

Moscow City Council



Regular Meeting
~Minutes~

Laurie M. Hopkins
City Clerk

www.ci.moscow.id.us

208.883.7015

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

7:00 PM

Council Chambers
206 E. Third St.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Hailey Lewis, Bryce Blankenship, Drew Davis, Evan Holmes, Sandra Kelly, Scott Sumner

ABSENT: Sage McCetich

STAFF: Bill Belknap, Mia Bautista, Bob Buvel, Nichoel Baird Spencer, Laurie M. Hopkins

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Lewis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. All Consent Items (ACTION ITEM)

A. Approval of Moscow City Council February 2, 2026 Minutes - Laurie M. Hopkins

B. Disbursement Report January 2026 - Sarah Decker

Staff presented the January 2026 Accounts Payable Report to the Public Works / Finance Committee on February 9th, 2026. The Committee received the report and recommended approval of the disbursement report.

ACTION: Accept the Disbursements Report for the month of January 2026.

C. Approval of Payment of Claims - Sarah Decker

D. Southeast Moscow Water and Sewer District Service Agreement Extension - Bill Belknap

The City of Moscow accepts and treats wastewater from the Southeast Moscow Water and Sewer District through an agreement between the District and City. The District was formed in 1974 as an independent Water and Sewer District. It is located on the southeast corner of Moscow, and comprises primarily of residential properties, the majority of which are located outside City-Limits, in Latah County. The District has contracted with the City for sewage conveyance and disposal services since October of 1980. The long-standing agreement allows properties in the District to connect to City facilities. Similarly, it allows the conveyance of wastewater through the District from properties located outside its boundaries. The current agreement will expire on March 1, 2026. The City and District have been engaged in agreement renewal discussions for almost two years and have now reached a general agreement on revisions to the existing agreement terms. However, the new agreement will not be prepared and adopted prior to the expiration of the existing agreement. The City has prepared an agreement to extend the existing agreement to December 31, 2026, to allow time to finalize the agreement and have it approved by both bodies. This was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on February 9, 2026, and recommended for approval.

ACTIONS: Approve the extension agreement with the Southeast Moscow Water and Sewer District.

E. Verizon Wireless Communications Facility Lease Agreement - Bill Belknap

The City of Moscow leases space on the City’s water reservoirs to wireless communications providers. In 2004, the City entered into a lease agreement with Cellco Partnership (dba Verizon Wireless) to lease space on the Jim Lyle Rotary Park water reservoir and to build the joint restroom/equipment structure that exists in the park. That agreement spanned 25 years and will end in 2029. Verizon Wireless has expressed the desire to renew and extend the lease agreement. Staff has prepared a new lease agreement that would renew the lease for up to another 25 years with an initial term of 5 years and five additional 5-year renewal terms. At the end of the current lease term in 2029, the lease fees would be increased to the City’s existing lease rate of \$15,690 per year to \$35,420.40 per year with 3% annual escalator each year thereafter. The lease agreement is before the Council for consideration. This was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on February 9, 2026, and recommended for approval.

ACTION: Approve the lease agreement.

F. Selective Traffic Enforcement Program – Grant Application - Alisa Anderson

The Moscow Police Department (MPD) is requesting participation in the national Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP), sponsored by the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) Office of Highway Safety (OHS). The program aims to reduce traffic crashes resulting in fatalities and serious injuries. Through problem identification, participating agencies focus on addressing specific behaviors and safety deficiencies within their jurisdictions. MPD is requesting to submit a grant application due on February 27, 2026, in an amount not to exceed \$75,000 with an in-kind match of \$18,750 for FY2027. This was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on February 9, 2026, and recommended for approval.

ACTION: Approval for the Moscow Police Department to apply for the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program, requesting grant funding assistance not to exceed \$75,000, with an in-kind match of \$18,750 for FY2027.

Blankenship moved and Davis seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

REGULAR AGENDA

2. Mayors Appointments (ACTION ITEM)

None offered.

3. Public Comment (limit 15 minutes)

Tom LaPointe (Moscow) spoke on communication. He felt the City is good at notifications for agendas but fall on other communications. In regard to one particular issue, he talked to five residents and only one was aware of the issue. He isn’t sure of solutions but maybe community meetings.

Mary Elizabeth Copple (Moscow) invited council to a community forum on March 7 to discuss issues we face. Council members will have opportunity to address constituents.

4. Citizen Commission Report

None offered.

5. PUBLIC HEARING: Moser Extension Right-of-Way Vacation Request (ACTION ITEM) - Bob Buvel

On October 15, 2025, the City received a letter requesting the vacation of portions of the right-of-way (ROW) located within the currently undeveloped portion of the Pine View Addition to the City. The request was made by Pam and Joe Jucsen, who are the owners of the Pine View Addition. Pam and Joe Jucsen are proposing to plat the area which requires the vacation of an extension of Moser Street which is located within the plat area. According to Pam and Joe Jucsen, the proposed vacation is to provide wider street right-of-way within the Pine View Addition. A vicinity map of the proposed vacation area is shown on the Notice of Public Hearing attached herein. The notice of the hearing was advertised in the newspaper of record and mailed to properties within 300 feet of the subject ROW and all franchise and other utility providers were also provided notice.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Conduct the public hearing and upon consideration of any testimony received, approve the vacation request by adoption of the Ordinance under suspension of the rules requiring three complete and separate readings and that the ordinance be read by title and published by summary; or consider the Ordinance on first reading; or deny the vacation request; or take such other action deemed appropriate.

Buvel introduced the item providing an aerial of the area and as noted above. This right-of-way vacation is a condition in advance of the Pine View Addition. It will be effective once the Pine View Plat is recorded. No utilities that staff are aware of but the utility companies received notice of the opportunity for public comment.

Belknap provided a background that the ROW was dedicated over 20 years ago as a condition of approval of a lot division. The ultimate design of the subdivision wasn't known so that was the alignment that was chosen as the dedicated ROW to provide access for those lots to be divided and homes constructed. Now the plat has come forward which was approved last year. This ROW doesn't align with the current plat.

Mayor Lewis opened the public hearing at 7:11 p.m.

Scott Becker (Hodge and Associates) thanked staff for the introduction and he can answer any questions.

Greg Bohach (Moscow) lives on Rose Court and representing the neighbors concern of traffic. He spoke with Scott Becker many times. The neighbors are concerned about access to D Street and emergency vehicle access.

Nancy Chaney (Moscow) offered a few reasons why more detail should be included in the ordinance. She suggested a recitation that spoke on public good and three edits within the ordinance.

Mayor Lewis closed the public hearing at 7:20 p.m.

Sumner confirmed the ordinance is written so that the vacation is valid once the final plat is recorded. Belknap added that State code dictates that upon vacation, the property is divided with half going to each adjoining owner unless council states otherwise.

Holmes pondered passing the vacation ordinance on first reading to incorporate some of the suggested language that helps establish the public interest aspect. Lewis explained the process of passing an ordinance. Belknap said the ordinance as presented is legally correct and accurate. The council can put as much detail and explanation as desired. Because it is a right-of-way that was pre-dedicated prior to this plat being designed, Staff didn't feel it was necessary to embellish the recitations or ordinance. If the council would like to provide elements to be included, Staff can incorporate it and bring it back for second reading.

Blankenship felt it is fairly routine in nature and suggested taking the public comment into consideration on future similar ordinances.

Kelly moved to approve the vacation request by adoption of the Ordinance under suspension of the rules requiring three complete and separate readings and that the ordinance be read by title and published by summary. Sumner seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Mayor Lewis read Ordinance 2026-01 by title:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MOSCOW, A MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF THE STATE OF IDAHO; PROVIDING FOR THE VACATION OF A PORTION OF PUBLIC STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY LOCATED WITHIN THE CITY OF MOSCOW AND LEGALLY DESCRIBED IN SECTION 2 OF THIS ORDINANCE; PROVIDING THAT TITLE TO SAID VACATED PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY SHALL VEST WITH THE OWNERS OF THE PROPERTY AS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 4 OF THIS ORDINANCE; PROVIDING THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ORDINANCE BE DEEMED SEVERABLE; AND PROVIDING FOR THIS ORDINANCE TO BE IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT FROM THE DATE THE FINAL PLAT FOR THE PINE VIEW ADDITION SUBDIVISION IS RECORDED.

6. Public Transportation Services Agreement with Regional Public Transportation (dba SMART Transit) (ACTION ITEM) - Bill Belknap

For over 20 years, the City of Moscow has provided financial support to Regional Public Transportation (RPT) (dba SMART Transit) for the provision of public transit services in Moscow, including fixed route and on-demand (dial-a-ride) services. During that time period, the City has never had a formal agreement with RPT for these services. Staff have prepared an agreement with RPT to document the services the City receives in exchange for the annual financial support. The agreement includes a five year term with annual financial support in the amount of \$140,329 per year with a 1% annual escalator. The University of Idaho provides equal annual financial support to RPT to fund public transit services to the students, faculty, and staff in the community. The agreement is before the Council for consideration. This was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on February 9, 2026, and recommended for approval.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve the public transit services agreement with Regional Public Transportation, or provide staff further direction.

Belknap introduced the item as written above. The University of Idaho also contributes at the same level of financial support and are also memorializing their contribution. Lewis said SMART also receives grants from the State of Idaho.

Kelly and Blankenship expressed what a vital service transit is for the community.

Belknap said this agreement is \$10,000 more than budgeted. During the FY2026 budget preparation, Staff was still trying to understand SMART's financial position. With a lower health insurance increase than anticipated, the city can contribute the original \$40,000 request and that will meet their obligation for their grants.

Davis appreciated formalizing the contribution and moved to approve the public transit services agreement with Regional Public Transportation. Kelly seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

7. BUILD Grant Local Match Commitment Resolution (ACTION ITEM) - Bill Belknap

Whitman County has been actively working to advance improvements to Sand Road and Kirkendahl Road to provide an alternative east-west route for freight traffic to utilize to reduce traffic within downtown Pullman. This improvement would also benefit Moscow by reducing freight traffic in downtown Moscow. This route was studied in the recent Pullman-Whitman County Freight Alternatives Study completed by the Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization. Whitman County would like to apply for a Federal BUILD grant to complete the design and engineering for the project. As envisioned in the study, the project would begin at the Mountain View/Highway 8 intersection with the installation of a signal and continue south and then west with improvements to Mountain View Road and Palouse River Drive continuing west to U.S. Highway 195. On September 15, 2025, the Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding with Whitman County to jointly fund consultant services for the preparation of the BUILD grant application. The total estimated planning and design cost, inclusive of WSDOT Local Programs and Local Highway Technical Assistance Council administration, is \$2.53 million, of which \$1.1 million is attributable to improvements within the City of Moscow. Within the draft application, the City and Whitman County are proposing a 10% match commitment toward these costs, which would be \$110,000 for the City. Staff has prepared a resolution to affirm this match contribution should the grant be awarded. The match funding would come from the Capital Project fund accumulations. This was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on February 9, 2026, and recommended for approval.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve the match commitment resolution, or provide staff further direction.

Belknap introduced the item. See attached presentation. In 2014, the City completed a Multimodal Transportation Plan that evaluated a potential removal/bypass concept using traffic modeling. The analysis concluded the project would provide limited benefit and would not justify the estimated \$110–140 million cost (2014 dollars), and the City discontinued pursuit of the concept. The southwest quadrant showed the most potential benefit, but costs outweighed projected improvements. The City instead shifted focus to protecting existing corridors and recognizing that a future western US-95 bypass would likely be a state-led project.

The 2019 Comprehensive Plan formally designated Palouse River Drive as a future east–west minor arterial on the south end of town, emphasizing access management to preserve roadway capacity. The surrounding area is primarily industrial and commercial, with some residential uses. In recent years, significant development activity in south Moscow, including expansion of the SEL campus, a proposed 50,000 square-foot manufacturing facility with the potential to add up to 1,000 jobs, commercial subdivision development, and new multifamily housing, has increased pressure on existing roadways.

Several south-end corridors are experiencing safety and capacity concerns. The Mountain View Drive/Palouse River Drive/State Highway 8 intersection is nearing warrant thresholds for operational improvements. South Mountain View Drive has inconsistent frontage improvements, and East Palouse River Drive has deteriorating pavement conditions, narrow sections, and limited bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Estimated corridor improvements exceed \$8.3 million (2024 dollars), which is beyond the City's current capital funding capacity without grant assistance.

In 2024, the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) initiated a US-95 and SH-8 corridor study to evaluate intersection operations through 2050. Several intersections are projected to fall below acceptable service levels. Alternatives under consideration include lane reassignments, access control measures, and potential removal of on-street parking in portions of downtown. Some one-way couplet concepts were evaluated and eliminated, while others remain under review. Additional public outreach is anticipated before the study is finalized.

Whitman County's regional freight study identified a potential bypass route intended to reduce truck traffic through downtown Pullman and Moscow. The concept would connect Kirkendahl Road and Sand Road in Washington to Palouse River Drive and Mountain View Drive in Idaho, with improvements including a new signal at Mountain View Drive and State Highway 8, a roundabout at Mountain View Drive and Palouse River Drive, and corridor upgrades to support freight mobility and multimodal safety. The project is anticipated to reduce truck traffic in downtown Moscow, improve safety for all users, and support future growth.

The City is pursuing BUILD grant funding for engineering and design only, estimated at approximately \$2.5 million, with about \$1.1 million allocated to improvements within Moscow. Construction funding would be pursued separately at a later date. Council previously approved a Memorandum of Understanding with Whitman County to jointly fund consultant services for the grant application, which is scheduled for submission on the 24th. A resolution confirming the City's local match commitment is before Council for consideration.

Mayor Lewis spoke on the public outreach process for ITD's studies. Davis highlighted the many City Council transportation discussions. He said Whitman County will be using this corridor so traffic will be directed into Moscow at this location.

Approximately two years ago, Staff became aware Whitman County was pursuing a BUILD grant. Staff explained that anticipated south-end growth and increasing traffic volumes will continue to strain substandard roadway conditions, regardless of the freight project. After meeting with County representatives, staff concluded it would be in the City's best interest to collaborate on a grant application to proactively improve Mountain View Drive and Palouse River Drive. The intent is to upgrade the corridors to standard two-lane urban roadways with appropriate speeds, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and the ability to safely accommodate larger vehicles, not to create a highway facility.

Staff noted the City's long history of annexing former county roads and incrementally upgrading them over time. Mountain View Drive has been improved in phases over approximately 40 years. Two projects are scheduled this summer to add missing pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and staff plans to submit a grant application this fall for the remaining segment near Highway 8. However, improvements have occurred gradually as funding allows, often lagging behind development.

This grant opportunity could provide up to 90 percent federal funding for design, allowing the City to advance corridor improvements ahead of continued growth rather than responding after deficiencies emerge. Staff emphasized the importance of being proactive to avoid long-term maintenance burdens and to provide alternatives to potential Idaho Transportation Department actions, such as removing on-street parking or increasing capacity through downtown. Pursuing this cooperative project would position the City to address growth responsibly while preserving local transportation priorities.

Davis stated that both communities are growing, which is positive, and noted the proposal would remove approximately 200 heavy vehicles from the downtown Moscow corridor. He expressed strong support for the project, emphasizing the long-term benefit of addressing Mountain View Road proactively rather than deferring improvements for decades. Drew stated this is an opportunity for Council to act responsibly and utilize available resources, and that failing to pursue the project would create long-term transportation challenges for future generations.

Blankenship stated the proposal represents a proactive rather than reactive approach. He noted that if the City does not participate and Whitman County proceeds independently, Moscow would be left playing

catch-up. He expressed appreciation for the cooperative effort and acknowledged that, if the grant is awarded, there will be opportunities for public outreach and input on implementation. He emphasized that growth will continue, and planning ahead is a positive step.

In answer to Sumner's question regarding the 10% match, Belknap explained these grants are highly competitive. If you're in the urban category it's a required 20% match. Rural projects do not have a defined match but because this is a very highly competitive program, Staff felt meeting somewhere in the middle at 10% would be an appropriate position. Whitman County felt that that was a level they could support as well. The City has not received a BUILD grant in the past. Application was made for Mountain View improvements but were not successful in receiving. LHTAC will improve both approaches to the bridge, including realigning the sharp, blind corner on the west side to remove sight obstructions and create a safer transition near the County Highway District bridge. The project also includes construction of a new bridge wide enough to accommodate vehicle traffic as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Holmes noted that creating an alternative freight corridor would not remove Highway 95 or Highway 8 from downtown, and ITD could still implement changes such as on-street parking removal if congestion thresholds are met. He questioned the competitiveness of securing future construction funding, given that the current request is for a highly competitive design grant, and expressed concern that the completed plans could remain unused. He also raised concerns about long-term maintenance costs, noting that if the corridor becomes a truck arterial under City jurisdiction, ongoing maintenance responsibilities would fall to Moscow. He asked about the likelihood of advancing from design to construction funding and whether portions of the design could still be utilized if full project funding is not secured.

Belknap responded that projects receiving initial federal design funding are generally more competitive for future construction grants. He noted that the design phase would answer outstanding questions about scope and roadway configuration, and that Council could later determine whether to pursue construction funding. He confirmed that portions of the design could potentially be implemented independently if funding becomes available.

Mayor Lewis emphasized that improvements to Mountain View Drive have occurred incrementally over approximately 40 years and that south-end growth is already driving the need for infrastructure upgrades, independent of the freight study. He clarified that City matching funds would only be expended if the grant is awarded and stated that the return on investment would be significant. Belknap added that with estimated construction costs near \$9 million, design could total approximately \$1.2 million if contracted, compared to the City's proposed \$110,000 match. He noted that completing the work in-house would create substantial opportunity costs for staff.

Kelly expressed appreciation for the public comments and staff input, noting the complexity of the proposal and the significant time Council has spent reviewing it. She stated the 90 percent federal match is a strong benefit and voiced concern that, without alternatives, downtown parking could be reduced in the future. She supported the addition of a signal at Mountain View and Highway 8 and emphasized that continued south-end growth will naturally change existing views and traffic patterns over time. Kelly highlighted safety as a primary concern, referencing past successful roadway improvements with pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and shared personal experiences regarding poor visibility and unsafe conditions on Palouse River Drive. She stated she believes the project includes positive, forward-looking components and would be beneficial for the community if awarded.

Sumner asked whether updated traffic counts were available following improvements on the Washington side. Belknap responded that while specific counts were not available, Whitman County has reported increased traffic since paving Sand Road. Sumner noted that future employment growth at SEL will likely

generate additional traffic and stated that Palouse River Drive currently does not meet safety standards. He emphasized that making improvements now, while adjacent land remains largely undeveloped, would be more cost-effective and practical than attempting upgrades after further development occurs.

Davis moved to approve the match commitment resolution. Kelly seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Four (4). Nays: One (Holmes). Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

REPORTS

City Council

Farmers Market Commission – Davis said they have milestones to celebrate this year and working on policies.

Moscow Urban Renewal Agency – Kelly said they are reevaluating the RFP process for the 6th and Jackson St property.

Human Rights Commission – Kelly reported the Commission is planning a Know your Rights forum to take place March 24.

Historic Preservation Commission – Kelly said Reese stepped down as chair.

Parks & Recreation Commission – Sumner said the Commission selected Itani Park for the pesticide free park. They are looking for a consultant to analyze parks and recreation systems to get data make informed decisions.

Moscow Arts Commission – Sumner said they have many RFQ's out for various projects.

Sustainable Environment Commission – Holmes said the energy fair will take place April 4

Fair & Affordable Housing Commission – Holmes said they discussed proposed legislature regarding “protected group”. They are unable to sponsor the annual workshop normally held during the affordable housing month.

Planning and Zoning Commission – Holmes said they have been working on ideas for better regulation of R-3 duplexes. They also discussed ADU's.

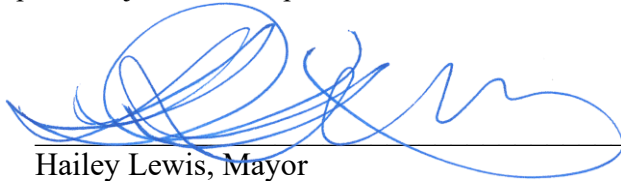
Council members spoke on other meetings and events they attended.

Mayor

Mayor Lewis said she attended the AIC legislative meetings as well as the City Official’s Day at the Capitol. She met with the ASUI. State of the City is tomorrow.

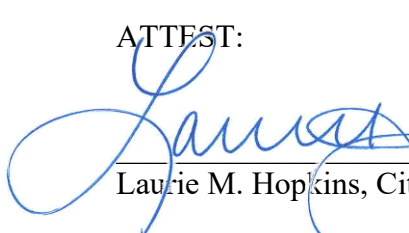
ADJOURN

It was moved, seconded and mutually agreed upon to adjourn at 8:43 p.m.




Hailey Lewis, Mayor

ATTEST:



Laurie M. Hopkins, City Clerk



Nancy Chaney, 1333 Ponderosa Dr., Moscow ID
General testimony RE Moser Ext. R-O-W Vacation Request
Feb. 17, 2026 City Council Hearing

As a condition for plat approval, the City received a request for vacation of public right-of-way through a future addition to the Pine View development. The applicants cite improved street connections with wider rights-of-way as the public benefit. The City's draft ordinance vaguely references its determination that "vacating said right-of-way is expedient for the public good." I understand legal and process-oriented reasons for not being more specific, but offer a few reasons elaboration might be warranted.

- 1) First, as Moscow grows and development pressures increase, legislative actions that affect both public and private interests seem likely to increase too. It's reasonable to acknowledge potentially controversial aspects and show evidence of cooperation, mutual benefit, mitigation, and compromise.
- 2) Street modifications impact existing uses and guide future development, including its scale, direction, and impacts on community character. It makes sense to show you've thought about repercussions of your decision. For example,
 - a. The requested vacation will affect established neighborhoods and future land uses in the vicinity.
 - b. What could be the impacts on water systems, wildlife habitat, existing uses, etc.?

For those reasons, I suggest inserting a recitation, following the second-to-last one in your draft, to the effect, *"WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council have determined that said public good is consistent with City's Comprehensive Plan goals (3.1) for orderly development, safe multi-modal alternatives, continuity and functionality of the transportation system, and context-sensitive design to enhance community character and quality of life"*

- 3) Also, a newly-platted street like this won't ever have been in public use to establish common-law status as **a perpetually accessible public resource. That's why it's vital such intent is clear in this enabling ordinance.** As I read it, it's not. I encourage you to modify:
- a. **Section 3: EXCEPTIONS FROM VACATION**, which prohibits impairment of rights-of-way, easements for lot owners, or current and future public utilities (Idaho Code 50-311). It explicitly states this vacation shall not include existing or future franchise rights. However, it doesn't address the potential for owners to limit access by other service divisions of the City or its agents. *I suggest appending this paragraph, to reference "... or other public services afforded by the City or its agents"**
 - b. **Section 4: RIGHT-OF-WAY VACATION** explains that the public right-of-way shall revert to owners of adjacent and contiguous real property at the time of the vacation approval, but doesn't anticipate succession, either by sale or transfer of said property, in whole or in part, to subsequent owners, potentially to include individual lot owners in that development. *Assuming the applicants and the City deem this an appurtenant easement, I suggest inserting a clause to the effect, "(... shall revert to the owners of the adjacent and contiguous real property) AND THEIR SUCCESSORS, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE..."*
 - c. Finally, Section 4 doesn't say *the right for public use shall be perpetual, free, and unhindered*. I suggest it should. I'm confident these developers don't intend a private street for an access-limited subdivision, but ignoring that potential could set a precedent with unintended consequences.

Thank you for considering my comments.

**Note: Title 2 of the Municipal Code does grant access to emergency responders and their assignees.*