

Linda Ann Kuller

From: N. Hodges <n.hodges@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 4, 2018 8:56 AM
To: Erika Shook; Linda Ann Kuller; Barbara Thomas; Jamie Stephens
Subject: Lopez Village Subarea Plan - Comments on proposed zoning changes

To the hardworking folks at the county and on the LVPRC who are putting in the time and effort to guide our little village into the future, thank you!

I was hoping to make my concerns about the proposed zoning changes within the Lopez Urban Growth Area a matter of record and hopefully offer a different viewpoint on why the proposed zoning changes may have unintended negative impacts.

My wife and I own Barn Owl Bakery and have supplied the San Juans with our breads and pastries for going on 5 years. As our business has grown we've considered opening a retail space near the village and have looked at different options including leasing a space, buying land and developing a space, and buying a space. Due to the high cost of labor and materials here on island the cost of building anything new is incredibly high, especially for a small business such as ourselves, while the spaces that are available for lease or to buy are few and far between. One of the largest obstacles we face is the incredibly short supply of real estate on Lopez that is zoned for commercial use.

The proposed zoning changes in the urban growth area that would remove the commercial zoning designation from roughly half of the urban growth area would only serve to exacerbate these problems, making it even more difficult for entrepreneurs and island-owned small businesses to find a place to operate. The amount of commercially zoned property is already limited on the island, and by further reducing it, we run the risk of inflating the cost of commercial real estate.

Rather than zoning that effectively prices out the kind of community that makes this island unique, why not look for a way to encourage live/work, mixed use, high-density commercial zones with a residential component. Maybe look at square footage as a way to encourage smaller mixed use developments, or as a way to discourage large big-box style buildings. The Eastsound Planning and Review Committee essentially uses parking requirements as a way to make every new business come before the board and publicly state their proposal, which is a chance to open up a community discussion. I would like to see something similar (although maybe not using parking) in the Lopez UGA where rather than hoping one set of rules and zoning changes will create the kind of village we want, let's think of a set of guidelines that encourages conversation around new development. The UGA is sufficiently small that a case-by-case approach is fully feasible.

The idea of severely restricting commercial real estate in the UGA seems like it might end up being counter productive in creating a livable, affordable island community. Before the committee commits to that course of action, I would strongly suggest doing a thorough build-out analysis, cost analysis, and direct communications with all the property owners whose commercial zoning designation would be taken away.

Thank you for your time and your hard work,

Sincerely,

Nathan Hodges

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Nathan R. Hodges MLA
360 468 3492
barnowlbakery.com