



RMDC's Mid-Towne Residences Project– Why This Caird Corner Location?

What, senior housing on one of the busiest corner's in Helena? What, senior housing on an industrial complex site? Yes. For RMDC, this site has been a deliberate and considered choice. Here's why:

First, clarity on where housing will be. Both phases of RMDC constructed housing will be setback from Montana Avenue—leaving that busy street front open to compatible commercial use or to deliberately designed open landscaping or to uses yet to be determined. In other words, no housing facility will sit directly adjacent to Montana Avenue.

Accessibility to services for residents: This 2.7 acre site gives future residents far easier access to often-used services than sites located on Helena's outskirts. Whether they drive, take a city bus, take an RMDC bus, or walk, Mid-Towne residents are within a few minutes and a few blocks of groceries, drug stores, doctor's offices, the library, the Farmers' Market, summer band concerts, classes at UM-Helena College of Technology, Carroll College football games, banks. For senior residents, access to community and RMDC buses may be the most critical asset. RMDC does not run its buses outside Helena city limits. And Helena Area Transit Authority buses offer, at best, limited service outside city limits. Residents who move here from metropolitan areas find all our distances handy, but Helenans value the difference between a 10 minute commute to the doctor and a 20 minute one.

Walkability (or bikeability) matters even more now. Tomorrow's senior housing residents are today's boomers—who put significantly more stock on walking, biking, saving resources, and being a part of environmental solutions rather than adding to resource use—as opposed to other generations.

Use of existing infrastructure: Housing sites for multiple residences within Helena's urban core save RMDC and the City infrastructure costs and fuss. We're within Helena's primary fire district; sewer and water have long since come to the neighborhood. The streets are lighted. And public bus service already exists.

Killing several good community birds with one stone: The Caird property has stood substantially vacant and deteriorating since 1986. It's been an eyesore for all this time—even though it's been an eyesore with interesting times to community history. It's been on the real estate market for much of that time. It's needed environmental cleanup for any future community use. RMDC's plans for a cleaned up, well-designed, interesting housing and mixed used facility solves a series of issues that the community has faced for 25 years—with no other viable solutions presenting themselves.

The busy corner is its own attraction for well-housed seniors. Not everyone wants to live on a tree-lined street forever—however much that's our stereotype. In big cities, the best real estate is the closest to downtown. And we know that, for some seniors, people watching is a treasured, manageable recreation.

Note that we are emphasizing well-built. Well-designed and built housing is part of the equation for sure. No one wants to hear semis gearing up at the stop light. But architects and engineers have long since mastered buffering those sounds. RMDC, as we have demonstrated with all our facilities, remain committed to building thoughtfully and well. Our bottom line isn't just about dollars but about resident and community service.