

Attachment C
Applicant's Letter

C/S 2587 and C/S 3329 Pre-Application Zoning Meeting
SYNOPSIS

Date: December 19, 2012

Location: Hampton Inn – 3550 Ember Lane – Billings, MT 59102

Jon Phillips introduced the proposed FedEx Ground Hub Facility project. He stated that the largest building is planned to be located approximately 800 feet north of Hesper Road. He said FedEx plans to employ 200 people initially but that number would double in the future. Jon said the traffic is spread out throughout the day and night with the peak traffic traditionally occurring at 10 p.m. and 3 a.m.

The following are answers to questions from attendees:

Jon said adding 200 employees in the future would not require a physical expansion but it would occur within the existing building.

Jon stated there were no plans for the remaining 47 acres of undeveloped property. He said the property to the west would remain exactly as it is for now.

The building material is planned to be pre-engineering metal.

The only access to the site would be off of Hesper Road, not Gabel Road.

Rick Selensky stated that the intersection of Hesper and Gabel could see a 3 to 5% increase in traffic. He said a traffic study was currently being developed and the numbers were preliminary.

Jon said minor vehicle maintenance could be performed out on site but the site would not provide sole source vehicle maintenance.

Jon stated that this facility would serve several states around Montana. He said there would be a small number of "over the road" trucks; however, this hub would be a small package facility that mostly uses smaller trucks and vans.

Jon said the lighting would be shielded based on discussions with the City of Billings. He said the property will be fenced and landscaped with berms located on the east, south, and possibly the west sides of the property. The fence would be chain link with barbs on top.

Jon described a variety of FedEx projects he has developed around the country. Many have been located in areas with diverse types of zoning. He commented that the proposed Controlled Industrial Zoning on Hesper Road is consistent with

the surrounding zoning. He stated that he could not predict if the FedEx Ground development would spur future warehouse development.

Jerry Thomas commented that the Trans Tech property was carefully developed and includes an architectural design review committee. This committee ensures that potential developments meet the Trans Tech standards. He said he has a major concern with this development and is worried that it will adversely impact current and future property values. Jerry said Trans Tech would be able to provide the 25% protest required to trigger a 2/3 majority council vote for approval. He asked Jon where else he had looked and why he picked this location.

Jon replied that he looked at many areas in Billings. He said utilities and access to the interstate were important issues. He also said that the City of Billings was interested in annexing the property.

Jerry encouraged Jon to look at other sites and to seek monetary assistance to off-set utility costs.

Jon said the building could not be rotated, but he said that FedEx is agreeable to providing heavy landscaping with berms to help soften the development.

The hospital stated they have two concerns, barbs on the fence and truckers. They are worried about the perception. They would like Jon to look at a landscaping design that could incorporate the Trans Tech Park. Jon stated that this could be accomplished.

A comment was made that the building would stand out due to the elevation of the property. It was stated that this is a major entrance to Billings and that Trans Tech is a professional area and this development could be a detractor. The commenter's primary concern was aesthetics.

Jon said they have mitigated similar buildings in other areas of the country with heavy landscaping. He said he was willing to e-mail examples to everyone who wanted them. E-mail addresses were collected and given to Jon.

Jon said the building elevation rendering was conceptual and FedEx's design team would be sensitive to local input. The hospital does not want barb wire fence and Jon stated that he will look into getting rid of that feature.

Jon thought that the Johnson Lane facility would likely re-locate to this location. There would be approximately 270 auto parking spaces. Jon and Rick were unsure of the number of truck parking spaces.

Rick stated that the vehicle trips per day are estimated to be 590. Trans Tech's traffic study estimated that they could expect 3,580 trips per day. It was asked if the 590 vehicles included the 400 employees. Rick stated that the traffic study will be completed soon, but he stated that the 590 trips per day were likely the opening day traffic volumes.

Tim Filz stated that the zone change application is due on January 7, 2013, the Zoning Commission meeting will be scheduled on February 5th, and City Council will vote on the proposed zone change on February 25th.

Respectfully submitted,



Rick Selensky, PE, LEED GA
DOWL HKM

C/S 3329 and 2587
Zone Change Pre-application Neighborhood Meeting
Hampton Inn - December 19, 2012 - 6:00 p.m.

Name (please print legibly)	Address (street, city, zip)
Tim Filz	PO Box 339 Billings, MT 59102
Todd McKeever	PO Box 80066 Billings, MT 59106
Keith Hermanson	PO Box 81612 Billings, MT 59108
Jerry Thomas	PO Box 80274 Billings, MT 59108
Kerry Ashment	3528 Gabel Road Billings, MT 59102
Jeremy Vannatta	1814 Front Street Billings, MT 59101
Chuck Platt	145 Grand Avenue Billings, MT 59101
Robb Bergeson	1691 Aviation Place Billings, MT 59105
Randy Reger	2708 Palm Drive Billings, MT 59102
Debbie Reger	2708 Palm Drive Billings, MT 59102
Brian Fennern	3533 Gabel Road Billings, MT 59102
Rick Selsensky	222 N. 32nd Street Billings, MT 59101
Jon Phillips	SunCap Property Group, Charlotte, NC
Greg MacDonald	2929 3rd Ave. North Ste. 538, Billings, MT 59101

PRIMARY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE 2008 GROWTH POLICY

Land Use Element

1. **ISSUE:** *Neighborhoods are experiencing pressures from new development and land use changes.*

GOAL: Predictable land use decisions that are consistent with neighborhood character and preferred land use patterns identified in neighborhood plans.

OBJECTIVES:

- Preserve Neighborhood integrity.
- Empower neighborhood groups.

Response: The proposed zone change and development is consistent with PG1.C.2 – Policy D of the 2001 West Billings Plan: “Regional commercial development to serve travelers, tourists, and business is appropriate adjacent to the Shiloh Road – Interstate 90 Interchange...” The developer stated at the Pre-application Zone Change Meeting that he would provide large building set-backs with heavy landscaping and earthen berms to help screen the development. He said he was open to tying the landscaping into the Trans Tech Park. The developer stated that FedEx is sensitive to developing and maintaining good neighbor status. They are willing to work with neighbors to preserve and enhance the neighborhood character.

2. **ISSUE:** *The current zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations do not always prevent incompatible uses in and adjacent to existing City neighborhoods and County townsites*

GOAL: New developments that are sensitive to and compatible with the character of adjacent City neighborhoods and County townsites.

OBJECTIVES:

- Maintain a high quality of life for new and existing residents.
- Reduce conflicts between neighbors.

Response: The property is surrounded on three sides by Controlled Industrial Zoning. The developer proposes to locate the building 800 feet north of Hesper Road and at least 800 feet west of Gabel Road. This large buffer area is planned to be heavily landscaped with earthen berms to provide sight and sound screening. FedEx is proud of their company brand and will develop the property to be compatible with the character of adjacent neighborhoods which should help reduce or eliminate potential conflicts with neighbors.

4. **ISSUE:** *Urban sprawl threatens the rural character of land surrounding Billings, increases the cost of providing public services, and threatens the vitality of the city core and downtown area.*

OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure the continued functionality of natural systems.
- Use City and County resources in a cost effective manner.
- Creative attractive communities.

Response: The proposed development is considered infill as it is surrounded on three sides by developed property in the City of Billings. This development is directly south of the new Scheels building and west of Trans Tech. The City of Billings has water, sanitary sewer, and storm drain facilities in Gabel Road. All three utilities would be extended along Hesper Road and the road would be widened along the development frontage. This would be accomplished and paid for by the developer.

Economic Development Element

1. **ISSUE:** *We need to continue a cohesive focus in economic development.*

GOAL: Coordinate economic development efforts that target business recruitment, retention, and expansion.

OBJECTIVES:

- Improve the quality of life for residents.
- Strengthen area economy.
- Create living wage jobs.

Response: FedEx Ground would open their facility in 2013 and plans to initially employ 200 people. Wages are estimated to average between \$37,000 and \$46,000 per year which are above the Montana Department of Labor and Industry latest statistics of 2010. These statistics list average private wages in Yellowstone County at \$36,857. Future expansion could employ up to 400 people. This would strengthen the area economy and create living wage jobs.

2. **ISSUE:** *Lack of living wage jobs.*

GOAL: Increase the median income of households and individuals.

OBJECTIVES:

- Improve the quality of life for residents.
- Attract and retain businesses that offer competitive wages and benefits.
- Reduce dependency on social programs.

Response: 200 high paying jobs with benefits would exceed the objectives of this issue. FedEx Ground would provide an immediate positive impact to the economy in Billings. The impact would continue for years with an additional 200 jobs. FedEx Ground would help reduce the dependency on social programs by providing high paying jobs with benefits.

3. **ISSUE:** *Entryways to our communities should be attractive and not present physical barriers discouraging economic growth.*

GOAL: Attractive and accessible communities.

OBJECTIVES:

- Encourage new businesses to locate in Billings and the gateway areas.
- Reduce travel time through town.
- Convey a business-friendly attitude.
- Increase the visual appeal of our highway and railroad corridors.

Response: FedEx is a high profile company that takes pride in their facilities and the surrounding improvements. They desire to work with surrounding property owners and the City of Billings to be a good neighbor. The existing property is generally an unused field that, at times, pastures horses or cows. FedEx would screen the property with professionally designed landscaping and earthen berms. They have agreed to work with the neighbors who expressed concerns at the Pre-application Zone Change Meeting. They plan to make the property as visually appealing as practical.

4. **ISSUE:** *Government supported programs and improvements are not sufficiently funded.*

GOAL: Improved public services and facilities.

OBJECTIVES:

- Construct safe and efficient infrastructure.
- Respond in a timely manner to public service needs.

Response: FedEx would be required to extend at their expense water, sanitary sewer, and storm drain on Hesper Road adjacent to their development. They would also be required to improve Hesper Road with curb and gutter on the north side and 39' of asphalt paving. The intersections of Hesper and Gabel and Zoo and Gabel are currently under study and could require shared improvement upgrades.

12. **ISSUE:** *The Billings economy faces a severe shortage of skilled workers in a number of sectors (a problem that will worsen as the population ages).*

GOAL: Community-wide planning and preparation of a skilled workforce to meet the diverse and growing economic development needs of the community.

OBJECTIVES:

- Improve coordination between the business community, economic development agencies, and school districts.
- Increase educational attainment for high demand, well-paying jobs.
- Increase per capita income.
- Increase local workforce availability to attract new clean industry jobs.

Response: The addition of 200 well-paying jobs with benefits would help increase the per capita income in Billings and Yellowstone County. The potential for future expansion would continue to benefit the economic development needs of the community. The FedEx Ground Hub facilities utilize smaller trucks and vans for delivery. This industry is considered clean and FedEx carefully chooses and trains their personnel to be professionals.

Aesthetics Element

1. **ISSUE:** *There are areas in the City and County that are unattractive and present a poor image of the community.*

GOAL: Visually appealing communities.

OBJECTIVES:

- Improve the image of the community.
- Instill pride in the community.
- Improve the quality of life for residents.
- Preserve the community assets such as the Rimrocks, the Yellowstone River, the downtown, and the major street thoroughfares.

Response: FedEx embraces and values the communities where they choose to locate. They take pride in working with neighbors during design to enhance their developments. They are willing to explore the possibility of continuing the park-like landscaping that exists at Trans Tech. Further, the large buffer between the building and Hesper and Gabel Roads would be heavily landscaped with earthen berms. The landscaping features would help improve the area and provide a walking and bike trail from Hesper Road through Trans Tech.

Natural Resource Element

3. **ISSUE:** *Due in part to the arid nature of our environment and the remoteness of some developments, there is an increased risk to human life and property for wildfires.*

GOAL: Minimize loss of life and property damage resulting from wildfires.

OBJECTIVES:

- Save lives and property.
- Utilize fire protection resources more efficiently.
- Protect the natural environment.

Response: The FedEx building would be designed with fire sprinkler protection. The site design and Hesper Road would include fire hydrants placed every 400 feet. The 45 acres to the west would remain in its natural state but would be closer to firefighting facilities.

5. **ISSUE:** *Human encounters with wildlife often results in a painful consequence for wildlife, pets, and humans.*

GOAL: Reduced opportunities for negative human and wildlife encounters.

OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce needless injury or death of wildlife and pets.
- Minimize property damage caused by wildlife.
- Protect human life and property.

Response: The FedEx site would be entirely fenced to help reduce or prevent negative human and wildlife encounters. The fencing should help minimize property damage caused by wildlife.

Open Space and Recreation Element

4. **ISSUE:** *Billings and surrounding County townsites need more multiple use trails.*

GOAL: A multi-purpose trail network integrated into the community infrastructure that emphasizes safety, environmental preservation, resource conservation and cost effectiveness.

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide convenient access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Improve quality of life for residents.

Response: The FedEx development would build a sidewalk fronting their development on the north side of Hesper Road. FedEx has expressed an interest in working with representatives of Trans Tech during the site design phase. It may be possible to tie the new sidewalk on Hesper to the existing Trans Tech pedestrian trail. This would provide pedestrians and cyclers a large recreational area.

Transportation Element

3. **ISSUE:** *Lack of adequate traffic control.*

GOAL: Improved traffic flow and reduced congestion.

OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce potential harm to people and property.
- Maintain safe and efficient traffic flow.

Response: FedEx attempts to locate their facilities near interstates to help minimize traffic flow in neighborhoods. The intersection of Hesper Road and Gabel Road is in the process of being assessed due to this development. FedEx is prepared to contribute their share of money to pay for improvements at this low performing intersection. Hesper Road would be improved to a 39' wide street adjacent to the development.

5. **ISSUE:** *Obstacles to efficient and safe traffic flow.*

GOAL: A safe and efficient transportation system characterized by convenient connections and steady traffic flow.

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify obstacles to traffic flow.
- Remove or minimize impediments to traffic flow.
- Manage traffic demand.

Response: DOWL HKM will complete a traffic accessibility study (TAS) which will identify traffic obstacles such as poorly performing intersections. This report will make recommendations to remove or minimize traffic flow impediments. The report will also include recommendations for handling future traffic demand due to 200 additional employees.

9. **ISSUE:** The sidewalk system in the City needs upgrading; many sidewalks are cracked and broken, several critical sections are missing, and important sidewalk routes are not adequately maintained.

GOAL: Well-maintained network of safe and interconnected sidewalks.

OBJECTIVES:

- Improved public safety.
- Promote healthy lifestyle.
- Reduce traffic.

Response: FedEx would build a new sidewalk along Hesper Road fronting the development. If this sidewalk were connected to the Trans Tech sidewalk, employees could walk to the Windmill for lunch or dinner. Healthy walks along the path could become a routine for some employees. FedEx employees could walk east across Hesper Road to restaurants such as the Rib and Chop House. The new business would pay taxes to the City of Billings to help maintain their roadways.

Public Facilities and Services Element

1. **ISSUE:** *Residents are not adequately informed of County and City projects.*

GOAL: An effective public notification system.

OBJECTIVES:

- Enhance public involvement.
- Provide timely and accurate public notification.
- Increase contact with news media.

Response: FedEx is proud of their brand and the facilities they construct and operate. The zone change public meeting was informative, forthright, and the neighbor's comments and requests will be taken seriously. Possibilities for public involvement include working with the Trans Tech committee. There has been one article in the Billings Gazette summarizing the project and there could be more in the future.

4. **ISSUE:** *There are safety and functionality issues with City streets.*

GOAL: Safe, functional, and attractive streets for all users, including drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

OBJECTIVES:

- Enhance public safety on the street.
- Reduce traffic accidents and congestion.

Response: DOWL HKM will soon complete the TAS which will analyze the intersections that would be impacted by this development. Gabel and Hesper and Gabel and Zoo will be scrutinized for potential improvements. FedEx has agreed to contribute their share of costs for intersection improvement that would enhance public safety and reduce congestion in these intersections. Improving Hesper Road with pavement widening and a sidewalk will also provide public safety on the street.

5. **ISSUE:** *Funding for community facilities and infrastructure is very limited.*

GOAL: Equitable collection and distribution of funding for public services and facilities.

OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure users pay fair share for public services and facilities.
- Ensure facilities and services are maintained in existing neighborhoods as new neighborhoods are added.
- Explore new sources of funding as appropriate.

Response: FedEx would pay for the extension of the sanitary sewer, water, and storm drain fronting their development. They would also pay for improving Hesper Road with curb and gutter, sidewalk, and widening the asphalt from 24 feet to 39 feet.

Community Health Element

3. ISSUE: *Some roadways are not designed to accommodate pedestrians and therefore create inconvenient and unsafe conditions.*

GOAL: Safe roadways supportive of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce traffic conflicts among multiple user groups.
- Support and encourage walking and bicycling for exercise and transportation.
- Provide safe walking routes to schools.
- Reduce vehicle carbon emissions.

Response: FedEx would be required to construct a sidewalk along Hesper Road fronting their development. If connected to Trans Tech's park path, this could promote walking and bicycling for exercise and transportation. FedEx prefers to be located near I-90 for short trips to the freeway helping to reduce vehicle carbon emissions.

Concept Site Plan



