
HARRIS RANCH CID TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

August 27, 2021

Members of the Board
Harris Ranch Community Infrastructure District No. 1 (“HRCID”)
City of Boise
150 N. Capitol Blvd.
Boise, ID. 83702

Re: The Myth of Harris Ranch CID “Local Amenities”

Dear Members of the Board,

We would like to respond to some of your recent public comments regarding the principal uses of Harris Ranch CID funds. It is apparent from your comments that you believe that the HRCID is being used to fund the costs of “local amenities” enjoyed primarily if not exclusively by residents of Harris Ranch. A closer look at actual HRCID expenditures, however, reveals that any such belief is fundamentally mistaken, and therefore that your public comments at a minimum were misleading.

To date, the HRCID has been used *almost exclusively* to fund facilities and improvements that are of *general* benefit to the City and its residents. Almost *NONE* of the expenditures to date have been for “local amenities” that are enjoyed primarily by the homeowners in the Harris Ranch development. That’s in large part because the CID Act was drafted to *prohibit* the funding of any improvements fronting on single-family residences. Idaho Statutes, Sec. 50-3102(2). So “amenities” such as sidewalks, landscaping, neighborhood parks and bike lanes, and even “necessities” like local access roads, water, sewer and stormwater mains, street lighting, and signage, cannot be funded through the CID, as Harris Ranch consists almost entirely of single-family homes and townhomes.

The Harris Ranch CID has spent about \$19.5 million through 2020, all at the direct expense of homeowners in the HRCID. The principal projects for which expenditures have been made include the following.

- **Improvements related to a fire station (\$1.15 million)** that serves large portions of the East End, Warm Springs, Warm Springs Mesa, Southeast Boise, Barber Valley, Mill Creek, Barber, Riverland East, and other areas, in addition to Harris Ranch. This is not a “local” Harris Ranch “amenity”, but rather a public facility of general benefit to the City of Boise and its residents.

- **Improvements to the Boise Greenbelt (\$570,000)**, used by countless residents and visitors to Boise. These are not a “local” Harris Ranch amenity, but rather public facilities of general benefit to City residents.
- **A Boise Greenbelt wetlands project (\$2.1 million)**, including conservation easements. This is not a “local” Harris Ranch amenity, but rather a public facility of general benefit to City residents.
- Land for **the 20-acre Alta Harris City Park (\$1.6 million)** adjacent to the Boise River. This is not a “local” Harris Ranch amenity, but rather will be a public facility of general benefit to City residents.
- An **arterial bypass road, E. Warm Springs Ave. (\$2.83 million)**, that connects Barber Valley, Mill Creek, Barber and Riverland East to E. Parkcenter Boulevard, the main east-west roadway in Southeast Boise, and that also provides the most direct access to Barber Park (especially during “float” season), the Shakespeare Festival and Highway 21 out to Lucky Peak and beyond, for much of Southeast Boise and other areas of the City. This is not a “local” Harris Ranch “amenity”, but rather a public facility of general benefit to City residents.
- An **arterial round-about (\$1.9 million)** that connects E. Parkcenter Boulevard with the arterial bypass road, E. Warm Springs Ave. This is not a “local” Harris Ranch “amenity”, but rather a public facility of general benefit to City residents.
- **Storm water collection and retention ponds and sediment basins**, adjacent to the Boise River and the E. Warm Springs Ave. bypass (**\$3.8 million**), needed due to *all* of the development stretching from the E. Parkcenter Blvd. bridge over the Boise River, on the west, to S. Eckert Road, on the east, and to the Boise foothills, on the north. These are not a “local” Harris Ranch CID “amenity”, but rather public facilities of general benefit to all the properties in the area, which is many times the size of the Harris Ranch CID. Those storm water facilities also benefit and protect the environmental health of the entire Boise River.¹

So far as we have been able to determine, the *only* expenditures by the HRCID that have primarily benefited homeowners in Harris Ranch are for a series of roundabouts on E. Parkcenter Blvd. within the development (**\$1.5 million, or less than 8%**). But those roundabouts are surrounded entirely by single-family residential townhomes, and thus are expenditures which are *expressly prohibited* by the CID Act. Idaho Statutes, Sec. 50-3102 (2). We therefore request that those payments, plus interest, be recovered from the developers.

¹ Please note that these project descriptions and associated dollar amounts are based on our current understanding of the City records provided to us, and are subject to further review and refinement.

We note that almost half of the HRCID expenditures to date (**\$9.07 million**) have gone to the Harris Ranch developers as payments for land. We plan to object to substantially all those payments, and to request that they be recovered from the developers, with interest.

In addition, a substantial portion of the HRCID expenditures to date (**\$2.64 million**) have *not* gone to public improvements *at all*, but rather to administrative and financing costs. That includes over \$300,000 paid *to the City itself* by the HRCID for various “administrative” and other “costs”.

In conclusion, we believe it is important that you understand that the facilities and improvements which a relatively small number of homeowners in the HRCID are being compelled to pay for are not “local amenities” but rather facilities of general benefit. We hope that this letter clarifies that fact.

Sincerely,

pp Bill Doyle

Executive Committee
Harris Ranch CID Taxpayers’ Association

Cc: The Honorable Lauren McLean, Mayor, the City of Boise
Council Member Liza Sanchez, Council Pro Tem
Council Member Patrick Bageant
Council Member Jimmy Hallyburton
David Hasegawa, City of Boise
Jaymie Sullivan, City of Boise
Rob Lockward, City of Boise
Amanda Brown, City of Boise