

**Jordan Crisp**

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October 9th, 2024

**Erika Castro-Guzman**

**Troy Rayburn**

City of White Salmon  
100 N. Main St.  
White Salmon, WA 98672

Dear Ms. Castro-Guzman and Mr. Rayburn,

This letter is regarding the Cherry Hill NW, LLC Preliminary Plat, under file numbers *WS-SUB-2024.001* and *WS-SEPA-2024.001* These are my comments after reviewing the materials provided by the City and the Applicant for the proposed Development *LOT 4, Cherry Hill Estates SP-91-17*.

In regards to the Traffic Study conducted in March of 2021, there are two key assumptions that I request to be addressed:

1. The “Planned Transportation Projects” includes a reference to the “City of White Salmon Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)” from 2009. The program refers to a reconstruction of the road and the addition of a sidewalk on one side of Spring Street (0.27 miles from Estes to East City Limits). This improvement has not happened and as far as we are aware, there is no current plan to do so.
2. The “Vehicle Trip Distribution” estimates were calculated assuming the Four Oaks project is completed including the access road connecting to Loop Rd. As far as I am aware, there are no immediate plans to start Four Oaks, so the percentages of increased volume of traffic are not accurately reflected in this study and 100% of the increase would be via Spring Street.

In addition to those issues with the report as published, I do not believe the time at which the study was conducted or the survey windows used accurately reflect the volume of traffic (both vehicle and pedestrian) on Spring Street, and the Spring Street and Main Intersection.

- In March it is still cold and wet in White Salmon resulting in fewer people riding bikes and fewer kids walking to school. This is not anecdotal; it snowed on March 11th, 2023, and was overcast for 3 consecutive weeks.

- The window of 4-6 pm used to survey for high volume does not reflect the actually busy hours of Spring Street and the Spring Street and Main intersection. The busiest time in the afternoon/evening begins around 2:30 pm. During this afternoon hour there is a combination of vehicles headed to the school campuses for pick up, city vehicles returning to the yard, pedestrians exercising or walking their dogs, and delivery vehicles such as UPS, FedEx, and USPS contractors all using Spring Street. It is not uncommon, especially at this time of day, to have two vehicles headed in opposite directions and pedestrians (on foot or bike) have to stop and navigate around one another.
- Please also factor in the growth our community has experienced since 2021. Four new homes were occupied since then on Champion Lane alone and I know there are more on NW Country View, Cochran Lane, and others in the vicinity which use Loop Road and Spring Street. In addition, families in the community now have more kids school aged walking to campus, and older kids hitting driving age resulting in more vehicles.

Finally I would like to share my concern about the safety of Spring Street generally, regardless of this new development. The street is narrow and the edges are literally crumbling away. There are two completely blind hills, one between Main and NW Patton, and the other between Champion Lane and Schoolview Place. I do my best to exercise caution by following the speed limit, not being distracted, and constantly scanning the road for pedestrians, and yet I have had close calls as both a driver and a pedestrian. Many times the only solution is to stand off into the ditch or a patch of grass to let vehicles pass or to pull my bike over and wait until a dog walker has cleared the hill before proceeding on my bike. The increased volume of vehicles will increase the level of danger, especially large and heavy construction vehicles which can't stop or maneuver quickly and aren't familiar with navigating our roads.

For all of these reasons, I implore you to consider the recommendation from the Traffic Impact Study 3rd Party Review: The City of White Salmon should require network improvements from the Developer (Applicant) beyond the limited project frontage. The applicant said in their study that the frontage improvements may be "impractical", but that is not an excuse to disregard the safety of our community. Improvements to Spring Street are critical.

I understand the need for housing in White Salmon and I support the growth of our community, but it must be done thoughtfully and with consideration for the safety of the existing and future residents! Thank you for reading and considering my comments.

Sincerely,



Jordan Crisp



Erika Castro-Guzman <erikac@ci.white-salmon.wa.us>

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## Public comment re: Cherry Hill

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Peter Wright <peterw08@gmail.com>

Wed, Oct 9, 2024 at 3:30 PM

To: Erika Castro-Guzman <ErikaC@ci.white-salmon.wa.us>, Stephanie Porter Clerk Treasurer <clerktreasurer@ci.white-salmon.wa.us>

Hi again,

Please add the following comments to the record for the proposed Cherry Hill Subdivision. I will also be attending the meeting to provide oral testimony with these comments.

--- Under RCW 58.17.110, a jurisdiction is obligated to deny a subdivision unless provisions can be made to address the public safety problems the subdivision creates.

RCW 58.17.110(2) states: *A proposed subdivision and dedication shall not be approved unless the city, town, or county legislative body makes written findings that: (a) Appropriate provisions are made for the public health, safety, and general welfare and for such open spaces, drainage ways, streets or roads, alleys, other public ways, transit stops, potable water supplies, sanitary wastes, parks and recreation, playgrounds, schools and schoolgrounds and all other relevant facts, including sidewalks and other planning features that assure safe walking conditions for students who only walk to and from school;*

My main concerns are regarding pedestrian safety along the approximately 725 linear feet of NW Spring Street that is proposed to remain in the present current condition between the subdivision access road and N Main St. The fact that pedestrian safety is called out specifically in state law underscores its importance for all new development in Washington and further supported by local planning goals to improve walkability and reduce emissions.

There are a few ways to look at the pedestrian safety problem. One is to ask whether allowing this ~725-foot section to remain in its current condition ensures the safety of the future residents of the new subdivision who walk. Even when Four Oaks is developed (an outcome Cherry Hill is already dependent on in order to connect to extend city water and sewer), NW Spring Street will still be the most direct pedestrian route from the western portion of the subdivision to Whitson Elementary and most in-town services. For all intents and purposes, NW Spring is a primary pedestrian access route to Cherry Hill. The evidence from prior testimony is clear that it will not be safe for new residents to walk into town via NW Spring Street unless it is fully improved from the intersection with the access road.

A related question is whether approving the preliminary subdivision plat as proposed would result in an acceptable level of pedestrian safety for existing users of Spring Street, some of whom are residents who do not have a choice of walking route. Again, the evidence points to "no". Even if all of the residents of Cherry Hill walk into town via Four Oaks, many will still drive via NW Spring Street – substantially increasing the traffic volume along the easternmost ~850 feet of NW Spring Street and making it less safe for all pedestrian users.

Improving just 125 feet as proposed does not solve this problem and may lead to other issues as a disconnected section of improvements. Half-street improvements along all 850 feet between N Main Ave and the proposed Cherry Hill access road are the minimum necessary to ensure pedestrian safety.

The City's obligation to ensure public safety also means that “a standard or prescriptive requirement supporting additional frontage improvements...within the TSP or municipal code” (as noted in the staff report) should not be necessary to justify approval conditions requiring the developer to make these improvements. As far as public safety is concerned, the TSP merely guides how those improvements should be made as part of the planned network (e.g. with a bike lane in addition to a sidewalk).

Imposing these conditions does not mean the developer would ultimately bear the entire final cost of the improvements or that the City cannot support the process. It simply acknowledges that a 36-lot subdivision accessed via 725 feet of NW Spring Street without improvements would be a public safety problem and that imposing conditions on the developer are the only procedurally appropriate mechanism to ensure that the development can move forward with an assurance of public safety. There are a variety of tools that the City could consider employing to support the developer in initially financing and/or reimbursing the cost of these improvements, particularly as other new development occurs off of NW Spring Street. However, it would be premature to consider these as part of the approval of this preliminary plat.

Allowing this subdivision to proceed without ensuring the safety of pedestrians along NW Spring St would be repeating our past planning mistakes. Over time, those mistakes have made residents of NW Spring Street less safe and may now cause new housing to be relatively more expensive to build than it might otherwise have been. Although it is critical that we tackle all of the factors that make diverse housing less attainable for residents, reinforcing suburban development patterns by exacerbating known pedestrian safety problems is not an appropriate approach.

Thank you,  
Peter Wright