Where Should Homes Go?

Weigh geography, housing needs, and environmental rules

WG.C.5.5 "Analyze the influence of geography on current issues to consider decisions regarding future land use, including the costs and benefits of environmental regulation."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two geographic conditions that affect where Bayhaven can build, circle the proposed buffer rule, and number one benefit and one cost of that rule.

A Choice for Bayhaven

1. At the edge of Bayhaven, a developer proposes homes on low ground beside a tidal creek. During storms, wind can push seawater up the creek while rainwater drains toward it. The site includes a salt marsh, where grasses slow moving water and hold sediment. As the climate warms, sea level rises and coastal flooding becomes more likely. Bayhaven needs homes, and land near its jobs is scarce. Building on the creek site could shorten commutes, but raising roads and homes above flood levels would add construction costs. Homes could still face access problems when surrounding streets flood.

2. A proposed town rule would keep new buildings and fill at least 100 feet from the marsh edge. That buffer leaves room for marsh grasses and for water to spread during a surge. It also reduces the number of homes that fit on the creek parcel. The developer says fewer homes would raise the cost per home and could push buyers to more distant towns. Supporters argue that protecting the marsh may reduce flood damage and the cost of repairing public roads. The rule would not stop every flood, especially if storms grow stronger.

3. Another option is a former warehouse parcel on higher ground. Existing roads and water pipes reach it, but old buildings would need removal, and workers might travel farther to the waterfront jobs. Town officials must weigh more than the price of a building permit: who can afford the homes, who pays to repair flooded streets, and whether the marsh can keep protecting the shoreline. They can approve homes on the creek site with a buffer, direct new homes to the warehouse parcel, or combine both approaches. No choice removes every cost or risk.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the tidal creek and low ground affect the risks of building homes on the creek site?

2. Explain one possible benefit and one possible cost of the proposed marsh buffer.

3. How does the warehouse parcel's location change the costs and benefits of building there instead of beside the creek?

4. Which of the council's three choices would you support? Use two details from the passage to explain how your choice weighs housing needs against flood risk or environmental protection.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A foothill town needs homes. A builder wants to clear trees from a steep slope that gets heavy rain, but the town could instead build on a flatter, previously developed lot farther from jobs. Recommend a land-use decision and a rule for the slope. In one paragraph, explain how geography shapes your choice and weigh one benefit and one cost of your rule.

ANSWER KEY

Where Should Homes Go?

HIGH SCHOOL · WG.C.5.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two geographic conditions that affect where Bayhaven can build, circle the proposed buffer rule, and number one benefit and one cost of that rule. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the tidal creek and low ground affect the risks of building homes on the creek site?	**Storms can push seawater up the creek while rainwater drains toward the low site. Homes and access roads could flood.**
2	Explain one possible benefit and one possible cost of the proposed marsh buffer.	**The buffer may reduce flood damage by protecting the marsh and leaving room for surge water. It leaves space for fewer homes, which could raise the cost per home.**
3	How does the warehouse parcel's location change the costs and benefits of building there instead of beside the creek?	**Its higher ground reduces flood exposure, and roads and water pipes already reach it. Old buildings must be removed, and some workers may have longer commutes to waterfront jobs.**
4	Which of the council's three choices would you support? Use two details from the passage to explain how your choice weighs housing needs against flood risk or environmental protection.	**Answers vary. For example, directing homes to the warehouse parcel uses higher ground and existing pipes while leaving the marsh to help protect the shoreline, though old buildings must be removed.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would put the homes on the flatter, previously developed lot. Heavy rain can carry soil downhill when trees are cleared from a steep slope, so I would require builders to keep trees on the slope. This rule could reduce erosion and protect land below it. It would limit where new homes can go, and the flatter lot would leave some residents farther from jobs, but those costs are preferable to increasing erosion risk.

Accept any supported choice for question 4 that weighs housing against flood risk or marsh protection. For Part 3, accept a different reasonable decision if the response connects slope and rainfall to land-use risk and identifies a plausible benefit and cost of its rule.