

Public Comment

Engage Missoula

11/8/2022 to 11/10/2022

Tanner Laverdiere – 11/8/22

I live in Lower Miller Creek. This project, as proposed, will negatively impact the current and future residents of our neighborhood. We already do not have adequate roads to support the population living beyond the roundabout at Miller creek/Linda Vista. Our one elementary was full upon opening, and remains at capacity without the addition of further residents. The newer apartments at 4210 Christian dr are a great example of the why more high density housing is not a good idea for this area. There is not enough parking, and cars are constantly lined up Christian Dr due to this. Tollefson does not care about the communities he is negatively impacting. The current zoning should stand.

Mary Moe – 11/8/22

I am opposed to this project for two reasons: (1) A project of this scope and density would change the character and quality of life of this neighborhood. It is a family-oriented neighborhood where kids walk to school, parents walk their pre-schoolers to the park, and many, many neighbors walk their dogs. (2) Traffic is already quite dense and the speed limit on Lower Miller Creek Road should be 25 TOPS. The congestion at the roundabout at the beginning and end of workdays is at MAX already. No more!

Julie Anton – 11/8/22

While not opposed to the entirety of this development, I would like to see some sort of compromise. The current subdivision proposal is a significant shift from the zoning currently in place. The developer is not only asking to amend the Targeted Growth Policy and requesting a MASSIVE zoning variance but is also asking for additional exceptions to the requested zoning variance via a rezoning overlay in order to allow for even more mass density and multiple 3-story high commercial spaces. My understanding is that current zoning allows for 22 residential units and the developer is asking for 178 residential units, plus a 110-unit senior housing facility AND a parcel designated for a future religious assembly. In my opinion, this is too big of a swing from the existing zoning and has the potential to cause a wide array of concerns.

One concern is traffic. I encourage you to think further than the impact this one subdivision may have. There are many phases of Linda Vista left to be built that include large apartment dwellings that must be considered when analyzing future traffic movement. And if public river access is created, one can only imagine that will draw a significant amount of traffic in and out of the area during the summer months. At certain times of day, the current traffic congestion is intolerable, particularly at the stoplight where Walmart, Miller Creek Rd, and Brooks St merge. The school and the roundabout at Miller Creek and Lower Miller Creek are also challenging at certain times of day. And, as we all know, there is one way in and one way out for all of the residents of Lower Miller Creek with no alternative exit routes currently being proposed. Safety needs to be prioritized before we keep adding more and more units to this area.

Another concern is the school. Taxpayers recently paid for Jeanette Rankin Elementary school to be built and rumor states it is at capacity. The developer's proposal states anticipation of the units adding roughly 78 more children to the area. Where are they going to go to school and who is going to pay for it if a new school now needs to be built? The developer's proposal alludes this is a community problem, not a development problem, but I beg to differ. If development were to ensue within the current zoning code, there would not be anywhere close to 78 children needing to go to school in this area, rather the number would be more like 10.

Another concern is the lack of public services and public transportation servicing the area. Placing a 110-unit senior living facility in an area with no community services and no public transportation is irresponsible and just plain doesn't make sense to me.

Another concern is costs that will likely be passed along to existing homeowners in the area. Apparently, those people should expect an upcoming SID to pay for the proposed roundabout and sidewalks on the east side of Lower Miller Creek Rd. If riverfront land is dedicated to the city, who is going to pay for the maintenance of that? And then, as aforementioned, there is the issue with school capacity and who pays for a new school or two if they are needed?

The point of zoning, according to the zoning regulations, is to "preserve and enhance the residential character of existing neighborhoods". I personally do not see how the subdivision as proposed meets this point in any way, shape, or form. And no, this is not an issue of NIMBY. This is an issue of allowing development to stray too far from existing zoning at the expense of current residents and the character of our community. I am fully supportive of seeing this parcel developed, just not as the current proposal stands. I plead for you to ask the developer to go back to the drawing board and come up with a development proposal that does not require so many shifts from the existing zoning. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Tammy Bodlovic – 11/8/22

Ms. Tripard, I am not opposed to developing this area, but I am opposed to changing the zoning. When we built our house in 2007 it was for the area and the neighborhood. I am greatly concerned already about the increased traffic in the area and prior stated comments about access issues. Allow development to move ahead but please keep it as it was originally zoned. Please do not approve the zoning increases.

Joe McCaffery – 11/8/22

Please stop allowing this wealthy, politically connected developer to abuse the zoning process to further destroy our neighborhood. Per the original charter, Lower Miller Creek was never designed to be a high-traffic, high-density neighborhood. These are narrow streets with houses close together as it is. The zoning law changes enabled this greedy developer Tollefson to shoe-horn a high-density apartment complex into a PARTIAL lot has negatively impacted the character of the neighborhood and it has been detrimental to our property values -- and yet our property taxes are still going up! The

poorly designed, hastily built apartment complex was in addition to the new elementary school that the city sold as being complementary to the neighborhood. The warm rendering that was promoted on the sign in front proposed site for the school was a lie. The building was never painted to appear like it did in the proposal. Instead, it ended up being a cold, gray industrial building that sticks out, especially at night with the idiotic way they have chosen to illuminate the building. The city also never put in sidewalks or a proper curb across the street from the school, next to the park, so cars parking up and down the street before and after school have turned the grass along the now-pothole-covered street into a muddy mess in the winter that freezes over and makes the walking path dangerous. And it turns into a bunch of smelly puddles in the spring and summer because the water can't drain properly -- it makes the bad mosquito problem in the area that much worse.

We also now have people speeding through our neighborhood in the mornings and afternoons to avoid the crossing guards and crosswalks nearest to the school. Again, these are narrow streets, not designed for high traffic. And in the winter when snow is built up and cars are parked along the street - God forbid it's garbage day and trash bins are also in the street - it really gets dangerous. Will it take a child walking to school being hit by a car for anyone to notice? Like the greed-fueled apartment complex, the school was completed with corners cut and those cuts have harmed our neighborhood. All of this was supposedly done out of necessity to address the overflow issue with Cold Springs -- Then the powers that be closed Cold Springs Elementary entirely! So the overflow problem STILL exists. In fact, I know of families in the neighborhood who can't get their kids into the new school as it is. And you want to expand the neighborhood even more? AND change the zoning laws and shoe-horn in even more high-density homes?! How is this even up for debate? To consider yet another irresponsible development proposal, smack in the middle of a flood plane no less, that continues to destroy the character of this neighborhood is insulting to the people who have been living here and paying their property taxes and HOA dues since 2006. You're destroying what families in Miller Creek have spent their lives trying to build and maintain to benefit the same people. Pushing through yet another change to the zoning laws to yet again allow the Twights and Tollefsons to make millions more, is simply not right or just.

Jeff Brown – 11/8/22

I have some significant concerns with this proposed development. I'm not entirely opposed to a medium density subdivision, but for a subdivision this size and dense I believe it should be a prerequisite to have a second access route to 93/Brooks. Also, Lower Miller should first be widened with sidewalk and bike lanes on both sides, and the speed limit lowered to 25. And as a third prerequisite, there should be a solid plan for additional parks along the Bitterroot and closer to Lower Miller Creek, as well as a requirement to preserve natural open space. Without these prerequisites FIRST in place, this development would be very detrimental to the neighborhood and overall community.

Randi Bernhardt – 11/8/22

This would be a horrible idea unless the infrastructure is made better before allowing it. The school is busting at it's seams already, there is not enough emergency routes. Please stop allowing these divisions without properly securing infrastructure

Joe Blattner – 11/8/22

City Council, Planning Board, Case Planner, and other key decision-makers,

Please record my opposition to the Riverfront Trails city rezone application. Although change is inevitable and development should be expected on many undeveloped lands, rezoning the subject property to a higher density will result in negative, and irreversible, consequences. I accept development will occur on the subject property; its zoning, however, should remain unchanged.

A review of submitted documents and their proposed changes demonstrates a disregard for future concern for ingress and egress in the Miller Creek area. Higher-density infrastructure will bring increased use. Egress from the greater Miller Creek area in times of emergency (e.g., flooding, wildfires) seems to be merely an afterthought. They state, “much of Lower Miller Creek Road is operating at an acceptable level under present conditions” however, the increase of residents this rezone would result in no longer pertains to ‘present conditions.

Furthermore, the applicant slyly pawns the ingress/egress infrastructure as not their problem and assumes the City of Missoula will address it (“Future improvements planned by the City will address current concerns with traffic, congestion, access, and nonmotorized connectivity, as well as future growth and additional trips per day anticipated as a result of this rezone request and future development.”). The city will be burdened with this problem, taxpayers will need to pay more for that fix, and residents will still only have one street for ingress and egress to the ever-expanding area.

It is important to note, the documentation states that emergency services (specifically law enforcement) are all within 5 miles of the proposed Riverfront Trails rezone (pg. 43 of PUD and pg. 5 of the Rezone Application). The PUD document contradicts itself later when it is stated law enforcement is 5.2 miles away. A quick search reveals mapping results of 5.7 miles. These contradictory statements are a resounding concern and bring up questions regarding the veracity of any statements made in all submitted documents. These are not trivial matters when law enforcement access (ingress/egress) is of critical importance.

Increasing the number of Missoula residents, in higher density, will expose those residents to the perils of flooding. As evident from the 2018 floods in Missoula, this poses extreme danger to residents, first responders, and others. It was stated in the submittal package that “the proposed development is not in an area where no official floodway delineation has been made.” I implore our decision-makers to include in their metrics that rivers can and will shift and re-route over time. This combination, while maybe not ‘our problem’ today, will be a problem in the future. Future residents may not know or understand this risk, it is up to our public servants to protect them and prevent

undue hardship.

Please reject the Riverfront Trails city rezone application.

Respectfully,
Joe Blattner

Joe Yakawich – 11/8/22

The Maloney Ranch HOA has major concerns and strong opposition to the Riverfront Trails Major Subdivision proposal. Of major concern is the resulting increase in traffic of hundreds of cars on the already congested Lower Miller Creek Road--the only direct artery serving this entire area. In addition, we vehemently oppose the request to rezone this area from anything other than the current low-density development. Respectfully,
Joe Yakawich Maloney Ranch HOA.

Doug Odegaard – 11/8/22

I am not opposed to this subdivision and its density changes. I welcome the addition of more density and the focus on affordable housing. I do believe there are a number of items critical to traffic safety and load including the lack of transit consultation that need to be addressed prior to the city allowing this application to proceed. The section of road from Linda Vista Boulevard to Christian Drive / Lower Miller Creek roundabout needs not only a speed reduction and traffic calming but also safety for the new roundabout being proposed. This section of road is very consistently a road hazard each snowfall and freezing rain event and must be properly designed in approach to mitigate accidents. The sidewalks and road improvements planned should be funded by the land developers in part and not placed on the area residents. This includes not only this subdivision but also Teton Addition given it funnels through the area. Funding of all of these improvements need to be accurately calculated and communicated to all parties involved to allow for a proper final vote. When the Teton Addition was approved several commitments including \$100K contribution to MUTD for pilot transit project never transpired (agreed by WGM but never placed into the final agreement to City Council) therefore with prior precedent in that case we want to make sure the neighborhood is not beset with a high burden of improvement costs when the profit of these subdivisions does not benefit the whole. The Senior Living Center is an interesting addition of "mixed use" yet there will be added traffic by its employees, visitors and emergency services along the corridor that add impact but don't contribute to the neighborhood itself. I would much prefer the additional zoning of a small commercial space for a convenience store/cafe/etc with housing above to reduce traffic in and out of the neighborhood overall. While some may say the new businesses at the top of Miller Creek suffice I feel it must be near the 1/2 mile radius to make for a walkable community space to support the density being proposed. Lastly the "Future Religious Assembly" must be defined as part of this subdivision approval. I feel very strongly about this given the unknown of having a heavily lit building in the nighttime hours that adds additional light pollution to the area. In addition it adds even additional traffic load to the area. This is by no means an opposition to a religious assembly building itself and if properly designed and blends into the character of the neighborhood could be

beneficial but if a large amount of land is devoted to parking and it does not contribute to the benefit of all around the neighborhood that it not be allowed to proceed in lacking detail for approval. The developer needs to disclose the building characteristics and daytime/nighttime presence before it can be approved. I will be participating consistently in this approval process as I did with Teton Addition and ask for your patience and willingness to hear questions and concerns like these and work collectively on solutions. In addition I ask the planners, developers and city council members to not rush this project for the sake of housing but to do it properly to leave a lasting legacy for all to enjoy. Thank you. Doug Odegaard

Tim Radle 11/9/22

I appreciate the city not universally taking any development off the table as there is such a dire need for this in all areas of Missoula. I am in agreement that additional allowances need to be made for non auto transportation especially near the junction between Lower Miller Creek and 93. There is a very nice bike path on the other side of this intersection, and a beautiful non auto bridge over Reserve street, perhaps making the final connection with these neighborhoods through bike path will convince those living in this area that they have another option than to drive their SUV downtown. As for the school bursting at its' seams, this was clearly designed this way rather recently in order to better shove other neighborhoods out of the replacement for Clark Fork Elementary. Anyone who did not see the neighborhood as growing when they built a new small school was willfully ignorant. I do see a lot of individuals advocating for a additional exit, and hope they won't raise the same fuss when that proposal inevitably comes around again. Suggesting that only other neighborhoods need to accommodate and pay for our communities housing needs is selfish. The North Side is opening over 200 low income housing unit this year, and creating space on the roads, schools, and neighborhoods for our neighbors, Miller Creek area is not so special that they get to sit the development of Missoula out.