

**Closing River Valley Drive at
Chesterfield's City Limit to Protect
River Bend Estates**

Submitted by:

River Valley Drive Task Force

&

River Bend Association

Why Closing River Valley Drive at Chesterfield's City Limit Is Important.....

The City of Maryland Heights is proceeding with plans to amend their Comprehensive Plan to allow a proposed residential/commercial development (McBride) in the 'bottoms' not far from a water treatment plant. The site is less than ½ mile from River Bend.

In addition to some 200 thousand square feet of commercial, the development will have 930 dwelling units; more than all of River Bend, Westbury Manor and Greenfield Village combined. All of this is packed onto only 210 acres.

While we can all question the wisdom of residential development in this area (and we have), the problem for River Bend is traffic.

It is projected that this **single** development alone will generate more than 12,000 car trips per day (over 4 million a year) from the new Maryland Heights citizens who will live there. (*Lochmueller Group traffic study for McBride*)

Because there are absolutely no services in the bottoms, the new Maryland Heights residents will have to leave that area to buy everything and do anything. Since Olive is the closest commercial corridor to the site, they will use River Valley Drive, which runs right through our neighborhood, as the 'path of least resistance' to get to Olive and beyond.

River Bend cannot possibly absorb thousands of additional cars daily on our small street which feeds directly into our neighborhoods. Traffic of this magnitude must be diverted to roads built for large volume.

This is just the beginning. As is always the case, introducing residential to this area sets a precedent for further development. In fact, Maryland Heights officials, including the Mayor, have stated publically that they hope this project will 'drive development' and 'put us on the map'.

In the meantime, there is **NO** plan for a substantive road network added for this or any other project.

Some Background.....

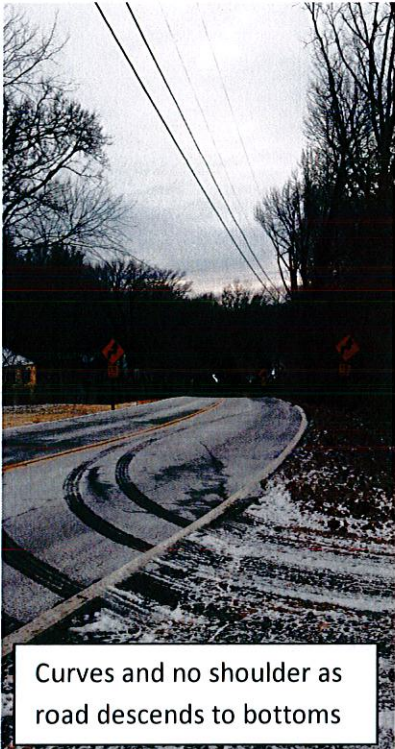
For many years, the Maryland Heights Comprehensive Plan strictly prohibited residential development in the "River Valley Subdistrict" of the Howard Bend Area. However, that City wants new housing stock and has convinced itself that this area, formerly designated an official 'flood plain', is the place to expand its residential opportunities. The site is less than ½ mile from River Bend.

Each and every new development in this 'plain that still floods' will produce tens of thousands of additional car trips daily which will use River Valley Drive to access Olive. In fact, River Valley and Hog Hollow have been cited as roads the new Maryland Heights residents are **expected** to use to access local services. The obvious choice will be River Valley Drive, particularly given the appeal of the signalized intersection at Olive.

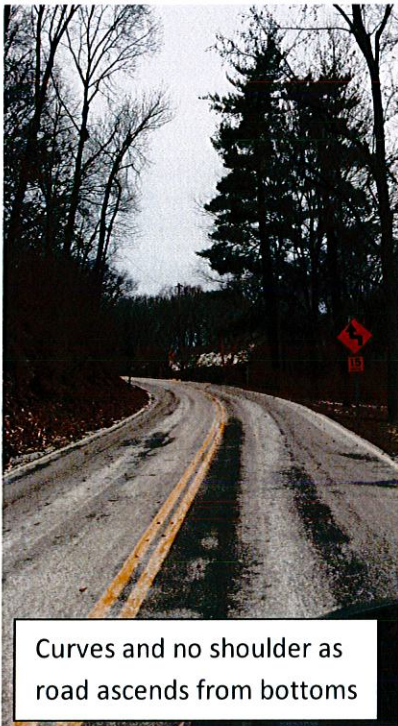
Because of the dramatic and life-altering prospect of thousands of additional cars daily on River Valley, the River Bend neighborhood(s), River Bend Association and our Trustees (on behalf of the people we serve) have for many months continuously opposed this and future residential developments in that area. We have made our views known to the appropriate officials in Maryland Heights.

Our objections have fallen on deaf ears and we have even been publically told by city officials that we 'don't count' and 'should be ignored' because we live in Chesterfield and not Maryland Heights.

This Is River Valley Drive.....



Curves and no shoulder as road descends to bottoms



Curves and no shoulder as road ascends from bottoms

River Valley Drive is a 2 lane, winding, shoulder-less road which serves the 5 subdivisions and unaffiliated homes which make up River Bend proper as well as an elementary school, a 75 unit apartment complex, a community center/tennis courts/swimming pool and a small park.

It is a mere 0.8 of a mile long from its beginning at the electric signal on Olive to the Chesterfield city limits where the road enters Maryland Heights.

There are 39 homes that have frontage on the road and 31 private driveways whose only access is River Valley.

There are 5 ingress/egress points which serve the subdivisions plus 1 that serves the apartment complex. There is an ingress/egress point for the parking lot of the wrap-around park at Olive; another 2 for River Bend Elementary School and 1 for the neighborhood community center/pool.

There is a large round-about and 6 landscaped islands which, though they are City property, are financially and physically maintained by one of the River Bend subdivisions.

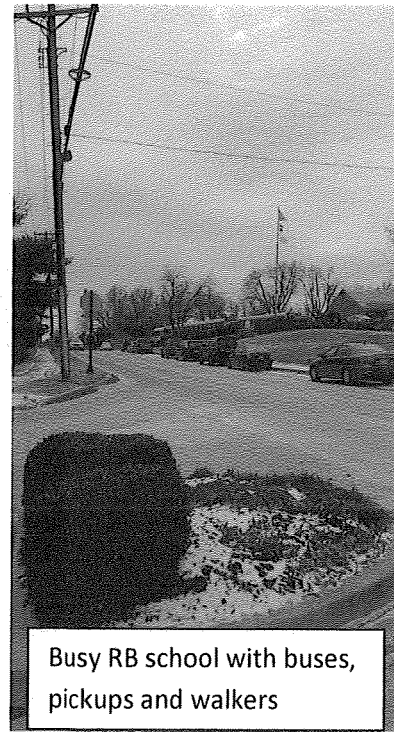
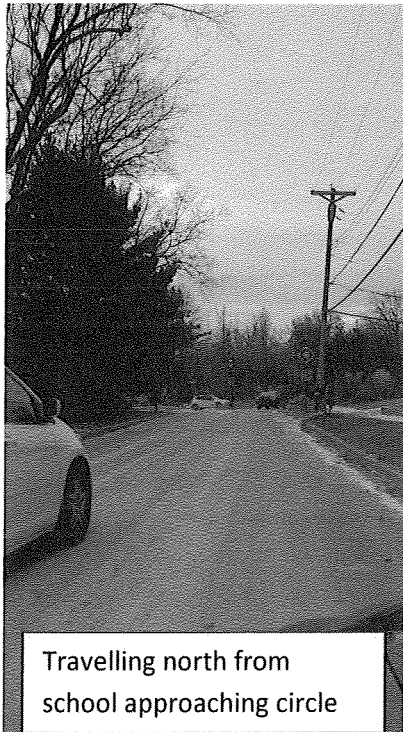
There is a stop sign and other traffic calming measures and a posted speed limit of 20 mph.

In addition to the usual activity one would expect a neighborhood street to have with a busy public elementary school and it's buses and car-poolers,

there are numerous walkers, runners, and kids and adults on bikes since the road is also marked as a designated 'bike route'.

River Valley Drive was never built, improved or equipped to be an arterial road carrying dangerously large volumes of traffic. It is a neighborhood collector designed to move traffic from the subdivisions to the electric signal at Olive.

This 8 tenths of a mile in Chesterfield is busy enough serving the homes, the school, the park, the apartments and community center/pool without adding thousands of additional vehicles to it every day.



Community Impact.....

- Leaving the road open to the 'bottoms' and any development that occurs there will devastate River Bend.
- Thousands of new Maryland Heights cars descending daily upon this small Chesterfield street is dangerous and destabilizing. River Valley Drive and our neighborhood cannot possibly absorb it.
- Traffic of this magnitude must be directed to infrastructure that is built and designed for large volume. It is incumbent upon Maryland Heights to provide adequate roads for their developments.
- Closing the road does not bifurcate or separate one part of Chesterfield from another. The City has no assets or interest in anything beyond the railroad tracks as our corporate boundaries culminate there.
- Because there is no Chesterfield property beyond this point, there are zero Chesterfield residents, businesses or taxpayers. The City has nothing to protect, patrol, maintain, plow, build on, repair, tax, pay for or make decisions about.
- The costs associated with closing the road will pale in comparison to the constantly escalating and never-ending expense of maintaining it for the benefit of Maryland Heights.
- Allowing this and future new Maryland Heights traffic to constantly tear up and down River Valley Drive will cost the City of Chesterfield thousands of dollars annually for more and more police protection; costs that right now we do not have.
- 80% of River Bend residents **must** use River Valley Drive to exit the neighborhood. There is no other way to get out. If new traffic is allowed to pour in, we will be forced to constantly compete for a spot on our street. The solution is to close the road.

Overwhelming Majority of River Bend Residents Support Closure.....

Earlier this year, the River Bend Association asked River Bend residents to weigh in on closure. To ensure confidence in the sampling, nearly 80% of River Bend households were contacted via email and phone. After a brief explanation about the McBride proposal and its impact on our neighborhood, this was the question:

"Would you be in favor of asking the City of Chesterfield to close River Valley Drive at our city limits (the railroad tracks) to protect our neighborhood from this and all future additional traffic? Please answer YES, NO or UNSURE."

These are the results:

YES: 87% NO: 8% UNSURE: 5%

Conclusion.....

In the past few years, River Bend has absorbed our share of negative impact with the completion of 141. The portion that extends from Maryland Heights border to Olive Blvd runs basically through our back yards.

In terms of resale value, the location of that highway has done permanent damage to homes along the bluffs. Additionally, since we were not provided a sound wall, the entire neighborhood is exposed to the constant racket of vehicles 24/7.

Smothering River Bend with shocking amounts of new traffic, which will only get worse, is something we can't recover from. It is akin to being in the middle of an enormous flood and it **never** stops raining. Allowing this to happen does not benefit River Bend or the City of Chesterfield.

To preserve and protect the integrity, character and safety of one of the oldest and well cared for areas in Chesterfield, River Bend respectfully asks that the City of Chesterfield close River Valley Drive at our City Limits to prevent the further destruction of our neighborhood.

We further request that this occur sooner rather than later so that the City of Maryland Heights, the developer and his buyers will know that transportation opportunities do not include Chesterfield's portion of River Valley Drive.

We thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of our request.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of River Bend Neighborhood Residents,

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