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DRAFT TALKING POINTS re: REZONING TO HIGH DENSITY IN GRANT CREEK

MARCH 24, 2022 FRIENDS OF GRANT CREEK

This is a short summary of a longer document (with appendices). Contact RT Cox, birder1@bresnan.net.

INTRODUCTION

KJA Development proposes to build c. 700 housing units, 625 apartments and 75 townhome-style units, all as rentals. There are 635 occupied residential units, plus the first 105 of KJA's apartments, in the Grant Creek valley. Many other lots are awaiting development.

1. THIS PROPOSAL DOES NOT FIT THE CITY GROWTH POLICY

A review of "Our Missoula, City Growth Policy, 2035" and its companion document, "Our Missoula Development Guide (OMDG) Yearbook," makes it quite clear that high-density development of the KJA gravel pit is NOT consistent with the City Growth Policy.

Although a gravel pit may intuitively seem like a great place to build housing, it's not what it is, it is where it is, that creates issues with transportation and fire safety, and is inconsistent with sound planning.

2. THE EXISTING ZONING BETTER MEETS COMMUNITY NEEDS

The existing zoning allows about 300-344 apartment units on the south lot and 125-130 single-family homes on the north lot for a total of 425-475 units, after allowance for utility and pipeline easements. **Such development and accompanying burdens should satisfy anyone's expectation that "Grant Creek needs to do its share" to accommodate new housing.**

3. REZONING IS CONTRARY TO EXISTING PLANS

The proposal is not consistent with the Grant Creek 1980 plan. The proposal does not provide mixed-use development within walking distance to stores and necessities. It is not close to infrastructure or public transport. As planned it is not consistent with neighboring residential

facilities. It does not provide for needed single-family homes or opportunities for purchase of homes. Residents would be totally dependent on automobiles for every need.

City planners created, with public input, several documents to try to guide future housing development in ways which would “build inward”, reduce need for motor vehicle use, promote non-motorized transit, and place housing near to schools, shopping and services. Our Missoula Development Guide, Looking Forward 2018-2028 is one of them; it demonstrates that the KJA site is minimally suitable for 476 residential units. Another 351 units are identified as unsuitable. Our Missoula City Development Guide Yearbook 2021 similarly identifies the site as minimally suitable for 105 units; the planners suggested stronger regulations to pressure developers to build near schools and services. The recently completed Five-Year Review: Our Missoula Growth Policy (2021) emphasized familiar themes: build within walking distance of stores, reduce motorized transportation, promote small lot single dwellings, etc. The KJA project fails to meet all of those recently reiterated goals. (See pages 26-29)

4. **TRAFFIC INFRASTRUCTURE IS ALREADY UNSAFE**

Poorly controlled exits and entries at Starbucks, Town Pump, Expo Parkway (serving three motels and other commercial customers and now new apartment residents), and, to a lesser extent, Stonebridge Road, constitute dangerous conditions. KJA’s traffic consultant makes no safety recommendations, he just suggests more bicycle routes.

5. **NO ALTERNATIVE EVACUATION ROUTES EXIST DESPITE GROWTH**

The Grant Creek Valley is already experiencing growth in an area with unsolved emergency evacuation issues. There is only one road out for 635 + 105 residences plus Snowbowl traffic, commercial traffic and development on already-platted lots.

6. **NEEDED TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE DELAYED FOR YEARS**

City traffic planners would like to conduct a large-scale study of Grant Creek traffic patterns but there is no funding available for such studies in the foreseeable future.

7. **THE DEVELOPER IS NOT COMMITTING TO SOLVE TRAFFIC NEEDS**

None of the issues regarding (1) lack of mass transit, (2) no committed alternative transportation systems, (3) no proximity to parks, shopping, churches and schools and (4) lack of crosswalks and safe turn lanes, which concerned planners and the Council during the 2020 rezoning request, have been addressed.

8. **CLIMATE CHANGE**

Climate change is relevant to this rezoning request for two reasons and has not been addressed.

- ◆ 3000+ daily trips in motor vehicles from the new units to destinations with services will add to carbon emissions.
- ◆ Further, as noted by several government agencies, climate change is contributing to massive and more frequent fires. Most of Grant Creek lies in a WUI zone. Fire evacuation will be difficult at best; doubling the population of Grant Creek would be foolish.