From: J. Kevin Hunt
To: Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject: Density & Epidemics
Date: Friday, April 9, 2021 11:46:21 AM

Dear Mayor and City Council:

I write to ask whether any of you have pondered how much worse the consequences to Missoula from the COVID-19 pandemic would have been, had the aggressive hyper-density and population importation policies you have pursued, been much farther along in March, 2020.

It doesn't require an MPH or an MBA to comprehend that packing people like sardines into denser and denser concentrations, and pursuing "economic development" & "affordable housing" policies predicated upon mythical supply-side promises and (as Edward Abbey put it) "growth for the sake of growth," the "ideology of a cancer cell," will immensely increase the transmission of the next emergent epidemic pathogen, overwhelm our two hospitals and place us in the situation of many cities during the 1918-20 flu epidemic, when corpses were stacked on sidewalks like firewood because morgues and mortuaries were full, and it was impossible to keep up with the bodies.

The greatly increased reliance upon mass transit (a good thing as a discrete concept) necessitated by the massive building of multi-family complexes from Reserve Street to the airport, will exacerbate the problem.

COVID-19 is not a one-off event. As the permafrost thaws due to climate change, microbes preserved by freezing are liberated and, especially in the case of viruses, become a grave threat due to the probability that many of them have not previously infected humans.

Hyper-density is bad for human well-being. The epidemiology of infectious disease is but one reason.

/s/ J. Kevin Hunt
Ward 1 — Missoula

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