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K Sunday, August 11, 2019

OUR READERS' OPINIONS

Ponder loss of beautiful stretch of rolling hills

The term "affordable housing" is used by many individuals having a genuine desire to help people with no prospect of buying a home in this competitive market. Buyers qualified between \$180,000 to \$230,000 cannot find a home to buy.

Whenever a home comes up in that price range, multiple offers bid the price out of their range.

Folks think we can solve that problem by putting up smaller homes on tiny lots.

The reality of the situation is local home buyers are competing with investors from out of town and Walla Walla itself on every purchase. One can access tax sifter and see how many of the new homes and properties in this price range are purchased by investors through their corporations and LLCs.

I witnessed one transaction wherein a local businessman bought seven new homes in one month to use as rental income. Research Chinook Loop, an ultra high density development. The city allowed a developer to build 43-plus homes wholly owned by the same LLC, one of the owners of the company who built them. First time home buyers will never be able to compete with deep-pocket investors.

To address the annexation with its 372 proposed houses crammed into one of the most beautiful pieces of land in this Valley:

Too far out to make use of the services.

A nightmare for egress on the two narrow roads leading into town. Access is too limited to add a potential 750-1,000 cars/drivers making multiple trips per day through two school zones with four-way stop signs during peak hours.

Represents a high risk of flooding the adjoining areas, Table Rock, Boulders etc. In 2005 our neighborhood was under water in the lower elevations.

Difficulty for emergency vehicles to enter and maneuver to perform their services.

Investors will once again swarm in and buy up a passel of "affordable homes."

To those of you who will be involved in the decision-making process of the "Back-told annexation," I beg you to drive out on Cottonwood Road, find a place to park safely, be careful, the road is narrow with deep ditches on both sides. Once parked turn off your motor, your phone and just gaze at the most beautiful stretch of rolling hills that seem to go on forever, a veritable "Gateway To the Blue Mountains."

Now imagine almost 400 homes with nearly identical roof lines threatening to spread over those unmolested, beautiful fields.

Will this be your legacy, your gift to future generations?

Jack Conley
Walla Walla