

My name is Carole King Klein. I'm a year-round Ketchum resident and voter.

I urge the City of Ketchum ("the City") to protect its interest after having adopted the Blaine County Climate Action Plan ("5B CAN") on September 16, 2024, and require compliance with 5B CAN by developers who seek approval from the City.

The City also has an interest in protecting local businesses from harm caused by the project.

1. Old growth trees, the hillside, Trail Creek, and the climate.

From the "The Residences on Trail Creek" project ("200 SAP") proposal's Landscape paragraph:

We are proposing on removing a (#?) [sic] number of mature growth trees onsite to make way for the new project. We will propose replace trees offsite where the city advises to do so and tree species. We will be maintaining a majority of the mature growth on the sloped section of the site down to trail creek.

Removing mature growth trees is NOT in compliance with 5B CAN. Replacing the old growth trees with new trees defies common sense—as IF putting in new trees will make the ecosystem as functional and beneficial as it was before removal of the old ones.

Mature trees are a free, existing carbon storage mechanism that pulls carbon from the atmosphere and stores it in the trees and the soil below at 0 cost to the City and 0 cost to taxpayers.

Removing mature trees *accelerates* climate change, which is non-compliant with 5B CAN.

The developers gloss over the time lag between removing trees and waiting two or more years for the construction to be over, then waiting for smaller trees to be planted, take hold, grow, and form a new interconnected root system.

Suggesting that replacement trees will restore the environment to what it is now is disingenuous. If the City approves this project as presented, they'll reinforce the disenchantment of young people who believe their elders and elected officials don't care about their concerns about climate change.

Preservation of existing old growth trees should include their roots on all sides. If preservation of existing carbon storage that also provides habitat for wildlife necessitates changing the design and/or the location of a new building on the property, preservation must have priority.

In addition to trees' function as a carbon storage mechanism, the old growth trees at 200 SAP are a vital part of an interconnected ecosystem that includes thousands of species ranging from insects and flora to wildlife such as deer, elk, moose, birds, ducks, mountain lions, geese, and so many more—including fish.

Fish?

Yes. When mature trees are removed above a creek or a river—and typically mature trees are not removed in isolation but along with smaller trees and bushes, creating a clearcut—rocks and sediment erode into a stream, river, or creek below—in this case, Trail Creek. See links below to studies in support.

Note that the developers are using the name Trail Creek in the name of their project. Will Ketchum's planners insist that they protect Trail Creek?
Also note that the machines removing the trees will add to the soil disturbance and exacerbate erosion.

Those machines and the removal of old growth trees will compromise the health of the ecosystem in and above Trail Creek, which will compromise the health of fish and other species in Trail Creek, Wood River, and potentially beyond.

Erosion can also change the course of a stream, a creek, a river—our local waters—**which will potentially cause harm to the owners of hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of property downstream of Spruce Avenue.**

Harm to fish will adversely affect our local businesses that serve anglers.

Removal of old growth trees is known to increase the risk of wildfire spreading more rapidly; reduce water supply; and cause desertification. Those problems will affect a much larger area than the land and water just below 200 SAP.

The suggestion in 200 SAP's Landscape paragraph that the developer will remove and "replace" the existing trees [after two or three years of construction—don't worry, the landscape will be just as it was before—] is absurd. One cannot "replace" an interconnected forest ecosystem that has provided stability for a multiplicity of species for decades.

As developers seek to integrate their project into our community, the City must require them to integrate preservation of the ecosystem on their property with the interconnected ecosystem around it. The developers must redesign their project to accommodate such preservation.

Here are some photos and videos of some of the existing old growth trees and interconnected smaller trees and plants in and around the 200 SAP property:

<https://share.icloud.com/photos/027ywOjluSMIM-MRozqePpXyQ>

The City must require 200 SAP to change their design to preserve not just the existing trees but the **roots**, and to do whatever else is necessary to comply with the goals of 5B CAN and prevent erosion.

The City should also require 200 SAP to amend the design so it no longer requires removal of the massive amount of soil needed to create space for the underground garage.

Here are some studies that support preservation of the old growth trees and the hillside they stabilize. Note that some of these studies have been successful in winning court rulings to stop or modify projects.

<https://fwp.mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwp/montana-outdoors/2018/bulltrout.pdf>

https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs_rm/rm_gtr120/rm_gtr120_315_319.pdf

<https://library.weconservepa.org/guides/110-impacts-of-natural-land-loss-on-water-quality#:~:text=Forests%2C%20riparian%20buffers%2C%20wetlands%20and,periods%20of%20low%20stream%20flows>.

https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/gtr/gtr_srs092/gtr_srs092-092-summer.pdf

<https://bluemountainsbiodiversityproject.org/2361-2/>

2. The size and setback of the structure

The proposed height and proximity to Spruce Avenue of 200 SAP along with Les Saisons across the street, of similar height and proximity, will create an urban canyon on Spruce Avenue. Add a narrow sidewalk and a minuscule setback from the street, and visitors will be unlikely to find it inviting to walk **to**, let alone **into**, the proposed commercial area.

3. Conclusion:

Given 200 SAP's current design's non-compliance with 5B CAN, with established science and common sense supporting preservation of ecosystems, and with the economic risks to businesses and property owners downstream of harm caused by erosion, I am asking the Planning and Zoning Department to require that the architect and developers of 200 SAP revise their design to meet the concerns listed above.

I've also heard a variation of the following sentiment from many of my neighbors and other Ketchum residents and property owners who remember when we could drive into

town from the south and be greeted by Ketchum's magnificent mountains on both sides of the highway with no 5-story hotels obstructing the view.

Just because developers *can* build a structure that takes up nearly every square inch on, above, and below a property they own doesn't mean that they *should*.

And now, let's hear from two thoughtful non-residents.

*"Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've got till it's gone,
They paved paradise, put up a parking lot."*
-Joni Mitchell, "Big Yellow Taxi"

*"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better."*
-the Once-ler in Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*

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