

The Honorable Mayor John Engen
435 Roman St.
Missoula, MT, 59802

Re: 2920 Expo Parkway re-zoning application RM1-45

Dear Mayor Engen, Council Members and Development Committee,
As a retired Captain of the Missoula Fire Department, and concerned member of Friends Of Grant Creek, I feel I should address dangerous safety concerns involved in the re-zoning proposal.

Pedestrian safety is already an issue in the Cottonwoods area of Grant Creek. With vehicular traffic concentrated by use of motels, a gas station, and recreational use at Snowbowl, further increases would endanger public safety.

Evacuation of residents in case of natural disasters-fire, seismic activity, floods, or blizzards, is already complicated by everyone depending on only one avenue of escape. Grant Creek Road is a two-lane local thoroughfare with no shoulders that would be closed in case of vehicle accidents.

Emergency Response vehicles would be impeded by evacuation traffic, and any blockage of the road would risk the lives of every resident of Grant Creek. The nearest fire station is Station Four, at Latimor St. and West Broadway. It is 2.2 miles from Mr. Ault's property, and response times would be dependent on how congested traffic was at the time of an emergency. Snowbowl Road is six miles from Station #4, and Bench Road is seven miles. That is a significant stretch of two-lane road with no shoulders to navigate when residents are fleeing with their families, pets and towed belongings. Blockage at any point could have fatal consequences. The city would be implicated because of their lack of foresight. With over 300 students and more pre-school age children added to the neighborhood, the recreational opportunities offered in the proposal are woefully inadequate, and young folks would clog the streets and trails, endangering lives. There are no public parks for them to go to recreate safely.

There are no provisions for public streets that would meet safety codes. In case of fire, hose lines would make evacuation and egress virtually impossible, and four story apartments would necessitate elevated platforms for rescue and response. As Engine Four would be the designated first-in responder, the platform truck would be left in the station until another crew could respond to Station Four. Again, hose lines would complicate response times, endangering the lives of any people trapped on upper floors.

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