

Cassie Tripard

From: S & D Sherick <shericksd@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 8, 2022 3:31 PM
To: Cassie Tripard
Subject: Public Comment on Riverfront Trails Development

Ms. Tripard:

I am a resident that will be directly impacted by this development. I live on Lower Miller Creek Road, a portion of my property is adjacent to the development, and the front of my property will be taken by the planned round-about. I have a number of concerns about the impacts the proposed development will have on our community, and in particular I am concerned about the impacts resulting from changes to the growth plan and the zoning regulations that will result in a dramatic increase in population density in this area.

First, traffic is already a problem for existing residents, especially with the addition of the Jeanette Rankin school. The infrastructure is insufficient for the amount of traffic we currently see in the area, and backups and bottlenecks are common. A new development that is primarily comprised of multi-unit dwellings will dramatically increase traffic flow in the area, resulting in even more congestion. The only real attempt at mitigating traffic appears to be the installation of a traffic circle and the addition of a boulevard with trees. This does nothing to actually mitigate traffic. The growth plan and the zoning regulations should not be amended to permit higher density dwelling.

Second, the proposed development also does not appear to include sufficient parking for the multiple vehicles belonging to each multi-family unit. Nor does it appear to include sufficient parking for recreation access. The development proposes a lot of open space, but to the extent that open space creates recreational opportunities – especially, for example, river access for floaters - and brings additional vehicles, it compounds the congestion issues. You are likely aware of the onslaught of parked vehicles near the Buckhouse Bridge during the summer months when people float the Bitterroot River. Such a scenario would likely play out in the proposed development as well, with less ability to be absorbed under the current proposal.

Third, the open space preserved in the proposed development is insufficient to offset the environmental impacts of the development itself. It will reduce the wildlife corridor and have a significant impact on the riparian zone. The number of wildlife/vehicle collisions – already too high – will increase. Habitat and food sources will deplete, and the overall increase in noise, activity, and accessibility to the river will negatively impact the wildlife that call this area home. We should be mindful of potential pollution issues to the Bitterroot River that may arise, harming the trout and river-dwelling wildlife as well.

Finally, we have very real concerns about the impacts to groundwater flows and waste/contamination for the existing properties. Our property is served by a handful of wells, as are others in the area. The disturbance to the groundwater flows and the pollution caused by the proposed development have the very real potential to contaminate our wells, and to cause serious pollution problems and/or sediment changes when – not if – flooding occurs.

The PUD Development submitted by Tollefson/With Engineering, and in particular the proposed amendments to the Growth Plan and zoning regulations, fails to sufficiently account for the impact of the increased density on the already insufficient infrastructure. The detrimental impacts on existing residents and their properties cannot be overstated.

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