

**From:**  
**John Matava**  
**PO Box 951**  
**Cle Elum, WA 98922**  
**john.matava@gmail.com**

**To:**  
**Kittitas County Community Development Services**  
**Attn: Jamey Ayling**

**Statement AGAINST granting a Conditional Use Permit for the “Fowler Creek Guest Ranch, CU-23-00003”**

This statement outlines my rationale for recommending that the subject Conditional Use permit not be granted.

This development is beginning to look more like a 30 trailer residential Trailer Court than the original proposal for a short term recreational RV Park. Renting the hookups on a month-to-month basis to semi-transient residents makes more economic sense since it would be much less labor intensive to manage and less costly to develop.

1. Plans to build facilities consistent with a short term vacation RV park have been dropped. The plaza and meeting rooms are no longer in the plan. The swimming pool was always just a 'maybe' in the application. The promised meeting facilities may or may not be built. I am not sure if the County can/will demand that the property will be developed as the proposal states and require that the facilities be included. It is doubtful that the amenities will ever be built if the county does not demand that as part of the approval.
2. The economic viability of the property as a short term guest RV park was always questionable. No waterfront for boating or fishing, hunting would be off the property, no stunning views, the described boggy nature of the property, and the limited seasonal recreational opportunities. Because of its location near the freeway it is not even very quiet. The location will not be a strong draw as a recreational site. It certainly is not be attractive place to spend a week or even just a weekend.
3. Managing the facility for short term use will be extremely time consuming, costly and labor intensive. Maintenance, check ins, check outs, billing, booking, advertising, etc. This looked suspiciously like a “backdoor” permit for a residential Trailer Court even before the promised meeting and recreational amenities were eliminated. It looks even more so now.
4. Either targeting the short term recreational rentals or long term residential rentals, there will be absolutely no benefit to the surrounding properties.

If I understand things correctly, new Trailer Courts in Kittitas County are either banned outright, required to be located in the Ellensburg Urban Growth Area, or grandfathered as an existing use (Chapter 17.24.010). As a recreational RV park, the maximum stay is required be less than 6 months but it will be impossible to police the requirement unless the county has the rental records and tasks someone to review the records. What's more, the property does not even meet the requirement of Chapter 17.24 (Trailer Courts) in terms of the minimum lot size for the trailers or paved roads etc. It will not have the setbacks or spacing that would be required for a legitimate Trailer Court. The condition of trailers in a Trailer Court are subject to inspection by the county to insure the trailers meet

a minimum standard for habitation. I don't believe that is a requirement for a guest RV park.

Regardless of what the applicant would like the county to believe, this seems to be a backdoor application for a Trailer Court. Trailer hookups are in high demand everywhere because of the high cost of permanent housing. They are very lucrative for the owner/operator. It may not be that the current owner plans on using it as a Trailer Park but it could be used as such by the next owners or heirs. I have a family member who invests in rental property and she is of the opinion that a Trailer Court will return the most income from a small property, with a minimal investment in development and little ongoing cost. Trailer Courts return a lot of profit and are the 'holy grail' for rental property investment. Month-to-month rental of an RV hookup can be priced, depending on the market, from \$500 to \$1000 a month. That is substantial monthly income for a 30 hookup trailer park on a small pocket of land. Simple math shows an income incentive to the developer that is obvious.

The existing property is R5 in an area predominately zoned as Rural properties, Forest and Range, Commercial Forest, and Agricultural. In spite of the existing R5 zoning the area, this property has been subdivided into parcels that average about 2.5 acres. The area is not in an LAMIRD. This existing parcel is already aggressively subdivided to the limits of county ordinances and beyond what I thought possible.

People living in RVs and Trailers cost the community with no benefit. Drive through the Ballard neighborhood in Seattle. It has a large semi-transient population living out of mobile housing parked on the street. They bring major problems with drugs, violence, property crime, mental health issues, abandoned junk and trash, street congestion and create a high demand for government services. I am afraid this development will bring these same kind of lifestyles to this rural neighborhood. It is very likely the cities of Seattle, Issaquah, Bellevue, North Bend and King County will crack down on people living in street RV's. A recent Supreme Court ruling (Grants Pass, Ore. vs. Johnson) gives the local governments a lot more authority to do so. This will create demand for alternative, relatively cheap places to park their RVs in the I-90 corridor.

The application for the CUP should be rejected. Even if the current owner(s) claim they have no intention of renting Trailer hookups on a month-to-month basis there will be a strong economic incentive for their heirs or subsequent owners to do so. The stated plan is not tenable and there is a lot of potential income at stake.

Thank you for your time and your attention on the matter.

Sincerely  
John Matava