

May 5, 2020

To: Saint Paul City Council  
Re: Mississippi River Vista  
File Number: 19-084-032  
Location: 104 North Mississippi River Blvd.

Purpose: Public comment submitted to the City Council in Response to Staff Report and Recommendation for the Final Plat for Mississippi River Vista

From: Peg and Charley Rich  
88 Mississippi River Blvd. N.  
St. Paul, MN 55104

Re: Sidewalk Planning On Mississippi River Boulevard and Otis Lane

Dear St. Paul City Council Members:

We would like to share some of our concerns regarding the planned subdivision and development of the property at 104 Mississippi River Boulevard, two houses to our north:

#### 1) Access

One driveway for only two of three home fronting MRB when all three front MRB and navigation is done by GPS.

Problems with this plan:

- Difficulty with deliveries
- Wrong entry to MRB driveway that does not serve the third home
- Traffic tie-ups with shared driveway unless it is two cars wide to accommodate entry and exits of cars, trucks and service vehicles. Vehicles should not have to back out onto MRB.
- Delayed response to emergency services to MRB homes with access only from Otis Lane

#### 2) Safety -- Sidewalks to nowhere

Continuation of the MRB sidewalk on the "home" side can never create a fully functional sidewalk due to the topography and severe curve in the road towards Shadow Falls. Dead-end sidewalks will lead pedestrians to cross MRB NOT at a crosswalk, creating a pedestrian safety issue.

#### 3) Traffic Congestion on Otis Lane

The Otis Lane plan calls for 3 homes and 4 driveways, yet only has one curb cut now. Due to the narrowness of Otis Lane and the additional traffic on the Lane, the angle of the driveways should be directed so traffic comes and goes directly to the north end of Otis Avenue. Parts of Otis Lane are too narrow to accommodate two cars. Having to back up with the curve and grade of the Lane would be dangerous, especially when there are parked cars – for example, during MRB road closures.

Otis Lane has a steep grade and curve like MRB. During snowy, icy weather, traveling south on Otis Lane is hazardous and, sometimes, impossible (as garbage trucks and snowplows can confirm). During this past (mild) Winter, we witnessed this on three separate occasions.

Otis Lane, besides being narrower than a standard street, has 2 way traffic (essential due to the angle of driveways onto the lane) and parking (essential for homes when MRB is closed) and utility poles along the pavement. While it is officially a street, it is the design of an alley and, essentially, a rear access to backyards and garages. Directing people down an alley-like lane does not seem wise when the sidewalk on Otis Avenue connects with Otis Lane on the north and south end (a distance of 5 homes). Adding sidewalks to this lane creates risks and safety concerns and only seasonal use.

#### 4) Discretionary/Cooperative planning

As area residents for 30 + years and healthcare workers for even longer, we want to reduce risk. When MRB was repaved, the city proposal called for removing the island by 80 N MRB. We, along with our neighbors, worked with the city to keep the island as a SAFETY NECESSITY. Every winter, multiple cars slide onto the island. That island has prevented multiple collisions and injuries and provides for a safe turnabout when conditions prevent traffic flow up the hill.

Well-intentioned rules, regulations and ordinances cannot always take every situation into account.

We look forward to working with the appropriate City Departments to resolve these concerns. In this spirit, we, respectfully, request that you visit the area to truly appreciate the terrain and challenges the sidewalks and curb cuts present. These issues cannot be fully evaluated by pictures or architect plans.

We would like to add that representatives of Streeeter Custom Builder, the Developer, have been excellent to work with and responsive to neighborhood concerns.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Peg and Charley Rich