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January 6, 2020

Sophia Cassam
Linda Kuller
San Juan County Dept. of Comm. Develop.

Via email to: compplancomments@sanjuanco.com

Dear Sophia and Linda:

Members of OPAL's board of trustees and I have reviewed the draft Housing Goals and Policies and have the following comments that I hope are helpful.

5.7.A. GENERAL HOUSING INVENTORY, TYPES, CATEGORY AND CONDITION:

Goal 1:

1. Work with the SJC Building Advisory Committee, the Eastsound Plan Review Committee and the Lopez Village Planning Review Committee to understand market factors that limit more dense development in these areas.
2. ~~Develop housing stock~~ Build dwellings that meets the needs of those in the low, moderate...
3. Increase the inventory of long-term rentals through permit requirements and modifications to the development code. [This is not clear to me - what do you want to do?... do you want to reduce requirements? Add incentives to the development code? I think this statement needs more clarity.]

Goal 2:

1. ~~Identify~~ Assure that appropriate land use designations ~~to expand areas that~~ allow sufficient housing ~~that~~ to meets the projected needs of the elderly population, such as group homes...
2. ~~Advocate for~~ Support the cold weather shelters on San Juan and Orcas islands...

Goal 4:

Proposal #5 regarding adopting increases in SEPA categorical exemptions for residential and mixed-use development seems ill advised in San Juan County where the UGAs are lower density than most in the state, and where the environment is more fragile and less developed overall. The SEPA process is not overly time consuming and it assures that a developer is considering all possible impacts of a project.

5.7.B. AFFORDABILITY

Goal 6:

2. Facilitate ~~the preservation of affordability, repair and durability collaboration among non-profit and private housing developers to encourage the conservation~~ of existing affordable housing units.

Move to Goal 1 or 8:

#3 - Expand and implement the 2018 Home-Share Pilot Program.... [this does not related to the goal to “increase the number of resale restricted affordable housing units.”]

Add:

- Prioritize housing units for county funding and density bonuses that have resale-restrictions lasting at least 50 years.
- When expanding the boundaries of a U.G.A. require that 50% of housing units allowed in the newly expanded area be resale restricted.

5.7.C. VACATION RENTALS

Please include goals to limit the total number of short-term or vacation rentals, and to limit the number by island and/or land use zone. I commend to you the recommendations of the Orcas Island Vacation Rental Group that was sent to the County Council on December 18, 2019.

Thank you for your good work to make these goals and statements as clear and definitive as possible.

Sincerely,



Elisabeth C. Byers
Executive Director