



Elizabeth Wilson <elizabethanngilg@gmail.com>

INQUIRY -- City of Laurel Contact Regarding Collaborative Emergency Ordinance Request | Laurel C.A.R.E.D. | School Protection Buffer | Yellowstone County

Elizabeth Wilson <elizabethanngilg@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 25, 2026 at 2:07 PM

To: cwhite@yellowstonecountymt.gov, mwaters@yellowstonecountymt.gov, mmorse@yellowstonecountymt.gov, jmartin@yellowstonecountymt.gov

Cc: City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>, Civil Attorney <civilattorney@laurel.mt.gov>, bharakal@laurel.mt.gov, Kurt Markegard <kmarkegard@laurel.mt.gov>

Commissioners White, Waters, and Morse, and Mr. Martin,

My name is Elizabeth Gilg. I am a resident of Laurel, Montana and Yellowstone County, and I write on behalf of Laurel C.A.R.E.D. -- Community Advocates for Responsible Economic Development.

I am writing to ask a direct and simple question: has the City of Laurel made any contact with the Yellowstone County Commissioner's office regarding a request from Laurel C.A.R.E.D. for collaborative action on an emergency ordinance to protect schools and residential neighborhoods from the placement of correctional and secure detention facilities within one mile of sensitive uses?

The reason I ask is this. Laurel C.A.R.E.D. has formally requested that the City of Laurel and Yellowstone County act collaboratively and in parallel -- through the Laurel-Yellowstone City-County Planning Board, the joint planning structure that already exists for exactly this kind of shared jurisdictional action -- to adopt coordinated protective zoning instruments before the annexation vote on the proposed 32-bed forensic corrections facility on Old Highway 10 can proceed.

Specifically, we have requested that:

-- The City of Laurel adopt a School Protection Buffer Emergency Ordinance under MCA 76-2-306, establishing a one-mile minimum separation between correctional facilities and schools, parks, residential zones, churches, and licensed daycares, effective immediately upon passage; and

-- The Yellowstone County Board of Commissioners adopt a companion interim zoning regulation under MCA 76-2-206, establishing an equivalent buffer standard in the unincorporated areas within the joint zoning jurisdictional area, to ensure that county residents -- who are equally affected by this siting decision but who have no vote before the Laurel City Council -- are afforded the same protection.

Laurel C.A.R.E.D. has prepared full working draft instruments for both the City ordinance and the County resolution, ready for attorney review and modification prior to adoption. I am happy to provide those drafts to your office immediately upon request.

This request was submitted into the public record at the February 24, 2026 Laurel City Council meeting. It has also been submitted to the City of Laurel in writing, with copies to the Office of the Montana Attorney General and the Commissioner of Political Practices.

I am copying the City of Laurel on this email so that all parties are aware that this inquiry has been made and that both the City and the County are now correspondents in this matter.

I would be grateful for a response from the Commissioner's office at your earliest convenience confirming whether you have been contacted by the City of Laurel regarding this collaborative request, and whether the Board would be willing to consider this matter.

Thank you for your time and for your service to the residents of Yellowstone County.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Gilg
Resident of Laurel and Yellowstone County, Montana
Laurel C.A.R.E.D. -- Community Advocates for Responsible Economic Development
laurelcared.com
February 25, 2026