

TO: *Rose Shriner, CDS*
RE: *Big Creek Trails*
Date: *June 27, 2016*
FROM: **Roger B. Olsen**
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I have a lot of concerns rezoning land that should be 20 acre zoning into land that will accommodate a PUD. The county has thousands of lots that are less than 5 acres already. There is no need for more land that will accommodate more intensive development. We didn't need more 5 acre land, let alone 5 acre rural recreation but somehow that slipped through the cracks. It was a mistake and developing it in this manner is a bigger mistake. This land is well off the main roadways.

The proposed location has a lot of unbuildable land that should not be used to determine how many homes can be built there. All unbuildable land like that land beneath the power lines, critical areas, areas for waste water, roads and utilities should not be use when considered the total amount of homes.

The plan, as it stands today, calls for very small lots by rural standards. This kind of intensive development in the rural area cannot maintain rural character and will destroy rural character in that area. 58 homes clustered together will not be compatible with the rural character.

The health safety and welfare of Kittitas County residents will not be protected with this development. This is "urban style" development in the rural area. Urban services will not be available and should not be available. If this kind of development is desired then it should either be build under the MPR (Master Planned Resort) designation or it should be held to the same standards as a MPR. This project shows poor planning and the County should not be complicit in that poor planning.

This project is similar to the old cluster developments of the past which were found to not be in compliance with the GMA (Growth Management Act). But instead of a bunch of 21 acre tracts with 14 homes on each tract, this project will build 58 homes on not much more acreage. The current cluster development limits the number of homes to 6 per cluster. There should be no clusters bigger than 6 homes in the rural area.

We've been warned the past few years about wildfires. We've had several and we should be leaning from them, not tempting fate. This development, as planned, is a disaster waiting to happen. In most cases where homes have been saved during wildfires, they were saved because the homes were not clustered; they had ample "defensible space" consisting of ample green grass and homes were not close together because of large lots.

There were homes destroyed by wildfire that had green, watered lawns but the homes were clustered. The lots were small, putting home close together and lawns were not big enough to give adequate defensible space nor were the lots big enough to avoid the hot fire from going house to house.

On top of the County allowing poorly designed projects to be built in the County, the County has decided that the health, safety and welfare of its rural citizens can be served by 275 gallons of water per day. If you are going to have a lawn, then you can have another 50 gallons per day. This is a disaster waiting to happen and should be stopped right now.

The biggest loss will not be the loss of homes but the loss of homeowners insurance. If we allow this kind of development to continue, not only will homeowners not be able to insure their homes, the value of their homes will drop and in turn the county property assessment value will also drop. This will affect all rural residents of Kittitas County, not just the ones whose homes burned. If that should happen, I will be one of the first to join a lawsuit against the county suing for damages. If the County wants to go into the homeowners' insurance business, I will reconsider.

Another growing problem in the rural area, particularly in the Nelson Siding area where this development is being proposed, is the problem of wood smoke. We already have some intensive development in the Golf Course area and the Elk Meadows area. Each area acts like a collective smoke stack when the individual homes burn wood for heating. The only time we are relatively free of wood smoke is when there is a burn ban in the summer and there are no wild fires. That wasn't the case when we moved here 16 years ago.

I didn't see any ban on wood stoves in this development. Suncadia was wise enough to ban them in their community. Come weekends and no wind days, this valley fills up with smoke very quickly making our air much worse than in Ellensburg. This, too, is a health hazard that the County has failed to address and as far as I can tell, neither has this project. At the least there should be no wood burning devices in new construction in areas like Nelson Siding where diffusion is limited.

We don't need more land for housing in the rural area and we certainly don't need any PUD's in the rural area. A PUD is best utilized in an urban setting not a rural setting. This is an attempt to circumvent the MPR requirements. Suncadia is a good example of what development should look like if more intensive development is desired in the rural area. The houses are not too close together while still being clustered. Most importantly there is a lot of "green grass" meandering through the home sites creating a lot of defensible space. The Big Creek Trails development does not provide that basic firefighting setting.

Thank you,

Roger Olsen