

For Inclusion in the Public Hearing for re-zoning Lindley Creek Rd property

My name is Ursula Girard and I live at 1402 Coldwater Avenue.

I would like to state my opposition to the rezoning of this property for the following reasons:

Current Zoning. This property is already zoned R2 and R7 which allows for the density requested by the developer. My assertion is that the developer is requesting the rezoning in order to allow the mobile home park, as a quick and cheap way to develop this property and maximize profit. Merritt already has at least four mobile home parks, as well as a couple of areas in town which are predominantly mobile homes. I don't think these should not be considered a viable long term solution to development in our town. Encourage the developer to come forward with a proposal for an attractive, low-rise, townhouse project that will not look out of place in the landscape.

Sidewalk Access. Collettsville currently has no sidewalks, with the exception of the new subdivision above the river. If the Mayor and Council are willing to vote to accept that up to 373 units of housing will be built across from the school, have they budgeted for the addition of sidewalks throughout Collettsville to enable walking access to the new development? Actually, it is unbelievable that there is currently no sidewalk access to Collettsville school, in fact there is not even a decent shoulder on the road that leads to the school!

School Capacity. Does Collettsville school have the capacity for extra population? Given that it is a French Immersion stream only, one has to assume part of the population of children will be going to Central Elementary. Does Central have the capacity to accommodate an increase in students? Also, again, sidewalks, or lack thereof are an issue. There is no sidewalk to get to Central School on Voght Street.

Proximity to industry. This property is next door to a gravel pit/ quarry, and within sight of an increasingly developed industrial area which is noisy and ugly and dusty, and with regular hog fuel fires.

Extra burden on our healthcare system. Our local chapter of rural doctors of BC has gone on the record (in November 2020 referencing COVID) as saying that our emergency department has the capacity to handle one critically ill patient at a time: "How many seriously ill COVID-19 cases at once would it take to overwhelm Nicola Valley Hospital? Not many. We operate best with only 1 very sick person at a time needing our full attention. If our hospital has 3, 5, or 10 cases at once, no one who subsequently enters the ER for any reason can be served. Medical response to heart attacks, pneumonia, trauma, and many other ailments could be delayed. Our community's health care system requires a delicate balance and we must not allow it to become overwhelmed".

Currently it's almost impossible to get a family doctor in town. All of these people without a family doctor end up at the hospital to see a doctor as they can't go to a clinic. Yet, the city is entertaining the idea of adding hundreds of new housing units (potentially targeting seniors), without a plan for improving even the current situation of access to healthcare.

In closing, I do support low to medium density, low-rise residential development on the flats of Collettsville, given that it is close to downtown, and above the flood plain. I do not, however, support the high density apartment blocks, or the trailer part being proposed by this developer. Additionally, thought needs to be given as to how residential development on the flats will interface with the industrial operations on Midway Valley Road. The city needs to ensure all of its “ducks” are in a row before allowing large scale development in Collettsville, vis-à-vis sidewalks, school capacity, health-care availability for new residents, and increased traffic on bridges.

Respectfully,

Ursula Girard