

Chris Taggart

From: Scott Butcher <winston.butcher@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 12:46 PM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office; Chris Taggart
Subject: [EXTERNAL] North of Stevensville/Eastside Highway Project

Dear Ravalli County Commissioners - I live in Florence at 5331 Fiddler Ct. My back yard sits right along the Eastside Highway and looks to be right where the North of Stevensville/Eastside Highway project will start (immediately south of the traffic circle). I'm very glad the project will be able to make the stretch of the highway safer and I'm very grateful MDT has been reaching out to the community in advance of the project. I posed the following concerns to MDT when I attended a community meeting they hosted about the project and they said ownership of my concerns lies with my commissioners, therefore I'm reaching out to you. The major concerns I have as a resident that lives on that portion of the Eastside highway has to do with excessive noise pollution and public safety. When automobiles exit the traffic circle going south, the moment they leave the traffic circle they tend to aggressively and (often) loudly accelerate because the posted speed limit is immediately 60 mph. Our stretch of highway from the traffic circle to roughly the Hurtt Ranch is truly a neighborhood with many children present. My wife and I are proud parents to 11 month old twins and trying to walk around our neighborhood and especially along the highway pedestrian path has become an unsafe and incredibly unpleasant experience. Unfortunately, even the sight of a mother walking her young twins in a bright red stroller isn't enough to get many people to slow down and drive safely or respectfully. My wife now generally refuses to walk our children in our neighborhood out of fear for the safety of our boys. Also, the traffic noise pollution that constantly bombards our house, especially around 8am and 5pm is becoming unbearable and we're losing the ability to enjoy being in our own yard. Therefore, with the highway being improved, I anticipate an increase in traffic to the area and therefore a subsequent and significant increase to the danger we face as residents as well as a substantial decrease in quality of life due to more noise pollution. I'd like to respectfully request that the speed limit coming out of the traffic circle be lowered to a residential level of 25 mph and then gradually begin to increase its way back to 60mph after the neighborhood has ended and the road truly becomes more of a highway (just south of the Hurtt Ranch). Additionally, given the anticipated increase in road noise, I'd like to request noise mitigation features be placed in our neighborhood (solid fences and/or trees) along the highway so we aren't all adversely impacted by the increase in noise pollution due to this project. My family (and my neighbors!) would be incredibly grateful if you can make every effort to ensure this project does not come with a detriment to the safety and quality of life in our neighborhood.

Additionally, the posted speed limit along Hidden Valley Road, which also runs through the heart of our neighborhood is 40 mph and there are no sidewalks. There is literally no way to safely walk around the neighborhood and I've had to jump into the ditch with a baby stroller on multiple occasions because motorists often fail to slow down or even recognize there is a pedestrian on the road. Is there any way that road can be reconsidered for a slower speed limit or even some sidewalks? As it stands, we often feel trapped in our cul-de-sac due to the fact that both Hidden Valley Road and the Eastside highway are gaining more and more traffic with each passing day and the courtesy of drivers on the road seems to be substantially waning.

I'd be more than willing to chat further about what we experience as residents in the neighborhood or even host a commissioner to come experience the issues and dangers we face due to aggressive and disrespectful motorists. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. And thank you for being willing to engage the community!

Respectfully,
Scott, Lindsey, Eli, and James Butcher



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