

Marty Dargel

From: Lauren Barnes <laurenabarnes@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2026 5:45 PM
To: Marty Dargel
Cc: beecherkirk@gmail.com
Subject: Mangelson Property Proposal Concerns

I am writing to share my concerns about the proposed city plan amendment and zoning changes for the Mangelson property. As a Payson resident who has lived within 1/3 of mile from this land for over 13 years, I care deeply about how this area develops and the long-term impact it will have on our community.

I support a transition of this land from agricultural use to **low-density, single-family residential (R-1-10)**. However, I strongly oppose the inclusion of RMF-15 multi-family zoning and respectfully urge the Commission to adopt a plan that allows **only detached single-family homes** across these parcels.

1. Alignment with Payson's Community Identity & City Plan

Payson has long been a family-centered community. The Payson General Plan emphasizes the preservation and improvement of existing neighborhoods and property values, the appropriate distribution of residential density, and the protection of established neighborhood character. The Plan further states that future development should protect existing neighborhoods while directing growth to locations where it can be supported by infrastructure and where it is compatible with surrounding land uses.

According to [recent demographic data](#), Payson has a median age of 29.5 years (with 57% between the ages of 18-64) and an average household size (3.5) that outpaces national averages. According to the [Payson City's General Plan](#), in 2017, 77% of all occupied housing units in Payson were single-family homes (88% owner-occupied). Payson has already drastically increased the number of multi-family and high-density homes recently. Families choose to move to and stay in Payson partially because of historically spacious, low-density neighborhood structure which allows families to purchase homes and remain in the area.

The housing landscape in Payson has historically been dominated by detached single-family homes, which has helped families put down roots and remain in the community long-term. Homeownership is associated with stronger neighborhood stability, higher civic engagement, and longer-term residency ([Benefits of Homeownership](#)) and research shows that many households report higher satisfaction in detached, lower-density housing environments, particularly due to space, privacy, and stability compared to those living in higher density housing. ([CDC](#))

Moving this area toward higher-density multi-family housing conflicts with the long-standing development pattern that has supported Payson's identity and long-term community stability.

2. School Capacity & Impact on Families

This area of Payson feeds directly into Nebo School District schools that are already managing growth pressures. Salem Hills High School (Grades 10-12) is already managing a large student enrollment of nearly 1,600 students between only three grades while Valley View Middle School (Grades 6-7) already handles

roughly 960 students in a compressed two-grade facility and Salem Junior High (Grades 8-9) handles around 1000 students per year between the two grades.

Local experiences and reporting highlights that families are already experiencing overcrowding conditions. One report describes “[crowded hallways, cafeterias, and pickup lines](#),” which most of us parents already witness in addition to [classrooms with 30+ students](#), and a general sense that “the whole situation... is very crowded.”

From an educational standpoint, research consistently shows that overcrowded schools can:

- reduce individualized instruction
- increase stress for students and teachers
- negatively impact learning environments [\[ebsco.com\]](#)

The district has managed capacity dynamically by shifting boundaries, building new schools, and adjusting which grades attend what schools. Adding multi-family density to historical farmland introduces less predictable enrollment surges, which makes long-term planning more difficult and potentially destabilizing for families and potentially threatens the learning environment for children and teachers in our community.

3. Cumulative Growth: Arrowhead & Highway 198 Corridor Impact

This proposal for land use should not be evaluated in isolation.

The Arrowhead Ranch area of Payson alone includes large-scale residential expansion, including other proposals and approvals for *hundreds* of new housing units across multi-phase developments including one single subdivision with over 200 lots itself ([heraldextra.com](#)).

Less than a mile away from Mangelson’s land, a significant high-density housing and commercial development is underway along Highway 198 in Salem, including over 500 new housing units, major retail, and a grocery store covering 111 acres primarily under the direction of Kreate Development referred to as “Salem Central.”

Because Payson shares infrastructure, roads, and school systems with neighboring communities, this growth does not occur in isolation.

Research and lived experience confirms that as overall population size and density increase, traffic congestion and system strain become more pronounced, especially when growth exceeds infrastructure pacing ([mdpi.com](#)). Adding RMF-15 density at Mangelson property would further intensify:

- Emergency response delays
- Traffic congestion
- Longer commute times
- More strain on local and regional infrastructure

Payson has the opportunity to serve as a stabilizing force in regional planning, rather than compounding high-density pressures already being introduced in nearby cities.

4. Neighborhood Stability & Long-Term Investment

Detached single-family neighborhoods are strongly associated with long-term owner occupancy. These areas tend to foster:

- greater neighborhood engagement
- stronger community relationships and investment in the city

- more consistent property maintenance and upkeep

By contrast, multi-family developments can, over time, lead to higher turnover and more rental-based occupancy.

These shifts can subtly but meaningfully change community dynamics over time and also lead to less predictability regarding vacancies.

As of mid-June 2026, *each* of the communities at nearby South Haven Farms (Valo, Retreat, Residence) is carrying ongoing vacancies. While high-density housing may initially attract developers with the promise of higher profits, overall demand for these types of homes in Payson has softened.

5. Agricultural Land & Environmental Considerations

This land represents high-quality, usable agricultural ground. Once converted to higher-density housing, that capacity is permanently lost.

Research on urban land use shows that density decisions involve trade-offs, including:

- impacts on environmental systems
- changes to stormwater and land absorption
- reduced biodiversity and open space ([Building & Cities](#))

Lower-density development of single-family homes allows for a more gradual transition while preserving elements of Payson's rural and agricultural heritage. Including more open space, maintenance of more natural drainage and stormwater patterns and retaining some of the rural character that defines Payson.

6. Livability, Parking, and Perceived Crowding

Multi-family developments often bring practical challenges that nearby residents experience directly, including:

- Parking overflow due to limited garage use
- Increased on-street congestion
- Spillover parking into nearby neighborhoods
- A heightened sense of crowding
- Reduced safety and accessibility

These patterns are already visible in nearby developments and should be carefully considered before even considering the addition of more medium to high-density zoning.

Research on higher-density environments acknowledges that perceived crowding and livability concerns are real factors influencing community satisfaction, not just theoretical ones ([mdpi.com](#)).

7. Infrastructure & Resource Demand

While higher-density housing can be more efficient in theory, it also concentrates demand on infrastructure systems, including water usage.

In practice, communities experiencing rapid growth must balance:

- water availability

- infrastructure expansion costs
- long-term sustainability

This is especially relevant in Utah, where [water constraints continue to be an ongoing concern](#).

Request

I respectfully ask the Payson Planning Commission to:

- Deny the RMF-15 multi-family zoning
- Approve consistent R-1-10 single-family zoning for this area
- Compile and Review updated data on traffic, infrastructure, and school capacity before making a final decision

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and your commitment to Payson's long-term future.

Lauren Barnes

301 S 1200 East Payson