

600 Colorado Gulch Rd.
Missoula, MT 59808
June 11, 2020

Dave deGrandpre
Development Services
City of Missoula

To Staff of Missoula Development Services, Members of the Planning and Zoning Board and Members of the Missoula City Council:

We write to offer comment for the official record concerning the application for rezoning of two parcels of land at 2920 Expo Parkway. Over our 41 years as residents of the Grant Creek valley we have witnessed considerable change, much of it positive, but we have several serious objections to this rezoning request.

“Our Missoula” City Growth Policy provides many excellent goals and objectives for positive, sustainable growth of Missoula. We submit that the **current** zoning at 2920 Expo Parkway provides an opportunity to implement many of them -- **if done correctly**. However the proposed rezoning and development severely misses these opportunities. It incorporates no mixed-use commercial/residential development that would comprise a “cohesive sustainable neighborhood,” no low-income housing or opportunity for home ownership, almost no parks, green infrastructure or playground areas, no linkage to public transportation and is distant from shopping, schools and restaurants, forcing residents to rely totally on automobiles to connect to city services, amenities and employment. Alternatively, these parcels could become a proud legacy for Missoula if their development went through the formal subdivision review process where these issues could be resolved.

Second, we am very concerned about safety, the focus of Growth Policy Goal SW 10. Our home lies within 300 yards of the two most-recent “Colorado Gulch Fires.” Sight of flame and smoke sent many neighbors fleeing. A major wildfire, a not unlikely possibility, would trigger heavy traffic flow out of the valley. The addition of up to 2,500 vehicles in the proposed rezoning/development could severely hinder both evacuation (our **ONLY WAY OUT**) and entry into the valley by emergency vehicles. Anxious Grant Creek residents caught in town and “looky-lous” would attempt to enter the area, together with emergency vehicles, and traffic flow from Prospect and the proposed 2920 Expo development could prove a disastrous bottleneck above the I-90/Grant Creek Road intersection. The planned reconstruction of that intersection this summer will unfortunately be adequate only for today's traffic with no consideration for future growth. Before any significant increase in traffic on lower Grant Creek Road is permitted (such as would be generated by this rezoning and development) we must have an alternative second way out of the valley and effective evacuation plans. This should be a priority matter for Missoula.

Thank you for your consideration.

Wendell and Barbara Beardsley