

September 10th, 2020

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Missoula MT

To the Members of the Missoula City Council:

RE: Housing Proposal, Grant Creek

We are writing to document our opposition to the proposed Grant Creek Housing Development on the grounds of **public safety**. Attached are multiple publications that discuss ingress and egress safety guidelines regarding wildland urban interface and population densities. According to the documented analysis of the potential fire risk, mid elevation watershed, fuel load and potential flame length, Grant Creek is in a high urban wildland fire risk. Grant Creek road currently has traffic congestion at the traffic light near the freeway in mid-day and mid-week with the current housing population. Increased housing in a fire situation is a recipe for disaster. There is one way in and one way out. In a fire situation, this poses a major public safety risk for all the homeowners who could be trapped in a bottleneck with no way of escape in a fire emergency. This one route in and out should be enough to deny this project. Recent fires and deaths in Washington, Oregon and California should give us all pause to consider the importance of multiple escape routes in case of wildland fire. Climate change should be factored into all decisions regarding placement of housing in the urban wildland fire interface. Escape routes and increased traffic flow must be part of every land use plan as climate change is upon us and we must be prepared for catastrophic fires. In 2000, Grant Creek did have a wildfire that was a concern for a one option escape route. As can be reviewed below, Montana Fire Guide, the Missoula Wildfire Protection Plan, the National Wildfire Coordination Group as well as multiple other publications and professional think tanks all identify multiple fire escape routes critical in community planning in the wildland urban interface. Grant Creek is the very definition of an at-risk area in a wildland fire.

We write this with a background in wildland fire. Karen had a 34-year US Forest Service Career and was a Region One Wildland Fire Incident Business Advisor for Montana and Idaho. John was on a multi-state US Forest Service fire crew for 10 seasons.

To back up our concern, we offer the following resources and request the following publications go in the public record:

- Ready, Set, Go! Montana Wildland Fire Action Guide -
https://mcfpa.org/Ready_Set_Go_Wildfire_Personal_Action_Guide_MCFPA_Strategy_Doc_g518.pdf
 - Access to multiple escape routes is recommended
- Missoula County Community Wildfire Protection Plan -
<https://www.missoulacounty.us/home/showdocument?id=30120>
 - Ingress/egress mentioned in the susceptibility and risk section
- National Wildfire Coordination Group – 6 Minutes for Safety – Wildland Urban Interface Watch Outs - <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/6mfs/wildlandurban-interface-watch-outs>
 - Access, ingress/egress mentioned

- Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network – A quick guide for community leaders - <https://fireadaptednetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/FACQuickGuide3.0.pdf>
 - Ingress and egress mentioned as factors that shape wildfire disasters
- Ready.Gov – Prepare Now - <https://www.ready.gov/wildfires>
 - Knowing your community's evacuation routes.
- Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands – Wildfire Community Preparedness - <https://ffsl.utah.gov/fire/wildfire-community-preparedness/>
 - Access mentioned as increased wildfire risk

Respectfully,

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Cc: Planning Board
Office of Housing and Community Development