

City of Cle Elum, Attention: Planning Department/Wildwood

119 West First Street, Cle Elum WA 98922

Reference File numbers (SUB-2023-002, DA-2024-001, SEPA-2024-004)

Wildwood Ranch

In regards to the proposed Wildwood Ranch project I have several serious concerns and strongly oppose the plan as it currently proposed. I will lay out some of those concerns below and by the end I'm sure we can all agree that the current plan needs significant adjustments to gain city and community approval.

The first major concern is the density and lot size proposed. The average lot size proposed is approximately 3000 sq/ft. There is no development located within the city of Cle Elum or upper Kittitas county that allows this type of extreme density. The proposed neighborhood would not fit in with current city or upper county standards. Standards that many people who live in the city and upper Kittitas county appreciate and moved here because of those standards. Most lots in city limits are around 7000 sq/ft which allows for a home with some character and neighborhood feel. The 3000 sq/ft lots proposed would force the look from the street to be nothing but a garage door and a front door. There simply isn't enough space to put more than that on the front of the house, this also forces all the homes to look identical. I can't imagine the city would allow this level of density anywhere, it isn't safe, it is ugly, it lacks character and class and simply isn't what Cle Elum is all about. It also destroys habitat for the wildlife in the area.

My second major concern is the destruction of wildlife habitat. I fully understand that this lot will be developed for housing and have no issue with development. The proposed number of homes and impervious surface detailed in the report allows no room for wildlife habitat. Very often I see herds of elk, deer, flocks of geese, turkeys, and occasionally a bear utilizing the empty field for grazing. If we were to put half the homes proposed on the property it would at least allow some space for continued habitat for the wildlife and would fit in with the aesthetics of the surrounding neighborhoods. With 93 homes on less than 12 acres I assume streetlights will be required for safety reasons, this will add an unacceptable amount of light pollution further impacting wildlife in a negative and unrecoverable way.

Access is another significant concern of mine. The proposed road along deer meadow drive which will service the majority of the homes in the development is currently a private road mostly on county property not city property. Where exactly is the new city street going to be placed along with the sidewalks and storm drains? With this number of homes in a small space access is going to be an issue. 93 additional homes will have a huge negative impact on the narrow roads that are already failing. Traffic in and out of the development will certainly be a concern. Are traffic lights part of the

project to control traffic? None of the surrounding city streets have sidewalks, this makes walking to town unsafe and with a density as high as proposed it is assumed many people will walk to town. If sidewalks aren't provided on all of the streets leading to the development it would open the city up to litigation by not providing a safe way to walk to town, a primary city service. Again, the density proposed has to trigger all of these safety issues and concerns. There are currently no sidewalks on 3rd street which will be the primary access to this development. We certainly can't allow twice the density in this development compared to the homes currently on 3rd street without first installing sidewalks on all the streets leading to and from the development.

The final major concern is the length of development. It is proposed to take 20 years or longer to develop this project to completion. This is completely unacceptable. No property neighboring the project wants to live in a construction zone for 20 years or more. I have been in the industry for more than 22 years and have never seen a residential housing project with this extensive timeline. I can't see how the city would ever put it's current residents and future residents through this extreme nuisance for that length of time. It's only 11.97 acres with extremely tight lots, this project needs to be completed within 3 years maximum and can't have lots smaller than 7000 sq/ft.

In summary the project proposed in its current form is simply not acceptable for Cle Elum and its surrounding upper-country residents. The density of the proposed project is simply too high for the currently stat of city services and surrounding roads. Residents surrounding the project moved here to have a little space around their homes, enjoy nature, see the wildlife, experience little to no traffic, walk in safe neighborhoods without fear of getting hit by a car, and hope the city will respect those qualities. I am accepting that this parcel will be developed for residential use. I ask that the city hold the developer to develop it to fit in with the surrounding areas and the city in general. Lets get the lot sizes to 8,000-10,000 sq/ft, lets put in a few sidewalks, lets limit the impact on wildlife and light pollution, let's think through the access and specifically how is the traffic flow going to impact safety and lets start and complete this project in a reasonable amount of time. Essentially I ask that the city think of the residents and values that make Cle Elum great not just the greed of a developer.



Thank you for your time and consideration

Sincerely,

Benjamin Lazowski

251 Deer Meadow Drive

Cle Elum WA 98922

509-656-4518