



## ***KITTITAS COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT 7***

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*“Our mission is to provide the highest quality fire, rescue, and emergency services to our community in a caring and professional manner”*

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### **Subject: Comments Regarding Suncadia’s Request for Extension of the Development Agreement**

To Kittitas County Community Development Services,

Kittitas County Fire District 7 appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding Suncadia’s request for an extension of their Development Agreement. As the fire protection authority for most of the community, we have a responsibility to ensure that future development and ongoing operations within Suncadia do not increase life-safety risks for residents, visitors, or emergency responders. With the growing threat of fast-moving wildfires in our region, it is essential that the Development Agreement reflect current fire-protection realities and best practices.

#### **1. Emergency Access and Automatic Gate Operation**

During a rapidly advancing wildfire, delays of even a few minutes can have life-threatening consequences. The current reliance on personnel to manually open gates at Suncadia’s various access points introduces unnecessary delay during critical moments. We strongly recommend that Suncadia commit to installing automatic, emergency-responsive gate systems at all entrances. These systems should allow immediate access for emergency vehicles and those evacuating without requiring staff intervention.

#### **2. Roadside Fuel Reduction and Evacuation Safety**

Suncadia contains several internal choke points and narrow corridors that could become hazardous during a fast-moving fire. Without significant fuel reduction along primary and secondary roadways, there is a real risk of entrapment for both residents and responders. To improve survivability and evacuation flow, we request that Suncadia implement a comprehensive roadside fuel-mitigation program. This should include measurable, ongoing treatments that reduce vegetation density and ladder fuels along all major travel routes.

### **3. Hydrant Placement and Fire Flow Coordination**

Per the International Fire Code, the Fire Chief must be consulted on the placement of all fire hydrants. This coordination is essential to ensure adequate fire flow, access, and spacing as the community continues to build out. Additionally, transitioning hydrants to Storz connections would significantly reduce setup time during structure-fire response and would contribute positively to the community's WSRB rating.

### **4. Construction Standards for Future Development**

Given the wildfire exposure of the area, all new construction within the remaining buildout should meet the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) standards for a Wildfire Prepared Home. Ignition-resistant construction, ember-resistant design, and defensible-space considerations are critical to reducing structure ignition potential during inevitable wildfire events. These standards represent a proven, science-based approach to improving community resilience.

### **5. Pre-Fire Planning and Emergency Drills at the Lodge**

The Lodge at Suncadia represents one of the highest potential life-safety risks in the event of a wildfire due to its occupancy levels, visitor turnover, and surrounding fuels. To ensure preparedness, we request that Suncadia work directly with Kittitas County Fire District 7 to develop comprehensive pre-fire plans for the Lodge and surrounding facilities. Regularly scheduled emergency drills, specifically focused on wildfire scenarios, should be conducted to ensure staff readiness, identify operational challenges, and improve evacuation procedures. Proactive planning and practice are essential to reducing the risk of mass-casualty outcomes during a fast-moving fire.

### **6. Water Supply Capacity and Long-Term Planning**

As Suncadia continues to grow, it is essential that the community's water system can support residential demand, commercial use, and the fire-suppression needs associated with a large, high-risk wildland-urban interface community. We request that Suncadia provide a clear plan demonstrating that current and future water infrastructure including storage, pumping capacity, and distribution, can sustain simultaneous domestic use and emergency fire flow during peak-demand conditions. Ensuring adequate and reliable water supply is fundamental to protecting life and property as the development expands.

Kittitas County Fire District 7 supports responsible development that prioritizes public safety. We ask that these fire-protection measures be incorporated as conditions of any extension to the Development Agreement. We welcome continued collaboration with Suncadia and Kittitas County to ensure that the community is prepared for the wildfire challenges ahead.

Respectfully,

*Aaron Lowe*

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