

## OUR READERS' OPINIONS

### Speak out against massive housing development

Hayden Homes has submitted their final application to the City of Walla Walla requesting annexation of the Bachtold wheat farm between Cottonwood and Kendall Roads and creating a huge, 372 lot housing development. The public has until Aug. 12 to raise concerns to the city.

This development will bring severely increased traffic and pedestrian safety issues near two of our public schools (Prospect Point Elementary and Wa-Hi). There are also many environmental and flooding issues with developing this site.

The plat map for this development shows 84 lots that are less than 5,500 square feet (and five of those are less than 2,525 square feet!). These 84 small lots appear designated for "Wise Size" houses ranging in size from 400 to 1,064 square feet. These are kit homes supplied by Hayden affiliate "Wise Size Homes." This is an attempt to provide affordable housing, but it's not an appropriate location.

After a 26-week study, the Walla Walla Community Council recently released its Affordable Housing report. One of the conclusions of the 30-plus page report is this: "When seeking to construct new affordable housing units, it is critical to build in proximity to employment, services, public transit, retail services and amenities."

SmartGrowth America came to this conclusion: "Newly added affordable housing that is built is often located far from jobs, hospitals, grocery stores and schools creating high transportation costs and hardship particularly given that many of these households do not have reliable access to transportation."

The Bachtold site has a Walk Score of zero out of 100 and Transit Score of zero out of 100 (according to [walkscore.com](http://walkscore.com)). This means any errand requires a car.

Why would the City Council support new, affordable housing in possibly the worst location in the city for access to services? Several city management and City Council members participated in the Community Council study. They should know this location would create a hardship for people needing affordable housing.

Please let the city know that this development is not worth all the problems it would create. Let's make smart planning decisions instead of allowing high-density urban sprawl to be forced into our south side farming area.

Richard Counsell  
Walla Walla