

Chris Taggart

From: Amie Porter <ajporter2@msn.com>
Sent: Friday, April 8, 2022 3:13 PM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Lower Woodchuck Rd

Commissioners,

We were one of the residents who sent a previous email regarding the unpaving of Lower Woodchuck Rd. After watching the meeting online because we were unable to attend, there are various points we would like to bring to your attention.

First off, the traffic road assessment being used is from 2017. Much has changed since then on our road and in our valley and that assessment is VERY inaccurate and out of date. Businesses have grown, there is increased traffic due to farmers now growing and selling their hay bringing in large equipment, trucks, and semis to load it, and the main source of traffic, the MPG ranch, has increased its use to the public as well as their guests and employees. It was implied that there is less than 100 trips in and out each day which is completely false. Our family alone has 10 trips a day or more. That is not including other residents or business (Browns Nursery and MPG ranch) traffic, which as mentioned before is considerable. Before a decision can be made, it seems as though there needs to be a more up-to-date and accurate traffic study done over time.

Second, has there been any consideration as to contacting Missoula County to chip in on the maintenance of this road? A good portion of the road is in Missoula County, so it would seem before you can tear out a road, you would have to attempt to contact them and problem solve. They probably have a say in the matter and might just help with the maintenance. We will contact them to see if this has been done and bring this matter to their attention.

Third, residents and businesses on Lower Woodchuck should be given the option of the possibility of a SID tax to maintain the road. Tax payers and residents should be given more information and the opportunity to offer solutions.

There is also the concern of using Magnesium Chloride on the road IF it should be unpaved. There are many environmental concerns because we have a fragile eco-system here. Lower Woodchuck Road is right above the Bitterroot River. What about the implications of it leaching into the river or getting there via run-off. The chemical is known to kill plants and trees. Potential fire concern comes to mind when we start killing plants and trees and we already have an erosion problem on the west side of the road right above the river. The current paved road mostly deteriorates during spring thaw due to water running over the road versus going in the ditches. The ditches are clogged or too shallow. It is very possible for the county to correct that so the road will not wash out in certain problem spots and there would be way less maintenance.

We have a dirt/gravel driveway and just our traffic alone takes a toll on it. Lower Woodchuck would become a complete washboard and pot-holed mess. Having Lower Woodchuck unpaved to save money is a complete oversight because with the vast amount of use it gets, and the way the environment and spring run off is, there is going to be CONSTANT maintenance of the road, which means more money. We encourage you to do a more thorough study of the traffic, environment, and to contact Missoula County because they have residents who pay taxes on this road and that county should help out.

The fact that we see new subdivisions being put in all around Florence with paved roads really leaves us angry and frustrated when you say there isn't enough money to maintain our road. Our valley is growing at a rapid pace bringing in more tax dollars. We pay a considerable amount of taxes and to have our property value decrease on our over million dollar home is unacceptable. This is a problem that can be solved. Please don't look for an easy fix that is actually going to cost more money in the near future.

We would very much like a response back regarding this email and for you to consider some solutions mentioned above and to further study this.

Sincerely,

Amie and Jeremy Porter
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Florence, MT

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