

To: Kittitas County Community Development Services
Re: Big Creek Trails RZ-15-00001
From: David F. Matulka

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 used when considering the total amount of homes. The county has recognized this principle in the past and disallowed use of undevelopable land when calculating overall density. Rather than that approach, any proposal that clusters building lots has done so within the underlying zoning.

The plan, as it stands today, calls for very small lots by rural standards. This kind of intensive development in the rural lands of the county will destroy rural character in that area. Similar to proposals in the past, which were the impetus for hearings board successful filings against the county for approving contiguous cluster plats, 58 homes clustered together will not be compatible with the rural character regardless of the method used. This land is well off the main roadways and it appears that development of a second ingress/egress access road would be doubtful due to limited easements widths and bridge restrictions.

The health safety and welfare of Kittitas County residents will not be protected with this development. This is "urban style" development in a 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 built under the MPR (Master Planned Resort) designation or as a PUD or Planned Unit Development in an area with better infrastructure and higher densities already exist.

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 proposes to build 58 homes on not much more buildable acreage than would have been required for the same number of homes under these now repealed codes.

The current cluster development limits the number of homes to 6 per cluster. This was deemed to be consistent with rural character by the hearings board. There should be no clusters bigger than 6 homes in the rural area.

And then there's the worsening threat of wildfires in more remote areas of the county. Over the past few years we've had 10's of thousands of rural acres burned and homes, outbuildings and animals lost as a result of these wildfires. That 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 not built close together because of larger lots. With water restrictions in place across the county, keeping defensible space green will become more of a challenge than in the past.

Now that the county has decided that the health, safety and welfare of its rural citizens can be served by 275 gallons of water per day per home if you want to have a lawn or garden you are limited to 500 square feet. A 10X50 area to defend a home from wildfire blown by high winds is a disaster waiting to happen and should be stopped!

With high losses in property, homeowners may not be able to insure their homes because insurers will not offer the policies. Then 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. There is no national insurance program for wildfires like there is for floods. If that should happen, will the county insure these homes?

Finally, recreation homes often become permanent homes. Residents then demand more services as a result of their full time status. 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 development doesn't belong where it's proposed.

Thank you,

David F. Matulka