

**From:** [Jordan Hess](#)  
**To:** [Dave DeGrandpre](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Additional comments on rezoning at 2920 Expo Parkway  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 2, 2020 3:10:02 PM

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Dave,

FYI. See below for comments from Kristi DuBois.

Jordan

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**From:** Kristi DuBois <kdubois@montana.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 2, 2020 3:02 PM  
**To:** Julie Merritt <JMerritt@ci.missoula.mt.us>; vonlossberg@ci.missoula.mt.us; Heidi West <HWest@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Jordan Hess <JHess@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Mayor Staff <StaffM@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Heather Harp <HHarp@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Gwen Jones <GJones@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Amber Sherrill <SherrillA@ci.missoula.mt.us>; John P. Contos <ContosJ@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Stacie Anderson <SAnderson@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Jesse Ramos <JRamos@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Mirtha Becerra <MBecerra@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Sandra Vasecka <VaseckaS@ci.missoula.mt.us>  
**Subject:** Additional comments on rezoning at 2920 Expo Parkway

I oppose the proposed zoning change and support keeping the current zoning for the parcels at 2920 Expo Parkway. The current zoning allows around 500 housing units. My primary concerns are lack of transportation infrastructure to support the additional housing-related traffic, associated impacts of vehicle traffic on climate change, and the negative impacts to the health of Grant Creek. I have lived in Grant Creek since 1995, long enough to observe a large increase in traffic generated by motels, Snowbowl, and additional housing, including the housing development where I live.

For traffic going out of Grant Creek, ongoing construction that will create three lanes going out of Grant Creek (2 straight lanes and 1 right turn lane) will help alleviate somewhat the current traffic situation, but not the future traffic volumes. Keep in mind that those extra lanes are quite short, likely too short to take care of the traffic that now backs up all the way to Stonebridge and beyond. If the parcels were developed per current zoning, the additional traffic will likely bring us right back to where we are now or more, in terms of traffic congestion. The additional traffic we would have if the 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 also from vehicles getting T-boned while attempting to turn left on to Grant Creek Road 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.

Kristi DuBois  
2523 Klondike Court