

## OUR READERS' OPINIONS

UB 4-5-19

### Don't divide neighborhoods along economic lines

Some people have voiced concerns about the proposed Bachtold annexation — a 100-acre property surrounding the southeast part of the Table Rock neighborhood.

I know the area well as I grew up on just the other side of the Bachtold property. I have enjoyed those mountain views for nearly all of my life. My childhood neighborhood was quaint, safe and serene. Exactly the kind of environment I work everyday to build for my own children, although my wife and I have found a comfortable nest and wonderful neighbors closer to the center of town.

I think that's what we all want when it comes down to it. A comfortable, safe environment for ourselves and our loved ones.

That's what drives my thinking and decision-making on City Council, especially when it comes to housing policies.

I'll admit, sometimes I get lost in the weeds on housing policies. Wading through questions about land use and development regulations, yard setback requirements and lot coverage ratios, density bonuses and residential zoning — it's enough to keep someone distracted for a lifetime.

But at the end of the day, the big picture question that all of us must decide is this:

What kind of place is Walla Walla?

Is it the kind of place where strangers are met with a look in the eyes and a friendly hello? The kind of place where people share what they can when their neighbors are in need of help?

Or is it the kind of place where the wealthy can escape from the rest of the world? The kind of place where gated communities keep us divided, both above ground and below it in the literal map of our community?

I believe Walla Walla is a place for everyone. It's abundant land and natural beauty should be available to all, regardless of how much house they can afford. That is why I supported the zoning reforms last December that removed all of our exclusionary zoning and minimum property size requirements.

I have appreciated the questions raised around flooding, schools and traffic capacity. I expect all of these questions to be answered in a satisfactory way before voting in favor of any annexation anywhere in the city.

But when it comes to the question of keeping neighbors and neighborhoods divided along economic lines, I have a simple answer.

Walla Walla just ain't that kind of place.

Riley Clubb  
Walla Walla  
City Council member