

Promoting Robust Interaction Between Millwood Residents and City Government

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NOTICES:

- » **Comp Plan Review, 7/31/24**
City Hall 6:00 PM
Invest an hour in your future!
- » **SRTC Public Meetings**
Re: Argonne Corridor
8/06/24 & 8/13/24
Times TBD
- » **Millwood Neighborhood Advocates (MNA) 6PM**
Tuesday, August 20th,
Millwood Presbyterian Church



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"CONGESTION RELIEF": MORE CONGESTION?

The first train tracks in what is now Millwood were laid by the Coeur d'Alene Spokane Railway through Woodard Station in 1903. As the town of Millwood grew up around the tracks, trains carried commerce to the east and passengers to Coeur d'Alene Park. Now, decades later, trains are blamed in part for congestion on Argonne Road. Considering all parties involved in related issues – Union Pacific, Spokane County, the City of Millwood, Welch Comer, and an increasingly annoyed public – it's no wonder that a speedy resolution is sought. But experts note that widening Argonne will put Millwood's beloved Christmas tree – or more specifically, the tree's roots – at risk and create new problems.

A "congestion relief" plan was envisioned in 2009 and most recently discussed by the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) as they gathered public comment on projects scheduled from 2024 to 2027. Mayor Kevin Freeman was active in the discussion in 2009 and currently serves as Millwood's representative on the SRTC Board of Directors. Of greatest concern to Millwood residents is the amendment titled Argonne Road, Empire to Liberty Congestion Relief. Critics observe that the project is based on outdated traffic studies and data. Long-time residents assert that the project is not necessary due to Forker Road improvements that opened access to Spokane Valley and I-90, resulting in a verified reduction of vehicles and semis on Argonne. Additional relief is expected with the Bigelow Gulch Project 2, to be completed in October, allowing more vehicles to use Bigelow Gulch instead of Argonne on their way to Valley locations.

Of special concern to Euclid and Empire residents – already beleaguered by a manufactured home park and a 64-unit apartment complex just beyond Butler Road – are proposed turn

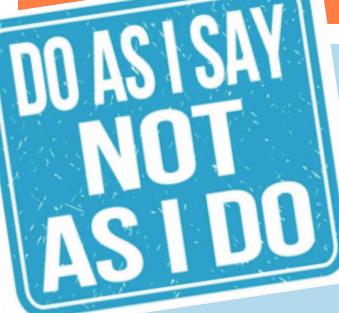
lanes funneling traffic into the pedestrian-friendly Historic District to the west and Empire to the east. The additional traffic is expected to endanger walkers, runners, and bike riders on roads that have well-documented problems with speeding and traffic so heavy that residents frequently can't back out of their own driveways. Installation of a turn lane would force pedestrians and bicyclists to cross five lanes of traffic. An island in the middle of Argonne further seems to pose danger rather than safety. Pedestrians and bicyclists would have to cross Argonne and the railroad tracks twice to proceed north or south or to Millwood Park. Over 18 businesses protested the "interruptions to our businesses during construction" isolating them from potential customers, threatening access and profitability.



By Will Maupin - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11097117>

Looking southbound on Argonne Road

Tenacious residents have called for improvements to crosswalk safety, better lighting and visibility, a "green arrow" regulating traffic, and passenger bridges instead of months of road construction. Long-time resident and business owner Vikkie Naccarato stated "With a much smaller price tag, Millwood's safety and success could be enhanced without taking away its unique character and charm." Cost, safety, and access seem to defy efforts at compromise.

**EDITORIAL****DO AS WE SAY, NOT AS WE DO**

Quick question: *Why is Millwood government so driven to push the Argonne widening project without regard for citizen concerns?* The Council does a good impression of listening, but they never seem to actually hear.

For months we asked City Council how we could be more involved in government; the answer was always, “come to the meetings.” The problem? There was little formal notice of upcoming agenda items, and even then we were only allowed two minutes to comment at meetings. After expressing our concerns over many months, the Council finally implemented a “two-touch” system. Action items presented at one meeting would not be acted on until the next meeting, allowing a one-month review period, except in an emergency. Not perfect, but better.

Then on June 11 they voted to approve an agreement to take property from Inland Empire Paper (IEP), our largest taxpayer, as part of an Argonne improvement project. The agreement was not on the published agenda; consideration violated the “two-touch” rule. This was not declared an emergency. The Mayor and Council were so eager to drive this agreement through they had to be reminded by their attorney that perhaps they should allow public comments. Four people urged the Council to delay consideration one month; that’s all, one month. The Council then proceeded with all haste to adopt the agreement as if those comments had never been made. The vote was unanimous (with one abstention).

Consider: This proposal is not in accordance with the Millwood Comprehensive Plan and is not consistent with the Argonne Corridor Study recommendations. Consider: 18 Argonne business owners signed a letter to the Council urging a pause in this project to allow more study and an update of data (the traffic study is 17 years old). Millwood Neighborhood Advocates submitted a similar letter. The Spokane Valley Chamber of Commerce has expressed concerns and urged a pause. The Mayor and Attorney implied that there was little negative impact on Argonne businesses during the 2009 Argonne construction project. They had to be publicly corrected. One reason given for the push was loss of status. Whose status? Who in Millwood government stands to benefit from this project? Look at the facts. We suspect they really don’t care what citizens think. Who do they represent? —Grandview Woodard

MILLWOOD HISTORIC HOMES
THE ROSEBUSH HOUSE


By Will Maupin - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=135439647>

The attached garage, built in 1928, echoes the French Eclectic style of the house. Currently the Rosebush House is the only Millwood home on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Rosebush House was designed and built in 1923 by Waldo Rosebush, inspired by the homes he saw during World War I in Normandy, France. Rosebush served as the general manager of the Inland Empire Paper Co. from 1919 until 1936. A true Renaissance man, he published books and articles on local history and firearms, patented numerous inventions for guns and paper processing, and built a gun range in the basement.

STORY**WHO ARE THE MILLWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD ADVOCATES?**

Millwood Neighborhood Advocates (MNA) include an informal group of concerned residents in the town where we live and/or work. Operating under the Mission Statement shown in our banner,

- we chose the word “robust” to invite lively discussion and active listening to many points of view on Millwood issues.
- we use the word “interaction” to reflect respectful and vigilant engagement with City representatives.
- we advocate “timely opportunities for research and discussion with City officials” so that we can respond promptly to issues that affect us.

We encourage a more open city government that is fully responsive to the citizens and businesses of Millwood. We meet the third Tuesday of the month (usually in the Community Center at Millwood Presbyterian) and welcome any resident or business owner to attend and participate in meetings. Our agenda keeps discussions focused to 90 exhilarating minutes, but anyone is welcome to voice additional issues.

Who are we? We are bankers, teachers, business owners, administrators, accountants, contractors, and retirees from various fields concerned with the future of Millwood. One developer referred to us as “ignoramus residents.” Come be an ignoramus and join us!



Millwood Neighborhood Advocates
has a website
(under construction, visitors welcome)!

millwoodneighborhoodadvocates.org

Contact us at info@millwoodneighborhoodadvocates.org.