

July 21, 2020

5430 Prospect Drive  
Missoula, Montana 59808

To whom it may concern,

We have resided in lower Grant Creek since 2003. Our attraction to the area was the proximity to the city, city services (fire, sewer, water, etc.), peace and quiet, open space, family atmosphere, sense of community, school district, and access to trails. We submit this letter in opposition to the proposed rezoning of the Grant Creek/2920 Expo Parkway 44-acre parcel. We believe the Grant Creek area is not suited for a 950 dwellings (max 1,185 dwellings) development in contrast to the existing zoning that would allow 502 dwellings. After review of the rezoning application, traffic study, and discussions with Grant Creek neighbors, we believe there are major concerns and issues to rezoning the 44-acre parcel of land that have yet to be thoroughly considered nor adequately addressed. These concerns include:

- 1) Traffic bottleneck at Grant Creek and I-90 that will likely extend south on Reserve during peak traffic hours.
- 2) Added degradation to existing roads at the I-90 interchange that are already in poor condition (reoccurring potholes).
- 3) Evacuation routes and bottlenecks in the event of a wildfire in the Grant Creek drainage.
- 4) Capacity for Hellgate School District to accommodate influx of new students.
- 5) Construction noise lasting for a period of 5 to 10 years.
- 6) Exacerbated water drainage issues in the area with a greater area of non-permeable surfaces associated with the higher density of residential units and larger parking areas.

This rezoning does not take into consideration the current culture, allure, and sense of community that has defined Grant Creek residential area. The current zoning provides an opportunity for over 500 dwellings on a 44-acre parcel. The proposed rezoning would allow for over 1,100 dwellings in the same area. Additionally, due to the steep hillside slopes on the west side of the 44-acre parcel and development regulations, the dwellings will be concentrated on about half of the parcel. It is also unclear if the developer has contacted the Yellowstone Pipeline Company (owned by Phillips 66) to confirm development over the existing pipeline that runs through the property. The pipeline is currently inactive but is still present and contains an existing right-of-way. This is just one example of potential issues that have not been adequately addressed.

The primary concern against the rezoning is the road traffic. The traffic study submitted by the developer focuses on the first year of development, which includes less than half of the proposed construction of the new dwellings. The study concludes there are no traffic capacity issues in the area with the proposed rezoning but that traffic operations are the issue. We disagree with this conclusion and believe the study does not adequately take into account seasonal influences to congestion along the I-90 and Grant Creek/Reserve Street interchange. The proposed mitigation efforts for the interchange will greatly improve current traffic congestion issues and flow of traffic based on current traffic levels, but is not believed to address the additional 5,000 vehicle trips per day once the proposed development is complete. The traffic study only provided an analysis of an increase of about 1,500 vehicles per day.

The traffic study looks at data collected in April and October and does not address the increase in summer traffic or anticipated growth in summer traffic in the Missoula area in future years. Nor does the study adequately address the additional daily vehicle traffic on the Reserve Street corridor. Additionally, the study assumes the Stonebridge Drive (a private road) will be available as an entry/exit point for the new development and does not consider Expo Parkway may be the only entrance/exit to this development. Lastly, the study does not address traffic bottleneck issues that would result during any emergency evacuation of the drainage due to wildfire. Unlike the Rattlesnake Creek drainage, Grant Creek has one entry and one exit point for all residents. The Stonebridge Road also serves as an emergency exit for Prospect Creek residents in the event the Prospect Creek bridge is not accessible (which occurred in 2011). It is a major lapse in due diligence to consider rezoning that would more than double the dwelling numbers of an area without a proper review emergency evacuation options. This is a dire concern for many residents. During a normal day, traffic is often backed up to Stonebridge with current residential dwellings in the drainage. The addition of 5,000 vehicle daily trips will have a significant and negative consequence to the area especially if the roads are not maintained better than current standards (e.g. perpetual potholes) and capacity of the roads is not increased. This is not simply a traffic operations issue.

A second concern is for the Hellgate School District. The school district recently built a new building to add capacity for more students to the district. However, this was based on existing zoning in the area and primarily to address growth along Mullan Road. The new space at Hellgate did not account for the rezoning of Grant Creek and addition of 500 dwellings that could result in an additional 500 students or more to the district. Currently, adding a significant number of students to the school district poses major challenges as we are coping with the current pandemic (Corona virus) and planning for the 2020-2021 school year. If the rezoning is approved, there is potential for over 400 new dwellings to be constructed by the end of 2021. This could add over 400 students to a school district that is already facing some major challenges with the current pandemic. It is critical that a dialogue occurs with the school district to discuss concerns and challenges associated with a large pulse of new students to the school district and bussing system. It is not appropriate for the developer to just assume the district will work through the logistics.

The third major concern is construction noise for the next 10 years. The current zoning allows for just over 500 dwellings and the proposed zoning allows for over 1,100 dwellings. The developer proposes 5 to 10 years of construction. The first phase of construction will be completed in 2021 with over 400 dwellings. The idea of 10 years of construction adjacent to Prospect Creek residential area will not only reduce property value but impede on the peaceful outdoor experience that residents moved in the area for. Currently, we hear the noise associated with the current parcel being utilized as a staging area for the Reserve Street road improvements and our land is not immediately adjacent to the 44-acre parcel. Residents are accustomed to neighborhood noises and occasional projects, but to listen to construction for up to 10 years is an incredibly burden. This area is not in downtown where high-density dwellings are expected (currently zoned) and are a location that is more appropriate to address the Growth Policy for Missoula. The Grant Creek neighborhood is on the outskirts of the city. Residents understand construction of a new development for a short duration, but 5 to 10 years will impede significantly upon immediate neighboring households and Prospect neighborhood in general.

Lastly, there is great concern over storm water and water drainage for this specific area. Currently, the end of the paved road on Expo Parkway is inundated several inches over nearly the entire cul de sac during and following rain events. This occurs with the existing drainage system, which includes the 44-acre parcel that is 100% permeable. Higher density dwellings include and require large impervious

surfaces for parking and large building complexes, which result in an increase in run off in the area. This will add to existing drainage issues and overwhelm the roads. In addition, we commonly see storm water drains in the adjacent neighborhoods flooding and not maintained by the city. This leads to the concern about the city's ability to adequately maintain existing system in addition to addressing larger loads to the from the proposed development.

I would like to thank you for reviewing our letter and concerns. We would like to stress that our opposition is to the rezoning of the 44-acre parcel and not to the existing zoning. We believe the developer could create a beautiful, complimentary development under existing zoning conditions that would blend a new community into the existing community without a major disruption or severe negative consequence to traffic, school system, neighborhood aesthetics, noise, and ambience.

We hope your decision will be based on preserving the community, ambience, character, and culture of the Grant Creek community.

Your Grant Creek Neighbors,

Ben and Kristi Webb