

Millwood Community Association
On behalf of the City of Millwood's businesses
April 8, 2024

Mayor Kevin Freeman
City Council Member Shawna Beese
City Council Member Shaun Culler
City Council Member Dan Sander
City Council Member Kelly Stravens
City Council Member Andy Van Hees

Dear Mayor Freeman and City Council Members,

In January 2023, we, the Millwood Community Association, formally communicated our concerns regarding the proposed Argonne Widening Project. Our apprehensions centered around its misalignment with Millwood's Comprehensive Plan and the lack of transparency of project proceedings. Our concerns have deepened over the past year. Despite our engagement and the dialogue that ensued, critical issues remain unaddressed, prompting us to seek an immediate pause and reassessment of the project.

The 2007 study guiding the proposed widening of the Argonne corridor is outdated. It overlooks key infrastructural developments in Spokane County, including 7 miles of the North Spokane Corridor and Bigelow Gulch's overhaul, among other connectivity improvements that have shifted traffic patterns.

Millwood's Comprehensive Plan anticipates the North Spokane Corridor's capacity to absorb volumes of regional traffic, even hinting that improvements on Argonne Road might become redundant. The Comprehensive Plan explicitly includes clear guidance against the widening of Argonne Road, knowing that such an action will exacerbate community division and complicate pedestrian accessibility. This long-standing guidance seems to be conspicuously overlooked in the current project trajectory.

It took months to repave Argonne Road in the summer of 2009. During construction, visitors could not access local businesses and the businesses bore the burden of property disruptions/incidentals during the construction, leading to a loss of revenue and, in some cases, permanent closures. The current project's multiple phases will cause similar disruptions during the Winter of 2025 and the Summer of 2026.

Rerouting traffic through residential neighborhoods, without necessary infrastructure improvement, presents significant safety hazards and disrupts the tranquility of our community. This will be acutely felt in East Millwood, as diverted traffic will rely on E Empire – a road residents already worry is an unsafe speedway, overused by non-residents as a shortcut.

In the long term, this project fundamentally alters the layout of our town. The project, as designed, removes the northbound left turn at Argonne & Euclid. This restriction impedes access to businesses and harms their long-term viability, while also forcing local residents into longer, less direct routes. Widening Argonne prioritizes fast-moving vehicular traffic over the well-being of Millwood.

The project removes the north-south pedestrian crossing at Argonne & Empire – forcing pedestrians into the arterial which carries 30,000 vehicles daily. Pedestrians traveling north or south along Argonne will be forced to cross this widened corridor twice, magnifying their risk of danger. This will especially

affect those with mobility issues. This design flaw neglects the critical need for ensuring pedestrian safety and accessibility, ultimately compromising the walkability and livability of our community.

As proposed, the project locates a 10-foot-wide pedestrian path on the opposite side of Argonne from Millwood's business district. By positioning the pathway away from the commercial heart of Millwood, the project not only misses an opportunity to enhance the aesthetic vibrancy and accessibility of the area's businesses, but also leads pedestrians to the problematic crossing at Empire.

Our grave concerns stem from the project's misalignment with community priorities. Take for instance the constraints imposed by the railroad, which limit construction to a certain distance from the railroad switch heading into the paper mill. The city's decision to utilize the space entirely for the road widening prioritizes vehicular traffic flow over the safety and accessibility of local pedestrians and cyclists. This approach fails to consider alternative designs that could preserve the integrity of pedestrian paths and maintain safe access to the park and trails, which are crucial for the community's recreational and social well-being. These discrepancies show a project designed in isolation, not aligning with Millwood's civic spaces like Millwood Park, the Inter-Urban Trail, Argonne Library, and West Valley High School.

Just this year, Millwood sought extra funds from the state due to rising costs. Funds were awarded on the condition that Millwood reduce the speed limit on Argonne from 30 to 25 MPH to mitigate the safety point deductions for widening the road. Now, \$2.7 million in the project's funding is linked to a speed study, opening avenues for reassessment, enhanced participation, and ensuring a thorough review.

The inadvertent discovery of the TIB's funding conditions, revealed only through our persistent efforts to better understand the project, underscores the need for a more transparent approach from the outset.

At this critical juncture, we urge a pause on the Argonne Widening Project for a comprehensive reevaluation involving residents, businesses, and civic leaders. Our aim is to guarantee safe Argonne access for all, upholding and enhancing Millwood's identity as a "Vibrant City with Historic Charm."

Thank you for your attention and we look forward to hearing from you to address our concerns.

Sincerely,


Millwood Community Association



Krysta Hanson – Owner
Oh My



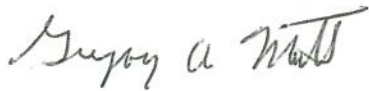
Jillian Labish – Owner
The Male Room



Gabe Thompson – Community Outreach
Millwood Masonic Center



Conrad Manfred – Owner
Kodiak Contracting



Greg Mott – Owner/Manager
Corner Door



Rachel Goch – Owner
Cutting Edge



Robbin Beach – Manager
A Rendered Thought



John Ferry – Manager
All Four Automotive



Cindy Martinez – Owner
Studio M Beauty Bar



Jami Bean – Owner
Ambition Physical Therapy & Fitness



Ryan Stockton – Owner
Stockwells



Celeste McGowan – Owner
The Paisley Pooch



Libby Carlson – Owner
The Old Mill



Ron Schafer – Owner
Schafer Insurance Agency



Jeff Postlewait – Owner
Rocket Bakery



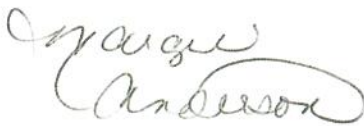
Paul Edwards – Owner
Argonne Cycle



Julia Postlewait – Owner
Rocket Bakery



Nancy Fischer – Co-Owner
Dynamic Weight Loss



Margie Anderson – CEO/President
Commercial Capital Corporation



Kristen Fischer-Black – Co-Owner
Dynamic Weight Loss



Tamara Britain – Operations
Dapoko | Bottles



Sarbjit Singh – Owner
Millwood Grocery & Spirits



Jeri Mainer – Owner
State Farm Insurance