

Concerns Regarding Wildwood Ranch LLC Development Proposal

Date: December 17, 2024

To: City of Cle Elum Planning Department, and Whom It May Concern,

I have reviewed the documentation related to the proposed development plan for Wildwood Ranch LLC, as outlined in the application documents (File Numbers: SUB-2023-003, DA-2024-001, SEPA-2024-004). After careful consideration, I have significant concerns regarding the potential impact on the environment, local wildlife, infrastructure, and the well-being of the surrounding community.

This summary highlights key issues based on the application materials, providing a clearer understanding of the risks this development poses to both the natural landscape and Cle Elum residents. The following points address concerns related to safety, traffic, water management, wildlife protection, noise, parking, and more.

1. Construction Phasing and Duration (Page 2, A6)

The proposed construction schedule indicates that the project will begin in 2024 and be completed in 1-6 phases over the next 20 years or as the market allows. Our quiet neighborhood, consisting of 9 homes in Kendrick Station, 9 homes in Thunder Ridge Plat, and the Goldies residence, will endure construction-related inconveniences and noise for up to 20 years. This extended construction timeline will significantly disrupt the quality of life for current residents.

2. Impervious Surfaces and Water Runoff (Page 4, B1g, Page 6, 3c)

The application states that up to 60% of the site may be covered with impervious surfaces, which could increase as more structures, roads, driveways, patios and sidewalks are added. This will result in significant stormwater runoff. The plan indicates that stormwater runoff will be detained, infiltrated, and conveyed to detention areas in the central and southeastern corners of the property. However, with such a high percentage of impervious surfaces, not all runoff will be contained, potentially leading to flooding in the surrounding areas, including the pond currently present in that same southeastern location.

3. Vegetation Removal (Page 7, 4b)

The proposal calls for minimum removal of vegetation necessary to construct the proposed multi-family residences. However, based on site observations and video of the proposed development, it appears that nearly all current vegetation will be removed. This could lead to increased water runoff and the loss of natural habitat, which is concerning given the local wildlife population.

4. Impact on Wildlife (Page 7, 5a, 5d)

The application mentions common wildlife such as songbirds and deer, but we have observed a more diverse range of species in the area, including bald eagles that nest nearby, elk that eat the vegetation and bed down in the field, and owls, beavers, bears, and bobcats. The development's impact on these species, particularly the use of pesticides and other chemicals that property owners would use, could harm local wildlife and disrupt the health of the nearby pond and its fish population. The proposal includes no measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, and this lack of protection is concerning.

5. Energy and Utility Concerns (Page 8, 6a, Page 14, 16b)

With an increase in electric vehicle usage, can the city's electrical grid accommodate the added demand from the 93 new dwellings with several electric vehicles potentially being charged? Additionally, can the City of Cle Elum's current water and sewer systems handle 93 dwellings with potentially 201 more users or would it put it under strain? It seems as our local businesses have struggled with plumbing issues and has anyone consulted with them?

6. Noise and Traffic Impacts (Page 9, b, Page 14, 14f)

The proposed development will generate significant noise, both during construction and after completion. The application suggests construction noise will be limited to weekdays from 8 AM to 5 PM, but this period spans up to 20 years, not a short-term disturbance. Additionally, traffic noise will increase significantly once the development is complete, with an estimated 770 daily vehicle trips and 5:30 AM and 7:00 PM peak hour trips. This is NOT similar OR consistent to the current surrounding neighborhood. Also, this will create a substantial safety hazard for current residents who use nearby roads for walking, jogging, and cycling. Especially noting the lack of existing sidewalks on east 2nd and 3rd streets.

7. Parking and Traffic Congestion (Page 10, 8i, Page 13, 14c)

The project proposes 186 parking spaces for 93 residential units, which equates to 2 spaces per unit. However, there is no plan for overflow parking for visitors or families with more than two vehicles. If overflow parking spills onto the streets, it could block emergency vehicles and create an eyesore in the neighborhood.

8. Public Services and Local Infrastructure (Page 14, 15a, 15b)

This project will significantly increase demand for public services such as fire protection, police services, health care, schools, and other amenities. The local healthcare system is already at capacity, and the nearby elementary school, despite the addition of 8 portable classrooms, is struggling to accommodate the current population. The increased demand for services from the new residents of the development will strain these already stretched resources.



9. Compatibility with Existing Land Use and Aesthetic Impacts (Page 11, 8bl, 10c.)

The proposed development, with its mix of 93 single-family and multi-family units, is in no way compatible with the surrounding land use, which consists of larger single-family homes on one-acre lots. This significant deviation from the current land use would disrupt the character of the neighborhood, decrease aesthetics and negatively impact the existing community. This type of development is more suitable to the Westside of the state and the dense population that exists there. This development is not attractive or fair to the existing residents, the city of Cle Elum, and the unique area.

In closing, the proposed Wildwood Ranch LLC development primarily benefits the builder, but it poses significant risks to the existing community and the environment. The development will compromise the aesthetics of the area, contribute to increased water runoff and potential flooding, harm and displace local wildlife, add to traffic congestion, strain public services, and potentially overwhelm local utilities. While development is inevitable, it is important to ensure that it aligns with the character of the existing neighborhood and minimizes its impact on the existing community.

I strongly urge the City of Cle Elum to reconsider this proposal. A more suitable development could involve single-family homes on one-acre lots, which would better align with the current surroundings and be less disruptive to water systems, wildlife, traffic, and public services.

Please consider declining this proposal.

Sincerely,

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Come tour the existing neighborhood and surroundings in person and ask yourself if the proposed Wildwood development makes sense. Would you want the proposed development to happen in your rural neighborhood?



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