

Nancy McQuarrie via Engage Missoula

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The following reasons sum up our concerns regarding the High Park Views Subdivision. We are asking that at the very most this subdivision be denied and at the very least Landon's Way has to connect to Simmons on the east side of the subdivision.

1. Impact on health and safety: A. When Tom Boone owned this parcel of land the city would not allow him to develop the land until he put through a connection from Landon's Way to Simmons. This was a result of the traffic safety concerns addressed by the city. Landon's Way and Woodbine Place were not built to sustain the amount of traffic that currently use these streets. Adding a new 13 home subdivision with 8 car trips per home per day will cause significant traffic safety concerns. When there are cars parked on Landon's Way, it becomes basically a one lane road and Woodbine Place is even worse. This situation becomes downright dangerous in the winter. The additional traffic impact to Hillview will be significant. 2. Impact on wildlife habitat: A. There is a large grove of old growth pine trees, up to 40 at least, that will likely be destroyed by this subdivision. This will impact the wildlife as these trees provide homes for a Great Horned Owl, a pair of Red Tail Hawks, Magpies, Flickers, Meadowlarks, and multiple LBBs (little brown birds). 3. Impact on local services: A. The public schools in this area are already overwhelmed by the number of students they must provide for. Any amount of additional students no matter how small will have a detrimental impact on the public schools. In the winter the school bus does not stop at its usual stop on Woodbine because of the icy conditions that exist and the safety issues. Parents are required to drive their children to school which adds to the traffic safety issues. On a more positive note, the young people and adults that use the Landon's Way cul-de-sac to do drugs and participate in other illicit activities will have to find another place to go which means less clean-up of the cul-de-sac on a daily basis on our part. Thank you for reading our comments! Sincerely, Nancy and Rowan McQuarrie 1201 Landon's Way

Gary Brooks via Engage Missoula

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We are contacting you to object to the High Park Views subdivision. One of our primary concerns is the disturbance of the ecosystem in the area. A wide range of animals and plants are native to that area. Creating any number of new homes there will disturb and possibly ruin that ecosystem. Recently, a person from that neighborhood observed a mother fox carrying a fresh meal to her kits. Many bird species that do not thrive in less timbered or more densely timbered areas also live there. There are some old-growth pine stands in this area. We seem to just keep destroying such stands of trees. There is only so much space left for wildlife; destroying their habitat several acres at a time seems criminal. Related to the above is Missoula's great love of open spaces. The city and county spend huge money to preserve or create open spaces. Much of the area above this point on High Park has been taken for housing. We have, seemingly happily, rid the south hills of much open space. Recently a trail area in Missoula was cleared of tents and debris. The reason given: we can't have those areas and the animals living there disturbed by people who are not just passing through. So, here is a chance to keep open space without further taxing citizens. I suggest we take this opportunity to keep open spaces. Another concern is the underground water sources in this area. According to some who live in the neighborhood, people have had to deal with water issues in their basements. These have, apparently, been caused by underground springs. Further, that part of town is poorly served by city busses and even snow removal. It seems daft to add even more people to an area underserved by transportation services. Along that same line of thinking, Landon's Way and Woodbine just were not built to sustain heavier traffic flows; this means traffic safety issues will only increase if more houses/people are added to the mix. Yet another concern is for area schools. If the plan is to take school-aged children down the hill to Russel Elementary, they are soon at maximum capacity. If the plan is to take the school children up the hill, I believe Chief Charlo is already maxed out (or soon will be). This is not a not-in-my-backyard issue; instead, this is a concern on a larger scope. Missoula has a growth problem, of sorts, but placing more houses in this area seems very unwise and a bit ignorant to us. On one hand Missoula begs for more open space, then slashes seemingly well-suited open areas from the map. Infrastructure concerns are real, and throwing more people into an area poorly connected to well-planned infrastructure seems daft. How much more unique plant and wildlife habitat will be destroyed before we finally take notice? This is not a good place for yet another "crop" of houses. Rethink the proposed development, then remove this from any further plans. Sincerely, Gary and Julie Brooks

Char Hay via Engage Missoula

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The proposed High Park Views subdivision site is very unique in that its property line borders the High Park Conservation Area, making it an extension of the sloping terrain of the conservation area. This gem of combined South Hills open space can be seen from across the valley floor. It is filled with old-growth trees and criss-crossed by a wildlife corridor of trails that house deer, raccoon, denning fox, owls, hawks, small birds and other small animals. This prime piece of open space, so highly valued in Missoula, informs the neighborhood character and quality of life for both humans and wildlife. We do not support the proposal as it stands. Our comments in response to issues in the proposal are as follows: Variance Requests #1 - #4: Ms. Donnelly is asking the city for four variances: dead end-streets, cul-de-sacs and circle and loop streets, street designs and improvements, lots and blocks and Simons Drive. In a nutshell she is asking to construct a major subdivision on a cul-de-sac with traffic access solely from Landons Way with the exception of one lot that would be accessed from Simons Drive. The recurring reason behind each variance request is that the steep slope of the property and existing topographical conditions makes it "impossible" to adhere to building codes. The proposal is the "only feasible design" and requiring otherwise by "enforcing the strict letter of the regulations would present a hardship to the owner" due to the topography of the site. Response: Nonsense. It is hyperbole to suggest that anything other than the current proposal is impossible. After all, this area is the South Hills, not the South Flats. For decades the entire South Hills area has been composed of streets that have been built to accommodate varying elevations and grades of land. For some historical background, this property was owned for years by WSB, a partnership. Originally, they proposed a subdivision with ingress/egress from both Landons Way and Simons Drive as required by city code. According to Tom Boone, "the costs of developing the property at that time precluded our investment in the development costs." They later tried again with another layout that also had two exits. Eventually they chose to not go forward with the subdivision process.

Unfortunately, when Ms. Donnelly bought this piece of property she purchased land that, because of slope and access issues, makes it costly and difficult to develop. And she is now asking the city to waive four major code requirements, (which we assume are in place for good reasons,) to make it easier and less costly for her to move this project forward. Her perceived hardships do not outweigh the impact that her proposal has on the entire neighborhood. Mitigation for Variance Request #1: "Mitigation for this variance (construction of a cul-de-sac) generally includes two pedestrian access improvements to the site." Response: This mitigation solution makes no sense. Requesting a building/traffic variance has nothing to do with, and is not mitigated by, including conservation area pedestrian access improvements. There are already pedestrian access sites in place in two locations. Parkland Dedication: "The portion of the property to be developed consists of a relatively consistent slope" with a "steeply inclined hillside, along its eastern property line, that will mostly be designated as parkland as dedication to the city." Response: We have walked this property for the last sixteen years. This statement is a red herring. The portion that is described as "parkland" is adjacent to a cliff that goes down a steep draw into a gully. We don't even let our dogs go down the edge of that gully. How dedicating this area to the city benefits the city is questionable at best. Impact on the High Park Conservation Area: Not addressed by this proposal Response: This proposal does not include any

buffer between the subdivision and the conservation area directly to the south. The edges of the south lots (i.e. back yards) are directly adjacent to the lower trail of the conservation area. Buffer zones are used to protect terrestrial habitats from surrounding land-use practices and negative human influences (e.g. movement of sediments, soil erosion, stress on wildlife from noise and human activity, etc.) that could damage these areas. There is nothing in the proposal that discusses the impact of a major subdivision on the existing conservation area. This is a major omission.

Traffic Considerations: Analysis from IMEG indicates that a single family home can “generally be expected to generate about ten trip ends per day and one or two in each peak hour.” They conclude that “Given the [Landons Way] street width and layout, this level of new traffic is not expected to create any prominent traffic impacts to current users of that street segment.”

Response: Using those statistics, at this time 20 end trips per day pass by our house which is located one house away, on both sides of Landons Way, from the proposed entrance to the subdivision. Twelve new homes would theoretically increase that number to 120 end trips per day. That is a 500% increase. That percentage of course increases as traffic moves further down Landons Way and Woodbine toward Hillview.

We are skeptical about that statistic. Does the 10 trips per day estimate include multi-vehicle households, visitors, deliveries, trash pickup, snow removal, contractors and so on? There are also major safety issues that need to be addressed related to increase in traffic. Because there is not a left turn lane from Hillview onto Woodbine, that intersection is problematic at all times of the year but particularly during the winter. Cars turning from Hillview onto Woodbine have to make a hard-left-almost-U-uphill turn. If you compare the Woodbine intersection to the Black Pine intersection one street below (which does have a left-turn lane off Hillview) there is a dramatic difference in the curb radius and corner clearance. The curb radius at Woodbine and Hillview is not large enough to accommodate two cars entering and exiting at the same time. With the major increase in traffic anticipated by further development on Hillview, the Hillview/Woodbine intersection is going to get worse. Numerous times in the past, cars have missed the curve at this intersection and collided with street and stop signs at the Hillview/Woodbine intersection, at times ending up high centered on private property on the corner. There is a white cross just past the Hillview/Woodbine intersection which indicates a past fatality. Because of the steep slope, vehicles traveling downhill on Woodbine have to stop well away (uphill) from the intersection in order to allow the vehicle making a left turn from Hillview onto Woodbine to enter. In winter the incoming vehicle has to hope that it can avoid vehicles coming down (a polite euphemism for speeding down) Hillview, as well as accumulated snow and ice, as they make the left turn onto Woodbine.

Vehicles trying to make a right turn from Woodbine onto Hillview sometimes have to drive up on the right-hand sidewalk to avoid incoming vehicles. This is a daily issue in good weather but snow and ice berms exacerbate the problem significantly because of the corner clearance and the steep grade of the street, turning that intersection into one lane for both incoming and outgoing traffic. We have included pictures of this intersection in winter in our public comment that is attached to the subdivision proposal. Additionally, because of inadequate width Woodbine narrows into a one-lane street from

Hillview to the Landons Way intersection because no-parking signs are not enforced, neighbors' cars are parked on both sides the street and snow berms create a one-lane street in the winter. Combine these facts and it's clear that there are significant safety issues that would only be compounded by increased traffic, negating IMEG's conclusion that there would not be negative traffic impact from the new development. The obvious solution is to continue Landons Way through to Simons Drive, thus providing an alternative ingress/egress. In fact, Ms. Donnelly currently owns the property at 503 Simons (lot 13 in the proposal) which already accesses Simons via a driveway. She may not prefer to make Landons Way a through street, hence her variance requests, but not doing so creates an undue hardship on Landons Way homeowners and it is certainly not impossible to do. Other concerns include but are not limited to: 1. Potential water issues: As noted in the proposal there are numerous springs and seeps in the South Hills. There is a permanent spring that closes the sidewalk just around the corner from us and neighbors have had water issues in their basements. The subdivision property already has a spring that feeds a small pond at its base. Although we are not downhill from the subdivision we are concerned about the affect that unleashing any water source could have on the property in our neighborhood. 2. Potential for further lot subdivision as mentioned in the proposed covenants that we would have no recourse to impact. 3. Vegetation - we are unsure when the aerial photo of the property was taken, but it is not an accurate representation of the trees on the property. Contrary to the vegetation report, the trees on the property are not "young and therefore small pine trees" and they are scattered throughout the property, not just the easternmost portion. During the initial IMEG presentation, an IMEG representative stated, "A lot of earth is going to have be moved and trees removed" to terrace the proposed houses.

4. Mitigation for loss of wildlife habitat is not addressed in the current proposal. There are specific problems about the proposed development as noted above. But beyond practical matters we also regret seeing another bit of within-city-limit open space - and particularly open space that is the continuation of a conservation area - lost to development. Tracy Stone-Manning, in her tribute to John Engen said, "He understood that the open space surrounding our town ... is not only critical to Missoula's economy but a fundamental part of who we are as Missoulians." We can only ask, is it critical? Once open space is gone, it's gone forever. According to the subdivision proposal, "Ultimately the goal for the subdivision is to help fill the much-needed demand for housing within Missoula." Playing the "Missoula lack of housing" card is not appropriate in this situation and it has not been our experience that altruism is a prime motivator for most property development. This proposal is trying to fit a square peg into a round hole: city requirements should be set aside because of the the difficult topography of the site and resulting hardship to the developer. Frankly, we are more concerned about the impact of the proposal on the character of our neighborhood, the impact on quality of life, the impact on the adjoining conservation area, wildlife and the environment and the safety of all who use the affected intersections and streets.

Thank you for considering our comments.

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It would be great if comments could be formatted so that they make sense. I wrote mine in paragraph format but when it got posted it's one, big run-on sentence. What a mess!