

Chris Taggart

From: Jeff Standaert <jeffs@pcimontana.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2021 1:46 PM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office; Chris Taggart
Cc: Jeff Burrows; Greg Chilcott
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RAL Trail

Dear Commissioners,

I would like to voice my support for a safer Golf Course Road. You guys know me, I work for PCI and work on several projects in and around the Hamilton area. I moved to Hamilton, on Merganser Lane, which is off of Golf Course Road in August of 2020, and love working for and in the County, and appreciate you guys taking a look at this project. Last fall I received a call from Peter Van Tuyn and he wanted some help with a trail he was proposing to come off of Golf Course and connect over to Marcus. Since we moved in, I was constantly wanting some sort of safety for my kids and pedestrians on Golf Course Road, so not only was this a great way for me to help out professionally, but I had personal reasons for wanting it as well, not to mention the gut wrenching response to want to do something, from the tragic loss of Robert the year prior. My oldest son has almost been hit twice by a passing vehicle, on different bike rides. We are constantly on guard with our kids about not going into the Golf Course Road, without an adult. So, the RAL trail was a great project I got to help with, and it really solidified in my mind the momentum that exists from the community, toward a safe and accessible pedestrian travel way to be installed along Golf Course Road.

From an engineering stand point, I believe the danger lies in the fact that you have three steep drop offs along the shoulders, there are all kinds of utilities and bushes in the ROW, and the sight distance of the road seems to encourage people to speed up and down the hill. The road is 24 feet wide, the same width as East side Highway, which is adequate travel way, but not for the addition of pedestrians. The difference between Eastside Highway and here is, the ROW is typically around 100 feet for the highway, the ditches are typically bigger, and the neighborhoods are further spread out, typically. The speed limit is 35 mph and Eastside is 70 mph. More people are going to want to walk or ride a bike down a 35 mph road than a 70 mph road. Not that Eastside doesn't need a bike path too, but the need at Golf Course is greater, and more practical, in my opinion. Golf Course Road accesses some 300 plus lots. Many of them densely packed. All these families desire the safety of their loved ones. So the lack of shoulder and flat areas for people to walk or ride, pushes them on to the road, and cars are forced to slow down, and encroach into the opposing lane, slowing down opposing traffic. If drivers don't slow down, we know what can happen. I don't think any amount of signage or traffic calming devices are going to really do much to slow people down, or allow for safe pedestrian traffic. I think the best thing to do is give the public another location to walk or ride.

When you live up Golf Course there are no other avenues to get out of the area, other than going to the east and out to the Stock farm, several miles out of the way to get to town. The road from Big Corral East, is considered a minor collector. The portion from Big Corral Road to Highway 93 is classified as a Major Urban Road. There are not too many Major Urban Roads in America that don't have some sort of pedestrian facility. The traffic and congestion is only getting worse, as more empty lots continue to get built in Arrow Hill, and Broken Arrow, Skyline and other subdivisions. Even our company may be working on another 20+ lot subdivision in the area, and there could be more. If sewer main were able to come into this area the possibilities are endless. As this area continues to grow, a great step would be to allow for this trail to be built.

I also must say, this could be seen as a conflict of interest, as somehow I am trying to push this, to feed myself work. This could not be further from the truth, as I truly am just affected daily by the lack of safety on that road, and concerned for my kids and my neighbors. I truly just want to see this part of Hamilton grow and flourish for the wonderful families that call it home.

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