Citizens and Developers working together: Promoting Low Impact Development  
Bill Brush of Smith Mountain Lake Assn.

Project Review & Evaluation Criteria for Proposed Development Projects

**Environmental**

We deeply respect the land, and as it's developed we want to see it developed responsibly and efficiently. The wise use of our land produces prosperity; a better quality of life and can preserve our special places and scenic beauty. We constructively and objectively work with developers and planners to encourage environmentally friendly development techniques for water, sewer, storm-water management, land clearing and erosion control.

**Character**

Our scenic vistas, forests, farms, lakes, streams, open space, historic villages and towns define our "community character" and enhance our quality of life. Without well-planned and executed development, our character and quality of life suffers. And should we ever lose the uniqueness that defines this area, we'll not only lose pride and identity with our community, we'll also lose our economic well-being.

**Planning & Zoning**

Conformance with the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan and consistency with future land-use plans are important review considerations. Rezoning requests and special use permits are reviewed for reasonable proffers and appropriate conditions.

**Proffers & Conditions**

Open space may be the most valuable and the most "profitable" land within our community for our local government. Open space does not impact transportation, schools, fire and rescue, law enforcement or parks and recreation. Commercial development impacts these vital services but usually offsets some of those impacts through added employment and taxation. New residential development always impacts vital services and places demands on local and state governments.

**Developer**

The developer's visions and goals have a tremendous impact on land use. We are fortunate to have several local, long-term, responsible developers and many positive examples of responsible development that enrich our quality of life every day. We want to work with those developers who are willing to share their concepts early in the development process and who will seriously consider constructive ideas.
## Project Review & Evaluation Criteria Checklist

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<tr>
<th>Does Not Meet</th>
<th>Meets</th>
<th>Exceeds</th>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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### Environmental
- Waste water treatment
- Ground water replenishment
- Storm water management (Low Impact Development Techniques a plus)
- Erosion control measures
- Tree preservation
- Buffering along streams and lakes
- Wetland Preservation
- Land Clearing, Debris Handling & Disposal

Subtotal X 5

### Character
- Preservation of view sheds
- Preservation of open space
- Accessibility of open space
- Compatibility with surrounding land use
- Exterior Lighting
- Buffering to adjacent properties, structures & roadways
- Building heights relative to topography
- Architectural controls
- Architectural consistency with existing development

Subtotal X 4

### Planning & Zoning
- Consistency with Comprehensive Plan Goals
- Current vs. Future Land Use
- Need for Rezoning
- Need for Special Use Permits

Subtotal X 3

### Proffers & Conditions
- Planned Density vs. Use by Right Densities
- Impacts to Transportation
- Impacts to Schools
- Impacts to Fire & Rescue
- Impacts to Law Enforcement and County Administration
- Impacts to Parks & Recreation
- Use of Public Utilities

Subtotal X 2

### Developer
- Openness with public, including initiatives taken to seek public input
- Willingness to consider new ideas and/or suggestions
- Demonstrates sincere desire to exceed minimum requirements as appropriate and economically practical in order to enhance quality of the project

Subtotal X 1
### Project Review & Evaluation Criteria Definitions

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waste water treatment</strong> -- Traditional septic tanks and drainfields meet our criteria, where public and or private sewage pre-treatment plants exceed our criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ground water replenishment</strong> -- less land disturbance and clearing is favored. Naturally treed and forested areas are superior in rainfall absorption, followed by grassed areas and lastly imperious surfaces [roofs, roads, sidewalks and drives]. Preservation of treed areas, re-planting of trees and shrubs, and grassy swales are positive examples.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Storm water management</strong> [Low Impact Development (LID) Techniques a plus] -- control of stormwater runoff to prevent erosion and deposition of sedimentation in streams and lakes. Measures including grassed swales, rocked channels, retention ponds meet our criteria. LID techniques to capture the first 1/2” of rainfall from impervious surfaces and return rainfall to the water table rather than channeling into streams and lakes are strongly encouraged. Techniques include: rain-barrels, pervious pavements, bio-retention [rain-gardens], grassy swales.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Erosion control measures</strong> -- erection of barriers [silt fencing, straw bales, soil and rock], grading/vectoring, or creation of settlement areas to retain sediment near its erosion source and prevent the transportation of sediment into streams and lakes. Steep slopes, proximity to streams &amp; lakes, and loose soils all present greater challenges and require increased control measures. Encourage developer commitment to ensure adequate control measures are properly installed and maintained throughout the construction process.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tree preservation</strong> -- preservation of trees and treed areas to maximize rainfall absorption and to minimize land disturbance. Encourage developer commitment to minimize tree removal and replant in areas where tree removal for access was unavoidable.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Buffering along streams and lakes</strong> -- a minimum of 20 horizontal feet from the 800’ project contour must be buffered to minimize the introduction of sedimentation and contaminates in stormwater into the lake. A 20’ buffer along streams should be proposed in concept plans. Natural water courses should not be disturbed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wetland Preservation</strong> -- substantial, sometimes extraordinary measures are required to prevent sediment from entering the protected wetland. Encourage developer commitment to ensure control measures are properly maintained throughout the construction process and any damage to wetlands is repaired.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Land Clearing, Debris Handling &amp; Disposal</strong> -- less clearing results in less debris. Disposal of natural debris is allowed on-site through grinding, burial, and/or burning. Tree stumps must either be ground or burned on-site or transported to a certified landfill or off-site stump grinder. Grinding on-site is preferable to burning. Encourage developer commitment to contract with licensed professional excavators and commit to responsible disposal measures.</td>
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<td><strong>Preservation of view sheds</strong> -- this includes not only views from the project but views of the project from adjacent properties, the lake and our primary and secondary roads.</td>
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<td><strong>Preservation of open space</strong> -- encourage clustering of development so that significant portions of a project are preserved as natural or developed open space, giving the entire project a sense of openness. All concept plans need to include calculations for open space.</td>
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<td><strong>Accessibility of open space</strong> -- open space within the project should be accessible to the residents of the entire project, rather than small fragmented pieces with limited accessibility.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Compatibility with surrounding land use</strong> -- if rezoning or special use permits create incompatibilities with existing land use, buffering becomes a critical factor as do proffers and conditions applied to special use permits to reduce the intrusion of the special use permit.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exterior Lighting</strong> -- exterior lighting should be designed to reduce glare, intrusion on adjacent properties, roads and lake.</td>
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| **Buffering to adjacent properties, structures & roadways** -- buffers should be designed to
**Building heights relative to topography** -- building heights should be designed to consider topography and impact to view sheds.

**Architectural controls** -- encourage controls imposed either through deed restrictions or through the covenants of a property owners association to set minimum architectural standards [e.g. structure size, structure type, exterior materials, colors, roof pitch, etc.] These architectural controls protect home values within the new development and in adjacent developments.

**Architectural consistency with existing development** -- review plans to ensure that planned building and landscape designs are equal to or better than adjacent development.

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### PLANNING & ZONING

**Consistency with Comprehensive Plan Goals** -- concept plans should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Any deviations from the Comprehensive Plan should be extensively reviewed and mitigating proffers and/or conditions should be included in the developer's concept plan if deviations are proposed.

**Current vs. Future Land Use** -- concept plans should be consistent with future land use maps. Concept plans need not be consistent with existing land use, but when incompatible uses with adjacent properties are proposed, the concept plans should be examined for adequate buffers to adjacent properties.

**Need for Rezoning** -- Not all concept plans require a rezoning request. When a rezoning is requested, the concept plan should be examined for proffers to mitigate the negative impact, if any, of the rezoning.

**Need for Special Use Permits** -- Not all concept plans require special use permits. When special use permits are required, the concept plan should be reviewed to insure reasonable conditions are imposed to offset any negative intrusions.

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### PROFFERS & CONDITIONS

**Planned Density vs. Use by Right Densities** -- rezoning sometimes permits higher densities than existing zoning. Proposed densities less than or equal to existing zoning are preferred over density increases. Concept plans proposing densities greater than what existing zoning allows, must be carefully examined for appropriate mitigating proffers. All concept plans need to include maximum density calculations.

**Impacts to Transportation** -- mitigating proffers or conditions to offset transportation impacts, if any, should be encouraged.

**Impacts to Schools** -- mitigating proffers or conditions to offset school impacts, if any, should be encouraged.

**Impacts to Fire & Rescue** -- mitigating proffers or conditions to offset Fire and Rescue impacts, if any, should be encouraged.

**Impacts to Law Enforcement and County Administration** -- mitigating proffers or conditions to offset Law Enforcement and County Administration impacts, if any, should be encouraged.

**Impacts to Parks & Recreation** -- mitigating proffers or conditions to offset Parks & Recreation impacts, if any, should be encouraged.

**Use of Public Utilities** -- the use of public sewer and water, when available, is encouraged.

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### DEVELOPER

**Openness with public, including initiatives taken to seek public input** -- developer initiated meetings with adjacent property owners, communities and civic organizations are encouraged.

**Willingness to consider new ideas and/or suggestions** -- meeting with the public is step one, seriously considering and incorporating reasonable suggestions are encouraged.

**Demonstrates sincere desire to exceed minimum requirements as appropriate and economically practical in order to enhance quality of the project** -- document all instances where the concept plan exceeds our evaluation criteria.