

OUR READERS' OPINIONS

Reconsider dense development in rural area

The new Neighborhood Residential Zoning in Walla Walla allows for the building of over 400 houses on a 100-acre field south of the city. This new housing supply will not solve the problem of affordable housing. Nor will it put money in the city's coffers, because according to the Development Services Department, residential development returns only 80 cents in property taxes for every dollar the city spends in services.

As Brad Rice's letter to the editor in the Sunday issue of the U-B points out, what this development will do is cause problems that taxpayers will have to pay to mitigate.

1. Traffic on all of the adjacent arterial roads will increase, and will require the addition of traffic lights at several intersections.

2. The ultimate build-out will result in hundreds of children in a part of town that has very limited capacity in its neighborhood school, which might necessitate busing.

3. The closest place for any sort of recreation is Howard-Tietan Park, which is

probably not walkable for most people, and certainly not for children.

I regret that I was unable to participate in last year's public deliberations about the zoning code revisions that were finalized on Dec. 19. Had things been different, I would have voiced my concerns about one-size-fits-all Neighborhood Residential Zoning and advocated for inclusion of a less-dense rural residential zoning option that could be applied to areas where the city meets farmland.

Is it too late to consider this possibility, in light of the potential problems of this proposed out-of-place dense development on the outskirts of town?

I am not against the town growing as necessary, and I am not opposed to development in general. But this is not the place for a development of this nature.

Ted Cox
Walla Walla

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