation of the Conditional Use Permit or grounds for suspension of the Conditional Use Permit.
- 4. The use shall be established within one year or a permit extension will be required.

#### (Prior to any events being held on-site, the following conditions must be met.)

- 5. A letter of approval for the expanded Summer PL and the driveway is required from Cascade Fire District. Must be a minimum of 20 feet in width.
- 6. Must have approval from Central District Health for the existing septic system and number of port-potties being proposed. Shall maintain septic system and drainfield.
- 7. Shall submit ITD permit approval to Staff for the change in use on the private road from a residential use to a commercial use.
- 8. All lighting must comply with the Valley County Lighting Ordinance. All lights shall be fully shielded so that there is not upward or horizontal projection of lights. This includes any pathway lighting.
- 9. Shall place addressing numbers at the building and at the driveway entrance.
- 10. Must have a fencing plan with neighboring properties if they run livestock for over 30 days per year.
- 11. All noxious weeds on the property must be controlled.
- 12. Must comply with payment of sales tax in accordance with Idaho State Code Title 63 Chapter 36.
- 13. No parking in the road right-of-way for Summer Place or in the setback areas.
- 14. Quiet hours are 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.
- 15. Hours of operation are Thursday through Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- 16. Season of operation is May 1st to November 15th, annually.
- 17. The owner or on-site manager shall be in attendance at all events.
- 18. A maximum of 100 guests allowed per event.
- 19. Dishes must be washed off-site.
- 20. Fire extinguishers must be mounted as required by the Cascade Fire Department. No fires are allowed during events.
- 21. The parking area should be watered, mowed, and maintained so that vehicle catalytic converters cannot ignite a fire.
- 22. Shall obtain a sign permit prior to installation of a sign. Off-premise directional signs must be approved by Planning and Zoning, Road Department and may require approval of Idaho Transportation Department.

**END OF STAFF REPORT** 

#### **Compatibility Questions and Evaluation**

Matrix Line # / Use:	Prepared by:
Response YES/NO X Value	Use Matrix Values:
(+2/-2) X 4	1. Is the proposed use compatible with the dominant adjacent land use?
(+2/-2) X 2	2. Is the proposed use compatible with the other adjacent land uses (total and average)?
(+2/-2) X 1	3. Is the proposed use generally compatible with the overall land use in the local vicinity?
(+2/-2) X 3	Site Specific Evaluation (Impacts and Proposed Mitigation)  4. Is the property large enough, does the existence of wooded area, or does the lay of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses?
(+2/-2) X 1	5. Is the size or scale of proposed <u>lots and/or</u> structures similar to adjacent ones?
(+2/-2) X 2	6. Is the traffic volume and character to be generated by the proposed use simila to the uses on properties that will be affected by proximity to parking lots, on- site roads, or access roads?
(+2/-2) X 2	7. Is the potential impact on adjacent properties due to the consuming or emission of any resource or substance compatible with that of existing uses?
(+2/-2) X 2	8. Is the proposed use compatible with the abilities of public agencies to provide service or of public facilities to accommodate the proposed use demands on utilities, fire and police protection, schools, roads, traffic control, parks, and open areas?
(+2/-2) X 2	9. Is the proposed use cost effective when comparing the cost for providing public services and improving public facilities to the increases in public revenue from the improved property?
Sub-Total (+)	
Sub-Total ()	
Total Score	

The resulting values for each questions shall be totaled so that each land use and development proposal receives a single final score.

#### 9-11-1: APPENDIX A, COMPATIBILITY EVALUATION:

A. General: One of the primary functions of traditional zoning is to classify land uses so that those which are not fully compatible or congruous can be geographically separated from each other. The county has opted to substitute traditional zoning with a multiple use concept in which there is no separation of land uses. Proposed incompatible uses may adversely affect existing uses, people, or lands in numerous ways: noise, odors, creation of hazards, view, water contamination, loss of needed or desired resources, property values, or infringe on a desired lifestyle. To ensure that the county can continue to grow and develop without causing such land use problems and conflicts, a mechanism designed to identify and discourage land use proposals which will be incompatible at particular locations has been devised. The compatibility evaluation of all conditional uses also provides for evaluations in a manner which is both systematic and consistent.

#### B. Purpose; Use:

- 1. The compatibility rating is to be used as a tool to assist in the determination of compatibility. The compatibility rating is not the sole deciding factor in the approval or denial of any application.
- 2. Staff prepares a preliminary compatibility rating for conditional use permits, except for conditional use permits for PUDs. The commission reviews the compatibility rating and may change any value.
- C. General Evaluation: Completing the compatibility questions and evaluation (form):
  - 1. All evaluations shall be made as objectively as possible by assignment of points for each of a series of questions. Points shall be assigned as follows:
    - Plus 2 assigned for full compatibility (adjacency encouraged).
    - Plus 1 assigned for partial compatibility (adjacency not necessarily encouraged).
    - 0 assigned if not applicable or neutral.
    - Minus 1 assigned for minimal compatibility (adjacency not discouraged).
    - Minus 2 assigned for no compatibility (adjacency not acceptable).
  - 2. Each response value shall be multiplied by some number, which indicates how important that particular response is relative to all the others. Multipliers shall be any of the following:
    - x4 indicates major relative importance.
    - x3 indicates above average relative importance.
    - x2 indicates below average relative importance.
    - x1 indicates minor relative importance.
- D. Matrix Questions 1 Through 3: The following matrix shall be utilized, wherever practical, to determine response values for questions one through three (3). Uses classified and listed in the left hand column and across the top of the matrix represent possible proposed, adjacent, or vicinity land uses. Each box indicates the extent of compatibility between any two (2) intersecting uses. These numbers should not be changed from proposal to proposal, except where distinctive uses arise which may present unique compatibility considerations. The commission shall determine whether or not there is a unique consideration.

#### E. Terms:

DOMINANT ADJACENT LAND USE: Any use which is within three hundred feet (300') of the use boundary being proposed; and

- 1. Comprises at least one-half (1/2) of the adjacent uses and one-fourth (1/4) of the total adjacent area; or
- 2. Where two (2) or more uses compete equally in number and are more frequent than all the other uses, the one with the greatest amount of acreage is the dominant land use; or
- 3. In all other situations, no dominant land use exists. When this occurs, the response value shall be zero.
  - LOCAL VICINITY: Land uses within a one to three (3) mile radius. The various uses therein should be identified and averaged to determine the overall use of the land.

#### F. Questions 4 Through 9:

- In determining the response values for questions 4 through 9, the evaluators shall consider the information contained in the application, the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan, the provisions of this title and related ordinances, information gained from an actual inspection of the site, and information gathered by the staff.
- The evaluator or commission shall also consider proposed mitigation of the determined impacts. Adequacy of the mitigation will be a factor.

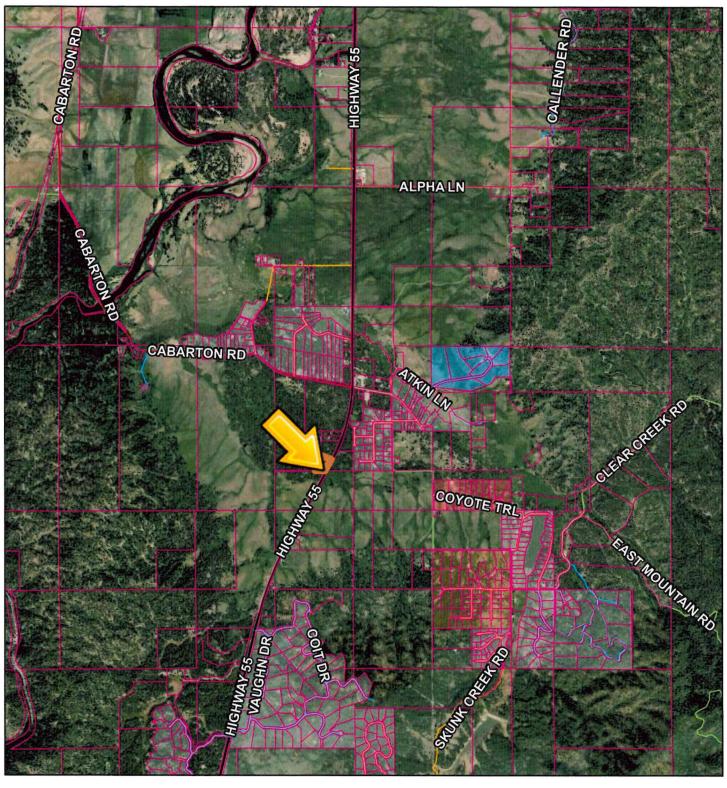
#### **Compatibility Questions and Evaluation**

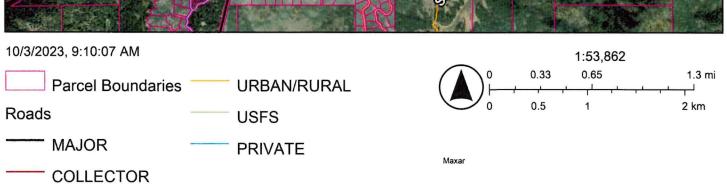
Matrix Line # / Use:	Prepared by:
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Response YES/NO X Value	Use Matrix Values:
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(+2/-2) <u>-/</u> X 2 <u>-2</u>	6. Is the traffic volume and character to be generated by the proposed use similar to the uses on properties that will be affected by proximity to parking lots, onsite roads, or access roads? No. There are concerns from the fire and road departments on the width of
(+2/-2) <u>-/</u> x 2 <u>-2</u>	7. Is the potential impact on adjacent properties due to the consuming or emission of any resource or substance compatible with that of existing uses?  Note: well smarch from site
(+2/-2) <u>+/</u> X 2 <u>+2</u>	8. Is the proposed use compatible with the abilities of public agencies to provide service or of public facilities to accommodate the proposed use demands on utilities, fire and police protection, schools, roads, traffic control, parks, and open areas? Fire department for concerns.
(+2/-2) <u>+/</u> X 2 <u>+2</u>	9. Is the proposed use cost effective when comparing the cost for providing public services and improving public facilities to the increases in public revenue from the improved property? The content of the improved property?
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Total Score +3	· .
The resulting values for each ques receives a single final score.	tions shall be totaled so that each land use and development proposal

APPENDIX A

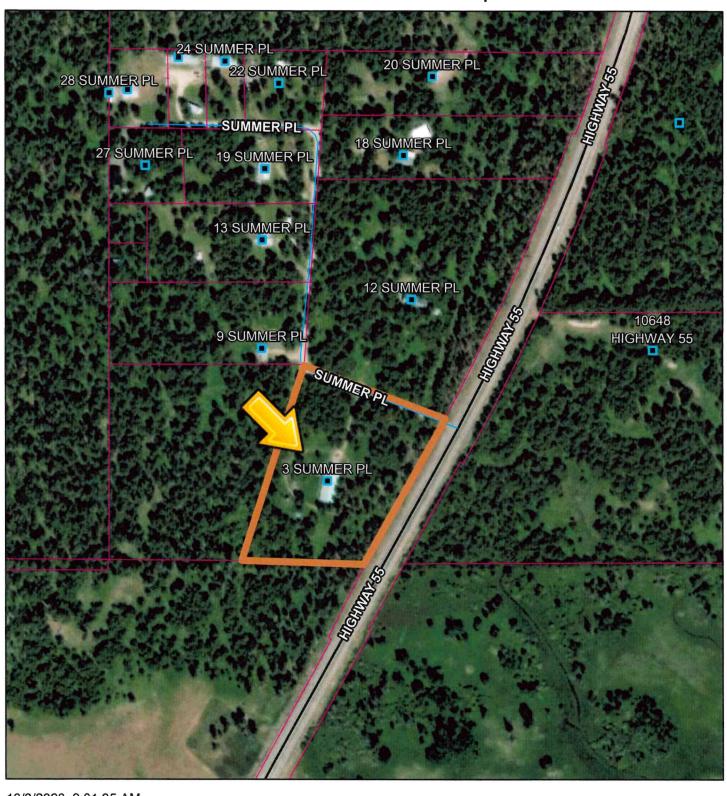
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## C.U.P. 23-41 Vicinity Map

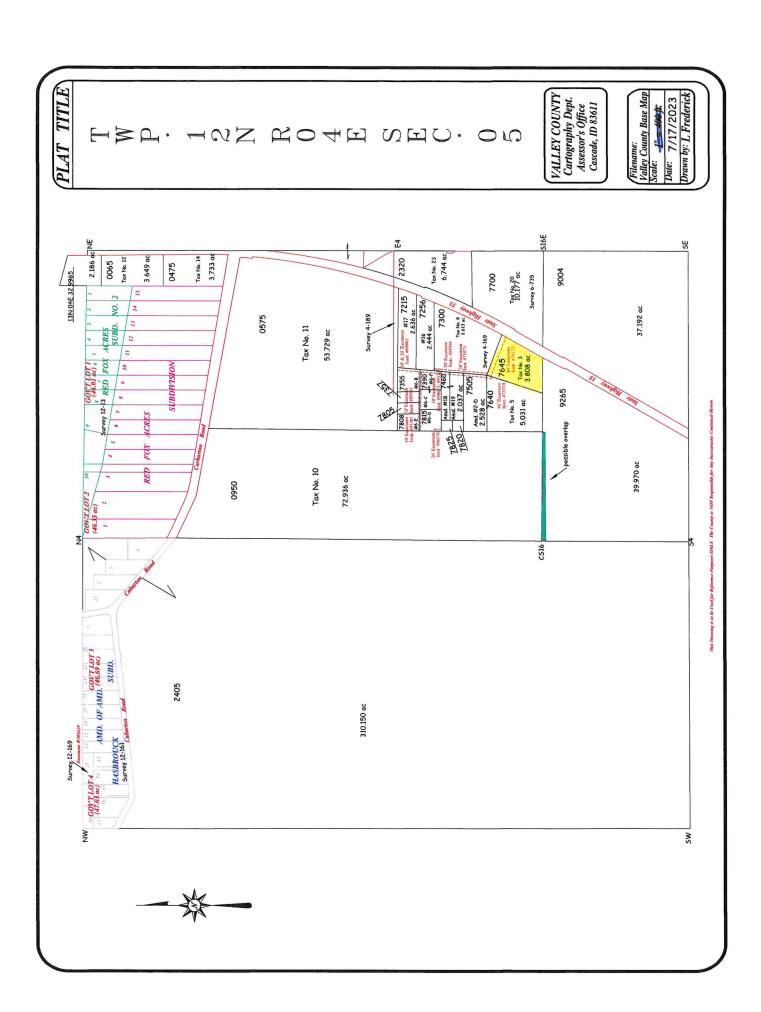




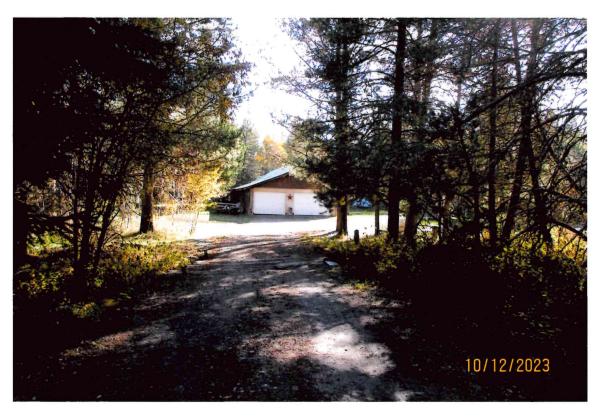
C.U.P. 23-41 Aerial Map





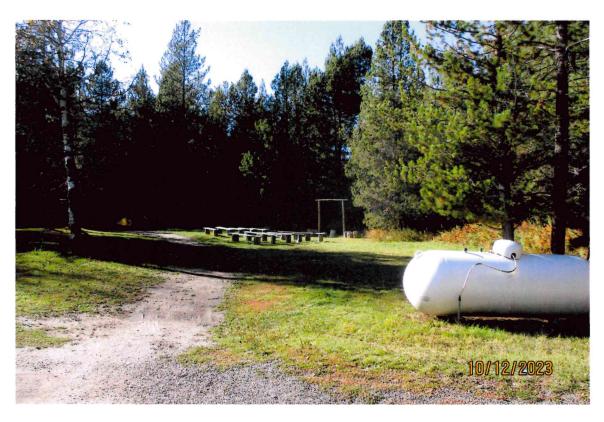












### IMAGES



















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			MERCHANISTON COMPANIES SERVICE	THE STATE OF THE S	AND THE PERSON OF THE PERSON O
	A STATE OF THE STA	We have No Objections to this Proposal.			
\\	2.	We recommend Denial of this Proposal.			
	3.	Specific knowledge as to the exact type of use m	ust be provided before we can co	mment on this Prop	osal.
	4.	We will require more data concerning soil condit	ons on this Proposal before we ca	n comment.	
	5.	Before we can comment concerning individual se of:  high seasonal ground water bedrock from original grade	wage disposal, we will require mo waste flow characteristics other		the depth
2003	6.	This office may require a study to assess the implicators.	ect of nutrients and pathogens to	receiving ground w	aters and surface
	7.	This project shall be reviewed by the Idaho Depa availability.	rtment of Water Resources conce	rning well construct	ion and water
	٤.	After written approvals from appropriate entities	are submitted, we can approve ti	nis proposal for:	
		☐ central sewage ☐ cc☐ interim sewage ☐ ce	mmunity sewage system ntral water dividual water		ater well
П	a	The following plan(s) must be submitted to and	oproved by the LLL B		
Account.	٥	The following plan(s) must be submitted to and a common co	pproved by the Idano Departmer mmunity sewage system ntral water	of Environmental  Community w	-
	IQ.	Run-off is not to create a mosquito breeding probl-	:m		
	11	This Department would recommend deferral unit considerations indicate approval.	high seasonal ground water can	be determined if ot	her
	1.7	If restroom facilities are to be installed, then a se Regulations.	vage system MUST be installed to	meet Idaho State	Sewage
	13	We will require plans be submitted for a plan rew food establishment be verage establishment		☐ c'N'd care cer	ter .
X	; <del></del>	COH has no record of on	Approved septic sus	lem on the	Dares / Th
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		alternative system by did not occur.	September 1991, This	- Dane-	10/0 23
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# Cascade Rural Fire Protection District P. O. Box 825 109 East Pine Street Cascade, Idaho 83611-0825

208.382.3200 - Phone 208.382.4222 - Fax

October 18, 2023

To: Cynda Herrick

Valley County Planning and Zoning

RE: C.U.P 23-41 Shabby Chick on the Cheap Event Venue

I have reviewed CUP 23-41 Shabby Chick on the Cheap Event Venue and request the following requirements for approval.

The access road, Summer Place, shall be improved to the International Fire Code Standards 2018. Section 503 Fire Apparatus Access Roads explains the standard to which the roads shall be improved to.

- 503.2.1 **Dimensions.** Fire apparatus access roads shall have an unobstructed width of not less than 20 feet, exclusive of shoulders, and an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches.
- 503.2.3 **Surface.** Fire Apparatus access roads shall be designed and maintained to support the imposed loads of fire apparatus and shall be surfaced so as to provide all weather driving capabilities.
- **Driveway.** The driveway at 3 Summer Place shall be improved to meet the Fire Apparatus Access Road Standard, the driveway shall have an unobstructed width of not less than 20 feet, exclusive of shoulders.

Event tents are referenced in the application. Event tents are allowed without a permit and approval from the fire code official when:

- Tents open on all sides that comply with all the following:
  - o Individual tents having a maximum size of 700 square feet.
  - o The aggregate area of multiple tents placed side by side without a fire break clearance of 12 feet, not exceeding 700 square feet total.
  - o A minimum clearance of 12 feet to all structures and other tents.

If an event requires a tent larger than 700 square feet, approval from the fire code official is required.

Fire Extinguishers shall be securely mounted 36" to 60" above the ground and have a minimum rating of 2A10BC.

Thanks

Steven Hull

Steven Hull
Fire Chief
Cascade Rural Fire Protection District
steve@cascaderuralfire.com

CUP 23-41
Jeff Mcfadden < jmcfadden@co.valley.id.us>
Wed 10/18/2023 11:40 AM
To:

- Cynda Herrick <cherrick@co.valley.id.us>;
- Lori Hunter < Ihunter@co.valley.id.us>

Planning and Zoning Commission,

I don't believe the entrance at Highway 55 and Summer Place, a private road, is wide enough for two vehicles. If a vehicle is heading to the highway from the event venue when a vehicle is turning onto Summer Place off the highway, the vehicle on Highway 55 will have to stop, on the highway, until the outgoing vehicle is out of the way. Thank you for your consideration.

Thank you,

Jeff McFadden, Superintendent Valley County Road Department

My property adjoins the proposed Shabby Chick on the Cheap Event Venue on the south.

Following are my concerns:

Fire prevention—One hose connected to an existing well would do little if the dry grass and/or weeds caught fire and spread to the timber. Having a few fire extinguishers would not be enough to extinguish a fire. Depending upon the rain, this area is extremely dry from July-November.

My family cuts firewood on the adjoining property. They cut the wood between late July through November. I'm sure anyone using this event would not appreciate the saws (2-3) operating so close to their event. We also occasionally cut wood in June and early July for campfire wood where we park our trailers during the summer.

Music—speakers pointing east toward Highway 55 would affect the quiet my family and I enjoy that does not adjoin this property but close enough to have to listen to the music being played. (RP12NO4E046006)

Access to Hwy 55—turning north towards Cascade can take time because of the very busy traffic on this road. Safeness should be taken into consideration.

Linda Decker, Manager Decker Land LLC



# Top 10 Ways to Be a Good Septic Owner

- Have your system inspected every three years by a qualified professional or according to your state/ local health department's recommendations
- Have your septic tank pumped, when necessary, generally every three to five years
- Avoid pouring harsh products (e.g., oils, grease, chemicals, paint, medications) down the drain
- Discard non-degradable products in the trash (e.g., floss, disposable wipes, cat litter) instead of flushing them
- Keep cars and heavy vehicles parked away from the drainfield and tank
- Follow the system manufacturer's directions when using septic tank cleaners and additives
- Repair leaks and use water efficient fixtures to avoid overloading the system
- Maintain plants and vegetation near the system to ensure roots do not block drains
- Use soaps and detergents that are low-suds, biodegradable, and low- or phosphate-free
- Prevent system freezing during cold weather by inspecting and insulating vulnerable system parts (e.g., the inspection pipe and soil treatment area)



For more SepticSmart tips, visit www.epa.gov/septicsmart

SAM



# A Homeowner's Guide to Septic Systems



Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 1410 N. Hilton Boise, ID 83706

January 2001

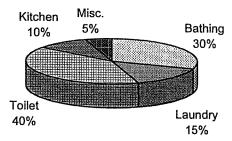


Do you have a home septic system? As an Idaho resident, there is a good chance you do—thirty-six percent of Idaho's homes, or about 210,000 residences, use septic systems to treat their sewage. These systems discharge more than 53 million gallons of wastewater into Idaho's soils annually, and this figure grows each year. In 1999, Idaho's seven health districts issued over 6,100 permits for new septic systems.

Septic systems dispose of household sewage, or wastewater, generated from toilet use, bathing, laundry, and kitchen and cleaning activities. Because septic systems are underground and seldom require daily care, many homeowners rarely think about routine operations and maintenance. However, if a septic system is not properly designed, located, constructed, and maintained, groundwater may become contaminated.

#### Household Wastewater

Households that are not served by public sewers depend on septic tank systems to treat and dispose of wastewater. Household wastewater carries with it all wastes that go down the drains in our homes, including human waste, dirt, food, toilet paper, soap, detergents, and cleaning products. It contains dissolved nutrients, household chemicals, grease, oil, microorganisms (including some that cause disease), and solid particles. If not properly treated by your septic system, chemicals and microorganisms in wastewater can travel through the soil to groundwater and pose a health hazard.



The average person uses between 50 and 75 gallons of water per day; mostly in the bathroom. Reducing your water use will help your septic system to work more efficiently.

#### **Your Septic System**

A conventional septic system has three working parts: a septic tank, a drainfield, and surrounding soil.

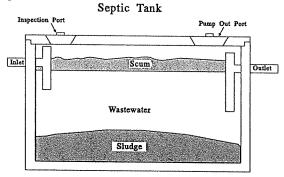
#### **Septic Tank**

Septic tanks can be made of concrete, fiberglass, or plastic and must be approved by the state. Minimum sizes of tanks have been established for residences based on the number of bedrooms in the dwelling. In Idaho, a 1,000-gallon septic tank is required for homes with three or four bedrooms. Larger tanks are required for larger homes. Local district health departments issue permits for septic systems and specify the minimum size tank. Some systems installed before the current rules and regulations may have smaller septic tanks.

A septic tank has three main functions:

- to remove as many solids as possible from household wastewater before sending the liquid, called "effluent," to a
  drainfield;
- to decompose solids in the tank; and
- to store solids that do not decompose.

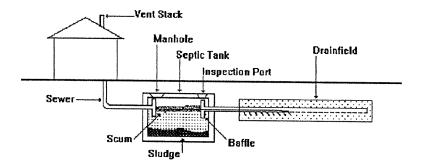
When raw wastewater enters the tank, heavy solids sink to the bottom of the tank as sludge. Light solids, such as grease and paper, float to the surface as scum. During the wastewater storage period, bacteria digest organic material in the wastewater. During this process, the solid material is reduced in volume and composition. Solids that do not decompose accumulate in the tank and eventually must be pumped out.



Tees, or baffles, are provided at the tank's inlet and outlet pipes. The inlet tee slows the incoming wastes and reduces disturbance of the settled sludge. The outlet tee keeps the solids and scum in the tank. As new wastewater enters the tank through the inlet tee, an equal amount of wastewater is pushed out of the tank through the outlet tee. The effluent that leaves the tank has been partially treated but still contains disease-causing bacteria and other pollutants.

#### **Drainfield**

Each time raw wastewater enters the tank it forces an equal amount of effluent into a drainfield. A standard drainfield is composed of a series of perforated pipes buried in gravel-filled trenches in the soil. The effluent seeps out of the perforated pipes and percolates through the gravel to the soil.



#### Soil

The soil below the drainfield provides the final treatment and disposal of the septic tank effluent. After the effluent has passed into the soil, most of it percolates downward and outward, eventually entering the groundwater. Soils are critical to the treatment of septic tank wastewater.

A system that is not functioning properly will release nutrient-rich and bacterial-laden wastewater into the groundwater and/or surface water. These contaminated waters pose a significant public health threat to people that come into contact with them. Wastewater that moves with groundwater can transport bacteria considerable distances. This can result in a threat to public health and adversely affect the quality of ground and surface waters.

#### **Caring for Your Septic System**

#### **Installing Your System**

In order to have a septic system installed on your property, you must first obtain a permit. Permit applications are available from your local district health department. Next, you must have a site evaluation performed. Make arrangements for this with your district health department and with a licensed septic system installer. Note that not all property is suitable for septic systems, so some permits may be denied. It is recommended that you have a site evaluation performed before you purchase property. Finally, have your system installed by a licensed installer and inspected by your local health district. Provide regular, preventative, maintenance to keep your system running smoothly.

#### **Inspecting Your System**

When too much sludge and scum are allowed to accumulate in your tank, the incoming sewage will not have enough time in the septic tank for solids to settle. Solids may flow to the drainfield and clog the pipes, causing the sewage to overflow to the ground surface, where it exposes humans and animals to disease-causing organisms. To prevent this from happening, it is very important to inspect your tank regularly and have it serviced when needed. All tanks have accessible manholes for inspecting and pumping. Some excavation work may be needed to uncover the manhole.

Properly designed tanks should have enough capacity for three to eight years of use before needing service. This is dependent upon the amount of wastewater generated. It is recommended that an average family of four have its septic tank pumped out every three to five years. Don't wait for signs of system failure to have your tank pumped. Your tank should be checked annually to measure sludge and scum levels. A licensed septic tank pumper can provide a septic tank inspection and recommend when the tank should be pumped. A tank inspection should include measuring the depth of scum and sludge and inspecting the tees in the septic tank.

If you do the inspection yourself, it is important to understand that septic tanks always appear full because both the inlet and the outlet are at the top of the tank. What you will need to know is how much of the tank's volume is being taken up by scum and sludge. When sludge and scum take up more than 35 percent of the tank volume, these solids need to be removed by pumping. A pole wrapped in a course weave cloth can be used to check the sludge depth. An extension on the pole can be used to measure the scum depth. Record these measurements as part of your pumping records. To check the tees, uncover the inspection ports.

Never allow anyone to enter your septic tank. Dangerous gases and the lack of oxygen can kill in minutes.

While it is impractical to inspect the pipes in your drainfield, it is important to watch for drainfield failure or overuse. See "Warning Signs of System Failure" in this booklet for information.

#### **Maintaining Your System**

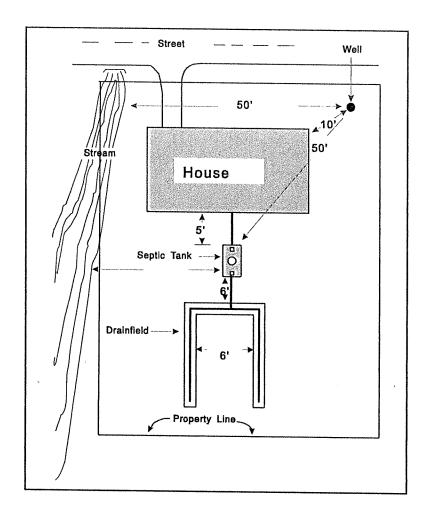
Pumping your septic tank every three years (or as determined by your inspections) will remove accumulations of solids, help keep the drainfield from becoming clogged, and help prevent you from experiencing sewage backups or septic system failure. An accumulation of sludge exceeding 35% of the total water depth in the septic tank could cause solids to enter the drainfield and clog the system. Hire a licensed septic tank pumper to pump your tank for you.

#### **Mapping Your System**

In order to take proper care of your septic system, you must know the location of the septic tank and drainfield. The location of your septic tank can be determined from plot plans, septic system inspection records, architectural or landscape drawings, or from observations of the house plumbing. If you do not have access to drawings, find where the sewer pipe leaves your house. Some installers mark the location where the waste pipe comes out of the house with an "S" on the foundation. You may want to do this as well. Probe in the ground 10 to 15 feet directly out from the location where the pipe leaves your house to find your tank.

Once the septic tank has been located, make several plot plan diagrams (with measurements) that include a rough sketch of your house, septic tank cover, drainfield area, well, and any other permanent reference points (such as trees or large rocks) and place them with your important papers. You'll find a sample system diagram on the next page, and a place to draw your own inside the front cover of this booklet. You may also want to hang a diagram in your garage and provide one to your local district health office.

Maintain a permanent record of any septic system maintenance, repair, sludge and scum levels, pumping, drainfield condition, household backups, and operations notes.



Create a septic system diagram, similar to this one, for your system.

#### **Warning Signs of System Failure**

While proper use, inspections, and maintenance should prevent most septic tank problems, it is still important to be aware of changes in your septic system and to act immediately if you suspect a system failure. There are many signs of septic system failure:

- surfacing sewage or wet spots in the drainfield area;
- plumbing or septic tank backups;
- slow draining fixtures;
- gurgling sounds in the plumbing system;
- sewage odors in the house or yard (note that the house plumbing vent on the roof will emit sewage odors and this is normal); and
- tests showing the presence of bacteria in well water.

If you notice any of these signs, or if you suspect your septic tank system may be having problems, contact a licensed septic system professional or your local district health agency for assistance.

#### Septic System Dos and Don'ts

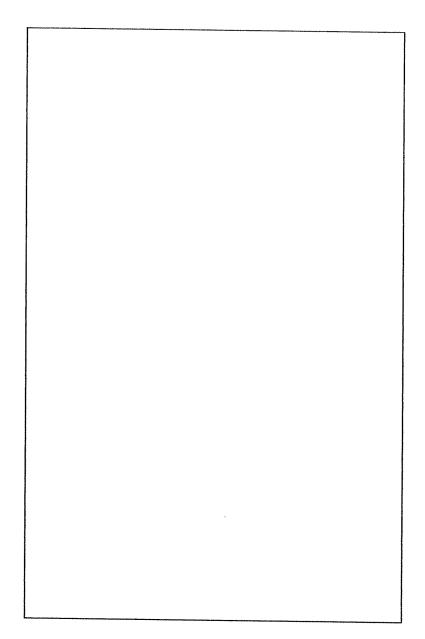
Proper operation of a septic system can prevent costly repairs or replacement. Observing the following guidelines will help to keep your system running efficiently.

#### <u>Do</u>

- ...practice water conservation. The more wastewater you produce, the more wastewater your system must treat and dispose. By reducing and balancing your use, you can extend the life of your system and avoid costly repairs.
  - o Use water saving devices such as low flow showerheads.
  - o Repair leaky faucets and plumbing fixtures immediately.
  - o Reduce toilet reservoir volume or flow.
  - Take short showers.
  - Take baths with a partially filled tub.
  - Wash only full loads of dishes and laundry.
  - O Shut off the water while shaving or brushing your teeth.
  - o Balance your water use (e.g., avoid washing several loads of laundry in one day).
- ...keep accurate records. Know where your septic tank is, keep a diagram of its location using the space provided in this booklet, and keep a record of system maintenance.
- ...inspect your system annually. Check the sludge and scum levels inside the tank and periodically check the drainfield for odors, wet spots, or surfacing sewage.
- ...pump your system routinely. Pumping your septic tank is probably the single most important thing you can do to protect your system.
- ...keep all runoff away from your system. Water from roofs and driveways should be diverted away from the septic
  tank and drainfield area. Soil over your system should be mounded slightly to encourage runoff.
- ...protect your system from damage. Keep vehicles and livestock off your drainfield. The pressure can compact the soil or damage the pipes. Before you dig for any reason, check the location of your system and drainfield area.
- …landscape your system properly. Plant grass over the drainfield area. Don't plant trees or shrubs or place
  impermeable materials, such as concrete or plastic, over the drainfield.
- ...use cleaning chemicals in moderation and only according to manufacturer's directions.

#### Don't

- ...flood irrigate over your system or drainfield area. The best way to irrigate these areas is with sprinklers.
- ...use caustic drain openers for clogged drains. Use boiling water or a drain snake to clean out clogs.
- ...enter a septic tank. Poisonous gases or a lack of oxygen can be fatal.
- ...use septic tank additives. They are not necessary for the proper functioning of your tank and they do not reduce the need for pumping. In fact, some additives can even harm your system.
- ...flush harmful materials into your tank. Grease, cooking oil, coffee grounds, sanitary napkins, and cigarettes do not easily decompose in septic tanks. Chemicals, such as solvents, oils, paints, and pesticides, are harmful to your systems operation and may pollute groundwater.
- ...use a garbage disposal. Using a garbage disposal will increase the amount of solids entering the septic tank
  and will result in the need for more frequent pumping.



Map your septic system here

#### For More Information

If you need to obtain a permit for a new or replacement septic system, or if you have questions about septic systems and their operation and maintenance, please contact your local health district.

Panhandle District Health Department 8500 N. Atlas Road Hayden, ID 83835 208-415-5100

North Central District Health Department 215 10<sup>th</sup> Street Lewiston, ID 83501 208-799-0353

Southwest District Health Department 920 Main Street Caldwell, ID 83605 208-455-5400

Central District Health Department 707 N. Armstrong Place Boise, ID 83704 208-327-7499

South Central District Health Department 1020 Washington Street North Twin Falls, ID 83303 208-734-5900

Southeastern District Health Department 1901 Alvin Ricken Drive Pocatello, ID 83201 208-239-5270

District 7 Health Department 254 "E" Street Idaho Falls, ID 83402 208-523-5382