



Kittitas County, Washington
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August 16, 2021

Mayor Jay McGowan and Council
City of Cle Elum
119 West First Street
Cle Elum, WA 98922

Dear Mayor McGowan and Councilmembers,

We write to you to express our concerns on the 47 Degree North Major Amendment to the existing Suncadia (Trendwest) development agreement of 2002 with the city of Cle Elum.

The existing 2002 development agreement was approved envisioning 1,334 residential units (810 single family/56 multi-family) and a 75-acre business park. The new proposed amendment would change this structure to 527 single-family manufactured units, 180 multi-family residential units, and a reduction of the business park footprint to 26 acres. Additionally, 627 Recreational Vehicle sites are now slated to be part of this development. As planned, the projected population of Cle Elum would double in well under a decade – a massive short-term increase not seen in our county's history since its earliest days. This growth would primarily be on land owned by a single corporate owner from outside of this area.

While this property is governed by a development agreement with the city of Cle Elum, we believe, without significant mitigation, the effects of this development as currently planned will have far-reaching and long-term negative impacts on the Upper County area. Those effects, thus far, have not been adequately presented as part of the forecasting process. Our concerns lie in a variety of county-provided public services which would be significantly stressed and are listed here.

Transportation: As planned, the entirety of ingress and egress traffic to the proposed development would take place on the county road network via SR903 and Bullfrog Road. Congestion on both roads is moderate to severe at the present levels of population and travelers. Without mitigation, the combined effects of this additional population growth, along with increased weekend RV travelers, will most certainly add additional traffic that will impact physical road surfaces, but also intersections, adjacent arterials and residential surface streets. This congestion will deteriorate quality of life, economic vitality, and the ability of first responders to mobilize as required. With the project's proposed full seven-year buildout and per-unit *pro rata* cost allocation, failure to require the developer to provide concurrent improvements has the potential to gridlock this area and the greater 903/Bullfrog corridors until funding, permitting, and construction are completed by local government entities at a future date.

In review of the Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), we cannot find information showing the developer would expand the existing road network to accommodate this increased congestion. We believe that, should the City approve this amendment, the project should be served by a Cle Elum-centered access with a primary transportation corridor away from the Bullfrog/SR903 system.

Public Safety:

Please find enclosed a letter from Kittitas County Sheriff Clay Myers. As the county's elected official in charge of law enforcement, we support the sheriff's perspectives on this project and urge you to incorporate them into your decision on this matter.

Revenue: The Draft SEIS Fiscal Memo (Appendix K) focuses on City of Cle Elum services affected by the proposed project but does not fully encompass the larger impact this project will have on the fair contribution of property taxes paid by county residents. No direct analysis of public services provided by Kittitas County, inclusive of transportation and public safety (Sheriff's Office) is undertaken. Moreover, the graph illustrated on page 29 shows New Construction Assessed Value (NCAV) to be about \$200 million under the proposed project at the end of the buildout in 2028. This stands in stark juxtaposition to the \$1.3 billion realized over the anticipated thirty-year buildout of the project envisioned under the original development agreement. Most alarming, the document indicates the NCAV of the proposed 47 North project will be **half** of the original project's NCAV in 2028 at the end of buildout – an untenable revenue deficit just as maximum impacts are realized. No additional information regarding this situation was available in the Final SEIS. We believe the potential to unfairly burden our remaining property owners in the county with the costs of improvements necessary requires this project be examined on a much wider scale than anticipated by the SEIS.

After review of this project, we respectfully request that the City of Cle Elum condition this proposal to fully mitigate the impacts as discussed. This includes:

- Full funding by the applicant of necessary road improvements or alteration of proposed access/egress to only the Cle Elum city center
- Required concurrent improvement of transportation network elements and supplementation of public safety entities affected by this proposal on a greater Upper County scale
- Adjust the project's proposed residential/business park allocation to offset the loss of NCAV and associated ongoing property tax collection outlined in the SEIS Fiscal Memo and ensure property owners outside of this project are not disproportionately burdened with the costs of mitigation.

Should these conditions not be feasible, we request that the amendment be denied, and the original approved development agreement remain as the guiding document for this area.

We understand the nature of this letter regarding a specific project is highly unusual, but we believe the effects of this project under the current proposal require formal correspondence. Without due consideration, our concerns over these potential impacts will most certainly be realized on a scale far beyond the project. We appreciate your consideration of our requests and believe you will make your decision with a perspective not only on the future of Cle Elum, but also of the entire Upper County.

Sincerely,



Brett Wachsmith
Chair

Laura Osiadacz
Vice-Chair



Cory Wright
Commissioner

Enclosure: Letter from Kittitas County Sheriff Clay Myers