

3/3/2024

Dear All,

Having reviewed all 53 documents (827 pages) provided in the “Aspire Subdivision 2nd Sufficiency Application”, we on the East Missoula Community Council have noted some concerns as laid out below.

1. Page 8 of the subdivision application states “[Due the property being surrounded by an urban environment, it has become increasing difficult to bring the needed farm equipment to the site to farm efficiently...](#)” If it was too difficult to bring in equipment to farm, it seems bringing in 1000’s of trucks to build roads and construct houses will be even more complicated. Details of the logistics plan (routes, time of day, number of trucks to be expected) should be provided.
2. Page 18 of the subdivision application states “[Water and sewer facilities have capacity for the development except for a small modification to the water system that the Developer recognizes and will do what they can to help.](#)” Further reading shows that this small modification is that when the subdivision is fully developed, there will be insufficient water capacity for Canyon River. They note “[An upsizing of a main in the Sommers Street area should solve the problem.](#)” This is hardly a small modification and would involve excavating Sommers Street, which is the main entrance/exit for the subdivision (90% by their own studies) What “help” are they proposing? Who would pay for this undoubtably expensive project? Is Canyon River aware of this insufficiency?
3. Page 25 of the subdivision application states “[Housing is estimated around \\$325,000 - \\$850,000 per unit depending on type. Rental units are expected to be between \\$1200 - \\$2600 per month.](#)” Given that the 172 single family lots are relatively uniform, one can imagine the low-end numbers will be the multi-family dwellings that are in the Phase 3 section. These homes edge right up to the freeway and appear to act as a sound/visual barrier for the rest of the subdivision. Add in monthly HOA fees and these homes look to be close to some of the most expensive homes in Missoula. They cannot be called affordable by any stretch of the imagination. (Also, the HOA documentation seems heavy handed, which has been shown to be problematic in other parts of the country.)
4. On the neighborhood character overlay and in the city rezoning application, the developer states their need for annexation so as to allow them to meet their goals of density and variety while also “[understanding the existing characteristics of the area](#)” and providing “[similar housing types, especially along the borders of the development](#)”. However, looking through the multiple maps provided (in particular

the existing slope category map which better shows the true lot size) it appears the typical Aspire lot is ¼ the size of the neighboring lots of the adjoining Canyon View subdivision as well as being well above the average price of a home in East Missoula. Seamlessly meshing with the rest of East Missoula cannot correctly be called out as one of their goals in our opinion. Neither can helping “[with the current house shortage Missoula is experiencing](#).” given the proposed cost of the homes.

5. This development is consistently called out as “medium” density on almost every document that has been submitted except for when variances are requested. On Variances 1 and 2, asking for reduced street widths, the development is called out as “low” density. Variances 3-6 request fewer roads and extended blocks. It seems the two requests are at odds with each other. Not only will the streets be narrower, but there will be fewer of them for this low and also medium density neighborhood. Additionally, variance 6 states that there will be 4 river access pathways. Only three are drawn on the plat, the fourth path to the river is at the end of the block and cannot be considered to “[help break up this block length](#)”. These variances are proposed for the primary purpose of maximizing the total number of homes that can be squeezed into a finite piece of property. To ask for six of them seems excessive. Also of note, the lot numbers do not match the variances making it harder to clearly see what is being asked for. Is there is a newer preliminary plat that is not included in the documents? If so, we request to see the updated plat.
6. The First Sufficiency Review dated October 19th 2023 requests the developer “[Select a new proposed road name for “Junction Way”](#) per the USPS addressing standards. The plat included in the documents still has the road named Junction, calling into question again if there is an updated plat that has not been made available yet.
7. Details of the Phase 3 section, with the multi-family homes situated closest to the freeway, seem sparse. That section is barely included in the roads and trails plan and completely absent in the landscaping plan. We feel that this section should be given more attention before final approval is granted. Its omission calls attention to the possibility the developer would like for it to be over-looked.
8. The updated traffic plan has some concerning statements as well. In particular “[The development would produce up to 2,266 new daily vehicle trips in this area.](#)” Further stating “[The direct traffic impact from the Aspire Subdivision development would be increases of 13 to 14 percent at the two Highway 200 intersections and from 55 to 60 percent at the other intersections along Speedway Avenue.](#)” and that “[It is possible for residents of the Aspire Subdivision to divert and use Speedway Avenue to Highway 200 to attain better access onto Highway 200, but the LOS issues at the](#)

Sommers Street intersection will likely remain above the desired condition.” We have consistently maintained that the development will affect traffic throughout the whole of East Missoula and this report has not lessened those concerns.

9. We know it is the intention of the developer to make improvements to Sommers Street, but with 23 power pole “bump outs” the majority of which are double (one directly across from the other) this does not look like a road that will be able to support 90% of 2266 additional cars per day not to mention the heavy equipment and deliveries needed to build the subdivision. On the “Sommer St Off-site Improvements” document these double bump outs need to be detailed. (Detail A is a section with no bump outs, Detail B has one bump out. The sections that have two should also be included, they are the ones that are most concerning but omitted from the drawing.)
10. The bus routes map appears to indicate the school bus pickup is on Speedway. With the longer blocks requested in the variances, and due to the layout of the property, some children will have long walking distances to catch the bus. Inevitably this will result in parents driving to the bus stop, thereby increasing the number of car trips per day above the previously estimated 2266.
11. The public bus route currently does not go to Sommers St, per the bus routes map, yet the Sommer St. improvement map shows a bus stop. Will the bus continue down Speedway to Sommers and then turn? That intersection has four power pole bump outs, reducing street width for the turn and then immediately stopping at the bus stop. However the Hwy 200 Corridor plan shows the bus continuing on Speedway until Staples which would make the bus stop on Sommers in the wrong location.
12. A small point but it seems hard to believe that no mammals have been spotted on the property since 1982, according to the included wildlife survey. It just calls into question the validity of the survey. The wildlife impact document is just a generalized survey of a much larger area. There are documents more specific to the site which are cited in the cover letter but not downloaded. These missing documents should be provided. (This was also noted in the First Sufficiency Review dated October 19th 2023)
13. A question raised in the first element review dated May 16th 2023, was will the two parks (Aspire and Canyon View) be connected. This was addressed again in the First Sufficiency Review dated October 19th 2023. While it seems the two parks will not be separated by a physical barrier, there is no path between them. There appears to be a slope which should have a path, especially if the park is going to serve as a

corridor for children to access the school bus. We understand the developer believes the city will take responsibility for this section, but we would like more details about this City/County divided park and the line between them.

14. Line 38, Neighborhood Character Overlay, of the First Sufficiency Review dated October 19th 2023 states “[Staff have significant and substantive edits to the proposed format and text to align the proposed overlay zoning with the existing Missoula Title 20 zoning. These edits and suggestions are being provided under separate cover.](#)” Where is this document? Is it document “**D1**” or is it one that has not been uploaded? If it is not uploaded we would like to see it.

In conclusion, the council has paid attention to this development since it was first proposed. We consider ourselves to be more informed than many of our residents about the project. But even for us this is a lot of information. It does not seem plausible that one 45-minute neighborhood meeting, almost a year ago, attended by 50+ people and generating 76 questions was sufficient. By our recollection, the developer had to leave to attend to a personal matter and ended the meeting abruptly. This does not feel like a project that has encouraged participation by the community it is trying to integrate into. Also, as noted in the first element review dated May 16th 2023, the responses to the questions were not included. They are still not included. Has this requirement been overlooked or deemed un-needed? With the missing responses and changes that have been made in the last year, it seems another neighborhood meeting would be prudent. Given the sheer number of times the developer pointed out the way that this project would be beneficial to the residents of East Missoula, we would think they would welcome a chance to come talk to us about these benefits. A single rushed 45-minute meeting feels to us like it was only done to check off a box on the application form.

Thank you for allowing us to review the documents and we look forward to hearing your responses.

Respectfully,

East Missoula Community Council

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