



## The Well Timed Whistle By Rhona Baron

Time may wait for no one, but The Whistle has requested an extra two weeks on your behalf. It seems most of the community missed the October 19 deadline for comment on the MDNS (Mitigated Determination of Non Significance) for an unprecedented development in the process of being green-lighted by the City.

“Leavenworth Meadows” is a three hundred unit multi-family development located between Club West on Titus and the Chumstick Highway. Weidner Construction, the same company that built Leavenworth Haus behind Safeway, is the developer. According to the Leavenworth Meadows permit, the applicant is proposing a complex of “156 one-bedroom, 108 two-bedroom, and 36 three-bedroom apartments in up to 21 separate buildings.” Four hundred parking stalls are planned. Development is slated to begin this month.

Leavenworth Meadows adds 600 residents within the city limits, all of whom must be supported by city services like water, sewer and roads. With an existing population of 2500, we face an increase of approximately 25 percent in a single development. None of the units are categorized as affordable as the city does not have the ability to require development for various income levels.

To be clear, Leavenworth Meadows is not part of the projected Urban Growth Area. The UGA will further densify population and neighborhoods. To be even clearer, I am personally in favor of building homes in this area. If done thoughtfully and aesthetically the former site targeted for affordable housing by MEND can become a real asset. As it is, The Whistle blows on the following concerns:

**WATER.** Leavenworth faces “an inability to meet the flow requirements of the 20- year and full-year buildout projections with existing facilities,” according to Adam Miller of Gray and Osbourn in a 2022 report to the City on water flow. Miller stresses the more immediate issue, “pipe line capacity.” To date, the city has not completed a plan or budget for increasing main lines, many of which have deteriorated throughout the village. A third reservoir may have to be built above Leavenworth Meadows to supply its residents.

**TRAFFIC:** The city has listed a roundabout as the solution to increased traffic flow. Duane Goehner, appointed to the 2019 Corridor Study group that reviewed challenges at the Chumstick/Highway 2 intersection states, “I know that the intersection at Hwy 2/ Chumstick/Pine St is troublesome. During the committee discussion, Nick Manzano from WSDOT informed us that solutions in this area are very complicated, and that a traffic circle would not work. Nick said pedestrian traffic exponentially complicates roundabouts. And when such intersections are impeded, all traffic stops. Traffic coming from Chumstick would be backed up miles waiting for Hwy 2 to clear. This would create

unprecedented gridlock into Pine Street. Add school traffic and the Fire Department behind all of that gridlock and safety is a real concern.” In addition, the City is relying on an assessment that doesn't capture actual peak traffic times, when school gets out. The proposed roundabout is dependent on county/city funding to mitigate impacts at ingress/egress points. Chelan County has identified this roundabout in their 20 Year Transportation Plan with no projected date of completion.

**ENVIRONMENT.** Wetlands exist on either side of the top of the proposed development and water flows downhill. According to the geotechnical report, “three to six inches of long-term, post-construction settlement is possible for the proposed development...” The Whistle respects the right of the developer who is an expert in engineering to mitigate and solve construction issues. We'd simply like to point out that we understand that Weidner's other site in Leavenworth has an ongoing, unresolved issue with stormwater drainage, despite public complaints. The city found no impacts with stormwater at Leavenworth Haus in the planning process. According to the MDNS on Leavenworth Meadows, environmental and stormwater issues were again summarily dismissed.

There is a Community Engagement night on November 1 from 5-8 at the Festhalle. The city plans to update the community on various issues unrelated to housing, as well as discuss the Urban Growth Area. We've contacted them requesting info on how citizens can (their words) provide “valuable feedback on a number of projects,” The Whistle received an email stating: “It's an open house in which information will be shared about various City projects.” At deadline for this column, while you are encouraged to take city surveys, there is no plan to add your written or verbal comments to a permanent record.

So we've posted your most pressing concerns in the Whistle Box on this page. We recommend clipping, filling in and submitting your thoughts in writing, or voicing them in person. We have asked the city to add comments to the public record. As always, feel free to get info and make comments at [LWhistle.com](http://LWhistle.com). We are interested in all opinions, pro and con. Or just whistle. We'll hear you.

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