



CITY OF RAPID CITY

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57701-2724

Growth Management Department

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MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Vicki Fisher, Planner III

DATE: July 29, 2004

RE: Special Exception to allow access from Skyline Drive to serve Lot 2, Block 13 located in Section 2, T1N, R7E, BHM, Rapid City, South Dakota

On May 3, 2004, the City Council approved a Layout Plat to reconfigure two lots, including the above legally described property. A stipulation of approval for the Layout Plat requires that the plat document provide a non-access easement along Skyline Drive. In addition, it was noted that an access easement, classified as a lane place street, was located along the west lot line to serve as access to the property. It was also noted that Skyline Drive is classified as a collector street on the City's Major Street Plan. The access easement is classified as the lesser order street, and, as such, requires that access be taken from the easement in lieu of Skyline Drive as per the Street Design Criteria Manual. The applicant has subsequently requested a special exception to the Street Design Criteria Manual to allow access from Skyline Drive which is not the lesser order street.

The street design standards for a collector street require that it be located in a minimum 76 foot wide right-of-way and constructed with a minimum 40 foot wide paved surface, curb, gutter, sidewalk, street light conduit, water and sewer. Currently, Skyline Drive is located in a 66 foot wide right-of-way and constructed with an approximate 24 foot wide paved surface. In addition to the above referenced Layout Plat, the City Council also approved a Variance to the Subdivision Regulations to waive the requirement that Skyline Drive be improved to City street design standards with the stipulations that an additional five feet of right-of-way be dedicated and that the property owner sign a waiver of right to protest any future assessment for the improvements. However, to date Skyline Drive is a sub-standard collector street. In addition, the existing grades and curvature design of Skyline Drive significantly impacts sight distance visibility. Allowing additional approaches onto the street allows additional traffic onto a sub-standard collector street and compromises traffic safety standards along Skyline Drive.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The applicant's Engineer has submitted a letter summarizing his findings and engineering opinions regarding the construction of a driveway from the easement verses Skyline Drive. Staff concurs that the 15% driveway gradient from the easement is more than the 12% driveway gradient from Skyline Drive; however, the Rapid City Municipal Code states that a driveway may be up to 16% gradient. As such, the driveway from the access easement meets City standards and preserves the integrity of Skyline Drive as a scenic roadway as well as precludes any additional traffic on a sub-standard collector street.

The applicant has also submitted a site plan identifying the future location of a single family residence to be located 25 feet from the Skyline Drive right-of-way. In 1996, the City Council approved a Planned Residential Development for the Skyline Drive Subdivision requiring a minimum 100 foot setback from Skyline Drive. The City Council noted that "structures built too close to the roadway could result in a corridor affect along the roadway and obstruct the scenic views from Skyline Drive. Structure locations and elevations will need to be developed so that the view of the ridgeline of Skyline Drive is not adversely affected". Even though the subject property is not located within a Planned Residential Development, the City Council may wish to review the impact the proposed setback and the direct access onto Skyline Drive may have on this scenic roadway.

It should be noted that that the City of Rapid City has requested that Skyline Drive be designated as a State Scenic Byway. South Dakota Department of Transportation staff has expressed concerns that the increasing number of driveways and structural improvements in close proximity to Skyline Drive may negatively affect the scenic qualities of this route.

Recommendation: Staff is recommending that the Special Exception to allow access from Skyline Drive which is not the lesser order street be denied.