

Adam Zack

From: Barbara Schultheiss <barbara@lifrc.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2019 10:12 AM
To: Comp Plan Update
Cc: 'Kim Pasciuto'
Subject: EDE Comments
Attachments: LIFRC Letter About Economic Element.pdf; LIFRC Specific Comments Econ Element.pdf

Adam,

Attached are comments from the Lopez Island Family Resource Center about the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our feedback with you, and look forward to more conversations on how to strengthen our San Juan County communities.

Barbara

Barbara Schultheiss (formerly Gurley)
Executive Director
Lopez Island Family Resource Center
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Lopez Island Family RESOURCE CENTER

Serving the entire community at every stage of life

April 18, 2019

Adam Zack
Department of Community Development
San Juan County
PO Box 947
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

Dear Adam,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the March 20, 2019 Draft of the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Lopez Island Family Resource Center (LIFRC) has three principal areas of work: advocating for a just community, building resilience by providing for basic needs of our residents, and creating opportunity for a better future for our community. In this regard we offer some general observations and attach some specific comments.

The three priorities identified by our community in 2016 were living wage jobs, affordable housing, and comprehensive health care (especially mental health care) for all.

Living wage, year round jobs are key to a stable and sustainable community. Not all sectors of our economy are equal when it comes to meeting this goal. Several of the economic sectors identified in the Element are typically low paying and seasonal (tourism) or do not typically employ others.

Our emphasis should be on creating opportunities that provide year round employment for more than the business owner and that pay living wages with benefits. This is not to detract from tourism but the direction suggested, using the lodging tax dollars to build much needed infrastructure and thereby create meaningful jobs, is a welcome change. Another essential part of living wage, year round jobs is the availability of child care which is not mentioned in the Element.



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The urgent need for affordable housing is noted and more fully addressed in the Housing Element. This cannot be left unaddressed any longer as the housing situation has deteriorated in the last few years. We need creative solutions that may stretch our thinking and cause some friction, but this is essential for a sustainable year round community.

We appreciate the acknowledgement of the need for long term health care for our seniors. We must, however, include mental health care to the health care equation.

The Economic Development Element refers in several places to an exodus of people who cannot find housing nor jobs. What is not mentioned is that the absence of any one of these three key areas results in an increased need for services from Family Resource Centers and in some cases, homelessness. In other words, it is not only that people may migrate out of our County or that they may take their dollars to the mainland in search of the services they need, but rather that they may stay in our community but in ever increasingly stressful circumstances.

We can do better. We must do better. Together we will do better.

Sincerely,

Barbara Schultheiss
Executive Director

Kim Pasciuto
Board Chair



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