Grant Creek Village/2990 Expo Pkwy Rezone Public Comment 8/27/2020 to 9/10/2020

Grant Creek, we currently have two lanes coming in under the interstate that merge into one lane in front of the gas station. We have hair-raising traffic issues where those lanes pinch to one, as people try to turn right into the gas station, left into the motels and apartments, and go straight up Grant Creek. We have had a number of accidents in this area in recent years, from vehicles hitting each other as they try to merge in, and also from vehicles getting T-boned while attempting to turn left on to Grant Creek Road	zoning change request is approved, would create traffic gridlock even more than what we have now, that would not be alleviated by the current outbound lane improvements. This gridlock currently not only happens during the morning and evening "rush" hours, but also all afternoon on most Fridays. A lot of comments have addressed the issues with getting out of Grant Creek, but not many have addressed the traffic issues coming into Grant Creek. For traffic coming into Grant Creek, we currently have two lanes coming in under the interstate that merge into one lane in front of the gas station. We have hair-raising traffic issues where those lanes pinch to one, as people try to turn right into the gas station, left into the motels and apartments, and go straight up Grant Creek. We have had a number of accidents in this area in recent years, from vehicles hitting each other as they try to merge in, and	Sep 02 20 03:25:17 pm	Kristi	DuBois
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from the Starbucks/gas station/motel/ area. No changes are planned to alleviate this traffic situation. Adding traffic from 500 new units trying to get in and out under current zoning will be bad enough, but adding 900+ units will be much, much worse. During winter, the left-turn vehicles going into the quarry area will need to deal with late afternoon traffic coming out of Snowbowl. I have not heard of any proposed changes to help alleviate this situation. You might want to check the accident records for this area.

In the recent past, we asked about getting traffic circles installed, similar to those at the Van Buren exit. We were told it would be decades before that could happen. Traffic circles would help move traffic in and out of Grant Creek, but would not help the people trying to get in and out of the motels and residential areas off Expo Parkway and Stonebridge. A stop light at either of these roads into the quarry area would likely back up traffic all the way to the interstate, at times. It will take some creative traffic engineers to come up with a good solution for this.

I just heard in your meeting today the comment that apartments do not generate as much traffic as the same number of units of single-family dwellings. I find it hard to believe this would apply to apartments in this setting, where no public transit is available.

The interstate is a large barrier for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. For years, I have asked Mountain Line if they could provide bus service into the mouth of Grant Creek, and was told no. I bicycled to work for a number of years. Bicycling out, then in to Grant Creek on Reserve Street is best described as combat bicycling and is very hazardous. I would have loved to have taken the bus, but as I did not work downtown, there were no reasonable options available to me to get to work by bus. Even if I had worked downtown, I would have needed to bicycle over a mile out of Grant Creek before getting on a bus. There were just a few other brave cyclists who bicycled to work from Grant Creek, and one was hit by a car that was turning left into Stonebridge Road from Grant Creek. He was coming south on his way out of Grant Creek. The car that hit him was cutting between cars that were backed up, waiting to get out of Grant Creek. Once you get out of Grant Creek, the bicycle lanes on North Reserve are very narrow and large trucks often take up part of them. These narrow bike lanes are impassible in winter due to snow piles from plowing. Without safe non-vehicle transportation, adding

those additional housing units from the requested zoning change will result in proportionally more vehicle traffic in and out of Grant Creek, which will contribute to climate change. This is not a climate-friendly zoning change.

Grant Creek is an impaired drainage, yet it still supports bull trout. I was horrified when Grant Creek was put underground in a tube where it goes under the interstate, back when they widened Reserve Street. I am not sure what an alternative could have been in that situation, short of widening the interstate bridges over Grant Creek and Grant Creek Road. I fear that too much additional traffic will result in even more of Grant Creek being put underground, to make room for additional traffic lanes. Grant Creek serves as the local beach and suffers greatly from foot traffic along the banks and small rock dams built by people to create swimming holes. The amount of damage is correlated with the number of people here. People from 500 additional housing units will be less damaging than people from 900 housing units. The proposed zoning change is not good for Grant Creek.

To be clear, I am not opposed to sharing the neighborhood with apartments. I have lived in apartments in the past, and I totally understand the housing needs in Missoula. If we had appropriate transportation services in and out of Grant Creek to handle tripling the number of residents here, I would support the zoning change. Those services would have to include 1) traffic circles at the interstate, 2) bus service to the bottom of Grant Creek (even better would be service into Expo Parkway, where there are apartments currently), 3) a 2nd way in and out of Grant Creek, perhaps a road going over to the Airway Blvd exit, and 4) a wide, safe bicycle/pedestrian path going in and out of Grant Creek. We could also use a park and ride lot at the bottom of Grant Creek, to facilitate car pooling and people taking the bus.

I understand it may be a chicken/egg issue, so do you build the infrastructure first or wait until a higher number of people are living here? It took us 20 years just to get the additional lanes going out of Grant Creek. That is unacceptable. If you want to put high density residential in Grant Creek, you need to provide the infrastructure first. In the meantime, most high density housing should be built on the other side of the interstate.

The developer can nearly double the number of people living in Grant Creek under the current zoning. We in Grant Creek will certainly be doing our fair share of new housing under the current zoning which includes apartments, so please do not accuse us of NIMBY. Please deny the zoning change request, and maintain the current zoning. Thank you for considering these comments and for all of your hard work on this difficult issue.			
'Mayor Engen, City Counsel Women and Men, and all other zoning officials I am writing today to voice my opposition to the 2920 Expo Park Rezoning. My issues of concern are many: 1) These units are all marked as rentals - yes? That's an issue for folks like me who are just at the cusp of home ownership - the prices of new homes keep rising with demand and supply has been continually limited. Placing new rentals on the market does nothing to solve this issue. 2) Traffic - already, every morning I sit at the red light by the 90 interstate for two, even three cycles. While I wait, I watch vehicles from Starbucks and Exxon struggle to get in lane and often times cut people off or place themselves at risk by blocking the northbound lane in their attempts to squeeze in. If it's that bad now, I can only imagine how bad it would be with another 1,185 multi-dwelling homes. Additional lanes might fix the problem we have now, but it will not be enough for the proposed future traffic Potential water source issues. It has been brought to my attention by Missoula City-County Health Department Officials that water was in question during the last Hotel, Restaurant, Housing increase. Those buildings jeopardized water availability to established homes further up Grant Creek. Reliant and consistent water availability should be closely considered. Will these 1,185 multi-dwelling homes decrease city water availability to homes further up the street? How will this potential water shortage affect the ability for fire departments to put battle fires up Grant Creek? This needs to certainly be ironed out before approving any homes, let alone an increase in home density. -Fire Danger/Ability to evacuate Grant Creek - As I noted above, we already have a traffic issue at the mouth of Grant Creek. Let's add to that the proposed 1,185 multidwelling homes will only have one access point to their new development. How do you think this will affect evacuating Grant Creek Residents in a timely efficient manner?	Sep 03 20 01:51:33 pm	Heath	Carey

-Increased Grant Creek Road drivers - Certainly many of the folks in these proposed 1,185 multi-dwelling homes will want to explore the upper regions of the canyon. Within the last 6 months we have noticed an increase in traffic. Not only that, but we've also noted an increase in the average speed of these new visitors. As with any wilderness front, animal density increases the closer to the wilderness one travels. Increased traffic with increased speed spells disaster for local fauna - already, we've seen an increase in vehicle caused animal fatalities. How do you propose we curtail this in the case of rezoning? I know it's hard to make decisions that have big impacts on your local community. This decision is no different. Only by looking at the facts and taking all of our concerns to heart will you be able to reach a justifiable ruling. Luckily, there are a serious of repeating concerns in these messages - focus on those. Only if you can account for those concerns with noted publicly identified solutions, should you move forward with this rezoning. Thank you for your time, Heath N. Carey			
I grew up in Grant Creek. It is such a beautiful place and my parents still live on the property purchased in 1987. We saw a lot of changes and development growing up which was welcomed. I loved making new friends in the newly developed neighborhoods, trick or treating in the Creekside Apartments which became a new tradition the year they opened, and I still remember how excited I was when the Starbucks was built! I moved to Las Vegas in 2004 and have gone back home to visit quite often. That said, I was SHOCKED when I visited Missoula this past Summer with the amount of traffic bottle-necked at the light to exit out to reserve. What would normally be a one stop light delay, took upwards of 10 minutes just to get out of at times. When my mom told me about the new development and that the project would be sharing the same entrance and exit of Grant Creek as the residents and current business, I couldn't even believe a project of that magnitude was being considered. There is absolutely no way more congestion can be added to Grant Creek Road and it not to be a safety hazard. Especially with the fire seasons Montana has been having and Grant Creek being at risk for an evacuation. This isn't about not wanting more development, build for Missoula, yes. But unless one can logistically find a way to have	Sep 04 20 08:11:43 pm	Kalika	Moquin

a different in/out for the new development in Grant Creek, it shouldn't be happening period.			
Submitted by Bert Lindler for Sandy and Paul Fortmann, Grant Creek:			
We have obviously been spoiled for the last 30+ years being able to smoothly exit our box canyon without a stop light on the only road out, and now			
There is no feasible way in this current configuration of roadways that Grant Creek Road can support/handle the amount of traffic it now experiences! Instead of adding to the increasing snarl/road rage of this intersection, we should be carving immediate changes to handle:			
1) The long drive-thru line of Starbuck's patrons who can only hope to take cuts from sympathetic drivers to enter a waiting line of cars winding beyond Rocky Mountain Elk's entrance,			
2) The MacKenzie River Pizza diners who must drive north first to enter the line of idling vehicles,	Sep 05 20 09:02:20 am	Bert	Lindler
3) The Town Pump travelers who hope we are not on our way to a doctor or other emergency to allow them to move into the centipedic line to likewise exit this singular exit and this is all on the east side.			
On the west side, the identical process is occurring with those wanting to work into the waiting traffic from the commercial businesses of three motels (C'mon Inn, Motel 6, My Place), the Cracker Barrel restaurant, and a residential area.			
Uffda!			
Currently, it is not dissimilar from an unregulated 4-way stop every block from the freeway to the Prospect Park subdivision, the lassssst turnaround for some distance			

without, we should add, a left-turn lane on a 45 mph county road.			
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We have waited through three to four traffic light changes just to get to Reserve Street. How long do those escaping forest fires have to wait sitting amongst the burning forest as those that have their Starbucks coffee in hand anxiously plead to move in line?			
When all this extreme politeness shows its awareness, reality says we residents could never feasibly exit our beautiful valley.			
PLEASE CONSIDER BUILDING A NEWLY CONFIGURED ROADWAY SYSTEM THAT CAN HANDLE ITS CURRENT NEEDS WITHOUT ADDING AN OVERWHELMING INFLUX OF ADDITIONAL WEIGHTINESS.			
Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and your superior conclusion!			
Sincerely,			
Sandy & Paul Fortmann			
P.S. Please consider implementing a secondary main exit from this valley, necessary from the onset of populating Grant Creek.			
My name is Mitch Lang, a home owner/resident Grant Creek. In reviewing the			
application, notes and slides for the 2920 Expo Parkway Rezone. I want to let you know			
I feel strongly against high density dwelling rezoning. Due to the location and the high			
speed traffic of N Reserve, every resident will be required to use a car, stressing the current roadways and causing a large amount of delays and congestion. Having biked			
from this area numerous times, it is difficult on the best of days with Reserve Street			
traffic to reach the nearest grocery store, Albertson's 3.7 miles away.	Sep 05 20	N 4:4 a la la III	Lawa
I would support any additional town home/condo projects as I feel this provides	10:48:19 am	Mitchell	Lang
affordable housing options, pride in ownership and less traffic impact, while minimally			
impacting current Grant Creek residents. To me this project can be both a short- and			
long-term success with the objective to creating home owning Missoulians in this part			
of the city. Update: Understanding there is currently construction at this intersection I just			
attempted to leave the neighborhood and met what would be a 15-minute wait to exit			

on a Saturday morning. I am doubtful adding two lanes approximately 200 feet back will severely mitigate the traffic issues enough to justify adding the expanded traffic to the neighborhood. This is a perfect example of putting the carriage ahead of the horse. In commenting in regards to the fire evacuation plan, I am also skeptical given an emergency you will be able to fully convert the northbound lane to southbound as inevitably with a wildfire you will have people going north to retrieve other people and pets from their home during the crisis. To me this is an absolute deal-breaker. The developer needs to have this contracted out to see what the actual impact is given normal, rush-hour and emergency traffic. Again, I am absolutely against the high density rezoning project without extensive research on the impact and mitigation prior to construction.			
My wife Maggie and I have lived in Missoula County for more than 25 years. Since 2008, we've lived in the Prospect Meadows neighborhood of Lower Grant Creek, a short distance north of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's headquarters. We've enjoyed becoming friends with a lot of our neighbors—not only in the Prospect subdivisions, but also farther up the valley. As a result, we know these truthand we want to share them: 1) My neighbors, my wife and I would actually welcome having apartments and/or apartment buildings nearbyprovided that sufficient infrastructure is in place before such apartments become occupied. 2) My neighbors, my wife and I believe our city needs to have more housing density in more places, including in our part of town—especially for the sake of the entire Missoula community's health and sustainability. 3) Unlike the city's Northside area, the Grant Creek area has only one way out for vehicles whenever an emergency arises. 4) This single way out is already far too overloaded to be safe in an emergency. 5) The existing choke point—in the southbound lanes at the traffic-light-controlled intersection of Grant Creek Road and Interstate 90—is already compromised and	Sep 05 20 06:25:41 pm	Frank	Allen

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unsafe in the event of a wildland fire in our valley.		
6) There is no evacuation plan for the Grant Creek Valley. None.		
7) The current residential population in the Lower Grant Creek area, combined with the hundreds of residents farther up Grant Creek Road, already translate into an excessive volume of vehicles for those southbound lanes.		
8) Not everyone acknowledges that our burgeoning volume of vehicles also includes those of all the guests and customers at Best Western Grant Creek Inn, Motel 6, C'mon Inn, My Place Hotel and the Cracker Barrel. The vehicles of these guests and customers must be counted!		
Yet when I watched and listened carefully to traffic-volume modeler Bob Abelin's recent (televised) presentation and his answers to questions. I found his methodology highly questionable and his responses unconvincing. Even exasperating.		
9) The total population of vehicles in the Lower Grant Creek area includes a whole lot more than Mr. Abelin apparently considered: It includes those belonging to all the employees and visitors at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's headquarters—as well as those of significant numbers of daytime workers. These workers come in trucks and vans, many with trailers. They come to deliver, repair, install, remove, treat, paint, mow, fertilize, rake, shovel or inspect.		
10) Keeping in mind that total population of vehiclesjust suppose a northbound ambulance has passed through the Reserve Street-Interstate 90-Grant Creek Road intersection at, say, 10 am or Noon or 2 pm or 4 pm, rushing to reach someone in the Prospect neighborhood who's having a heart attack and who must get to the hospital urgently.		
What worries us is what could happen when that ambulance, now carrying its patient, starts back south toward that same intersection—with no time to spare in reaching the hospital.		

Even with sirens blaring and horns blasting, would that ambulance be able get past around the line of 25-plus vehiclesfast enough to keep that patient from dying? Nearly every day, at those same hours just mentioned, the southbound lanes have lines of vehicles stretching north as far as the turnoff to the Elk Foundation and often beyond. I know this because I made the effort to watch those lines form and grow and then barely budge for quite a while. What would a delay of 10 to 15 minutes (if not longer) mean for the patient having the heart attack? And that's just the status quo! What would happen to such an ambulance and its			
patient if all 960 of Ken Ault's proposed apartment units had become occupied and if, as a consequence, all 1,500 of his proposed new parking spaces were filled? With that added density, what would happen if a wildfire were to come sweeping down			
the valley toward that intersection? What if the "post-rezoning" round of much-needed infrastructure improvements weren't completed by then?			
How much housing density is enough? And how much is too much? Frank Allen			
Dear Missoula City Council and Planning Department,			
My wife Karen and I live in Prospect Meadows on Lower Grant Creek. I thank the City Council for accepting our comments on the proposed Grant Creek Village Expo Parkway Rezone proposal. I am writing to oppose the proposed Rezone for the following reasons:	Sep 06 20 03:54:32 pm	James	Stutzman
1. As I write on September 5, the temperature is 94 degrees and the wind is gusting to 30 mph. There is thick smoke hanging over Grant Creek and Red Flag fire warnings have been issued across Montana. Sadly, climate change will lead to more catastrophic			

wildfires across the Inter-mountain West. Many other residents of Grant Creek have raised concerns about the threats posed to life and property if an emergency evacuation is issued on Grant Creek Road. I want to echo those concerns. At least one other writer reminded the City Council about the 2018 Camp Fire that destroyed the town of Paradise, California. That fire killed 86 people and destroyed 9,800 single-family residential dwellings. In the post-fire assessment, fire safety experts listed numerous factors that contributed to the devastating losses. One factor was the lack of secure escape routes. On the first day of the fire, the roads out of Paradise were gridlocked within an hour of the first evacuation order. In light of this tragic lesson, it seems counter-intuitive to add an additional 1,000-1,500 vehicles to the already over-taxed Grant Creek Road. 2. I have read the City of Missoula's Strategic Plan (2020-2023). The Rezone proposal appears to be at odds with the following sections of the Strategic Plan: - Safety and Wellness - Strategic Goals, Section 3: "Prioritize growth and development patterns that reduce household transportation." If approved, this Rezone would increase not reduce household transportation on Grant Creek Road and Reserve Street. - Community Design and Livability - Strategic Goals, Section 1: "Ensure pedestrian, bike and bus facilities connect residents to work, school, recreation, services and other amenities." Again, this Rezone proposal runs counter the the City's Strategic Plan and Goals specifically with regard to bus and cycling. Please contact us if you need clarification on our opposition to the proposed Rezone. James W. Stutzman

Karen L. Stutzman

I have been a resident of upper Grant Creek since 1987. With my husband, we raised 4			
children here. I am very familiar with affordable housing. I was the Transitional Housing Coordinator for the YWCA from 1994-1998. The proposed rezone is not the affordable housing needed here in Missoula. The developer, Mr. Alt has made that clear many times. The proposed rezone does not follow the 2015 Missoula Growth Plan – accept for density. It is not in line with Climate Change Missoula. It is not smart planning and does not take in consideration that Grant Creek is vehicle dependent – no bus route here, no safe bicycle path into Missoula. There have been many concerns and issue's voiced by many as to why the rezone would be disastrous to Grant Creek. The letters, research, time invested in really learning all the ways this rezone would devastate not only Grant Creek but all of Missoula should NOT be the responsibility of residents. It is incumbent on the developer to due this research. If Mr. Alt had done his homework, we would not even be discussing a rezone. Polluting Grant Creek will affect the Clark Fork. Hellgate Elementary will be maxed out after the Mullan Project adds 300 more students. Development Services voted 7-2 against the rezone. Please listen to their recommendation made to the City Council. In addition to the not solvable problem of one way in/one way out, the number of cars we have been seeing over recent years with the building of restaurants, Starbucks, 3 hotels, traffic from Snowbowl and daily visitors to RMEF has increased traffic so much it takes 2-3 light changes to get through the intersection! This morning (Saturday, Sept 5th) I took a picture of cars backed up past Stonebridge Road! That is unacceptable! This morning a fellow neighbor witnessed a man get out of his vehicle and angrily throw cones and barricades to the side of the road that were blocking traffic. I am not opposed to business and making a profit – unless to do so puts profits in front of the safety of residents. To approve the rezone doesn't factor in the huge increase of traffic, pollution – both to the Creek	Sep 06 20 03:58:28 pm	Dodie	Moquin

few to the detriment of many. Please follow your own Missoula Growth Plan, Climate Change Missoula and the 1980 neighborhood plan. In addition, please consider the expertise of the 3 retired firefighters who researched and let you know their very real concerns should the rezone go through. Also, the input from RMEF, the revised traffic numbers RT Cox submitted, the research and facts Karen Sippy presented. There is a huge body or research, facts and well thought out thinking that you will hopefully consider and vote no on the rezone. Safety before density! Thank you for your very careful consideration of this VERY important issue! Sincerely, Dodie Moquin, Upper Grant Creek Resident since 1987			
I write in opposition to the proposed zoning change. I agree with a great many of the comments already submitted in opposition to the change, especially those dealing with traffic issues. Let me add just a couple of points. First, I don't see how, once the proposed development is in place, we avoid having a traffic light at the intersection of Expo and Grant Creek Road. This will be necessary for the safety of foot traffic from the development to the commercial establishments on the east side of the Grant Creek Road. It's the most elemental part of making the development foot and bike friendly. It will also be necessary if the Mountain Line is persuaded to bring service up to this area, because it will have to have a stop on the east side of the Grant Creek Road. It will also be necessary to allow traffic in and out of Expo during the Snowbowl rush hour. This means, at even the most superficial level, that the projections from the traffic studies are simply wrong. A light at Expo will back up southbound traffic well into the two-lane stretches of the Grant Creek Road. It is likely that during the evening rush, traffic will be backed up onto the westbound exit lane from I-90. While it is not surprising that the developer is not overly concerned with the recreational infrastructure needs of his prospective tenants — at his meeting with the neighborhood council, Mr. Ault went on at length about the shortcomings in this regard of his development on the Mullan Road — but we can and do expect more from our City planning department. This is a narrow valley, and the availability of land for the use of dog-walkers, much less more extensive recreation, is quite limited. It is not only	Sep 10 20 10:30:20 am	Charley	Carpenter

privately-owned land along the west side of Grant Creek – currently habitat for bears and mountain lions, among others – and will violate the use restrictions in the Charlotte Reed Marbut Nature Reserve. For all the talk about climate change, and bike/walkability, this is a completely carcentric development. There is not now, and never will be, sufficient commercial development sufficiently close to this project to make walking practical for any but the most basic of errands. Even if the Mountain Line does come – and the stock admonition that the developer should work to make that happen is inapposite here, since the bus infrastructure is not going to be on his property in any event – it is still only one or two busses for the morning rush for a community with at least 2,000 adults. Anyone can handwave away issues for the future – we have a planning department in this City to anticipate problems like these, and to come up with solutions. 'Someone will probably have to figure this out some time in the future' is simply not good enough. The one-way-in, one-way-out nature of the Grant Creek valley is not unique in our area, and, in the past, other ill-advised developments have gone forward in other places. The fact that we've not done planning as carefully in the past is no reason to turn a blind eye to the issues we know will be caused by this development. The scale of this proposal is so far beyond the obvious carrying capacity of the existing (and reasonably contemplated) infrastructure that approval of this zoning change is an obvious mistake. I urge rejection of the proposed zoning change. **Charley Carpenter** 5510 Prospect Drive