

Adam Zack

From: Maryse Sagewynd <maryse@upperleftcoast.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 10:16 PM
To: Comp Plan Update
Subject: Proposed land use change, request #18-0008

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Re: Request No. 18-0008 for requested land use designation change for TPN 271223009000

Greetings.

We just received on Sunday, June 13, 2021 your postcard informing neighbors of your impending monthly meeting on June 18th at which you will address the above-referenced requested land use change. This short amount of time necessarily limits the scope of my comments in this message, so I will follow up in the near future with more comprehensive comments, because the extensive 2018 proposal reveals many issues that need to be properly considered before proceeding with re-zoning.

We live to the north of this forest at 564 Sunset Avenue. We believe that re-zoning the 28 acres of this wooded land to allow for the density of housing and people described in the staff report would be detrimental in several ways. We disagree that even with acceptable road access, "adding density to this area will be appropriate." Below are only some of the ways that it is objectionable.

Access, Safety Hazard. As the planning staff points out, road access for such a large number of new residences is problematic.

(a) North Beach Road is the only ingress and egress for many people already. We believe that it is unsafe for emergency reasons – in the case of earthquake, fire, tidal wave, vehicles trying to get out of this single two-lane road will encounter a traffic jam even now, and with 120 more houses at that location, this could be deadly. Plus, many people, residents and tourists alike, walk and bicycle along North Beach Road to and from town, and animals use the road too. So many more vehicles increases the likelihood of accidental collisions with people and animals.

(b) Bartel Road is private along this parcel's southern boundary. Permission would need to be gained from whatever landowners have the right to private entry at that point of Bartel; what would be their incentive to grant this?

(c) From a safety standpoint, access directly south from Bartel to Mount Baker Road would be better, but permission would be needed from various landowners which would impact their privacy, peace, and quiet.

(d) Applicant goes into great detail with direction to county as to how it should re-work traffic patterns, etc., to accommodate his wishes. There is no evidence that he has interviewed affected

residents in the North Beach community to ask how they feel about any of this or what their needs and wishes are.

Sewage, Drainage. Even if a sewage pipe is available at Bartel Road for hook-up by new housing, Orcas Island does not have an actual sewer-type of system, according to ESWD. New housing would still use septic tanks that would feed to vaults and then to a main pipe. The ground slopes north directly to our and our neighbors' properties. Run-off from septic system messes and any type of run-off from dense housing can still drain downhill to our property.

Water, other utilities. Water is a finite resource on this island. Providing utility infrastructure inevitably costs taxpayers. How much build-out, and tear-out of mature forests, can this island's natural environment endure before the ecosystems start to collapse?

Erosion. The soil in the woods, below the top organic layer, is glacial till, very crumbly, soft, sandy, rocky texture which drains quickly and falls apart easily. (The sea cliff in front of the applicant's own house on Sunset Avenue is fast crumbling away.) It is inevitable that most trees on this heavily wooded land will be destroyed which will ruin soil integrity and soil life, and cause erosion, which runs downhill to our property.

Disturbance of peace and use of property. The conversion of this quiet woods to dense housing would negatively alter the character of our neighborhood along Sunset Avenue and Raptor Road. It would lower the value of our property. It would immensely increase noise, traffic, and night lighting pollution, disturbing neighbors and animals. Construction is very noisy. We chose our location at the east end of Sunset Avenue years ago specifically for the relative seclusion, peace and quiet enjoyment of a wooded environment, which provides protection from inclement weather, hot sun, and the invaluable sense of connection with the resident wildlife. This is now our retirement oasis, vital for our mental health, which we worked very hard to create by hand. This location near town and medical facilities is important for us as we age.

Destruction of Wild Habitat. These woods may not have buildings, but they are not "vacant." They are filled with wild plants and animals. If this parcel is re-zoned to allow for small lots filling it up, as in the hodge-podge Hemlock/Spruce/Alder Street neighborhoods, this would destroy not only the peace and quiet of neighboring owners, but also the trees, the habitat of numerous deer, raccoon, squirrels, mink, bats, eagles, owls, herons, hawks and countless other year-round resident and migratory birds. It would disturb the permanent Bald Eagles nest nearby. An overview of the map shows that this acreage is a substantial portion of a larger forest that exists although has been chopped away at over the years; the loss of these valuable woods will continue the spiral of habitat loss and the appeal of this island to those who live here and visit.

History. The woods were the site of century-old logging operations, as several artifacts have turned up such as logging cables and chains, wooden/metal pulleys, hooks, axe heads, and other such things. Since it is near the shoreline, it is possible that this area also holds historic Native American artifacts that have sunk below the soil surface.

When I have a chance to further review the 2018 proposal (not even made by the current owner), I will write further comment. I must say that re-zoning there to allow for dense development of the type proposed will cause such a drastic change to our property and lifestyle so as to likely force us to leave the islands. We are no longer of the age where we can buy raw rural land and start over from scratch, and ready-built homes are astoundingly expensive now. This puts us in a terrible bind. Please realize that real damage to many can result from changes made in the wrong locations and without thoroughly considering all the ramifications to other humans and the ecosystem of the island itself.

Respectfully,

Maryse Sagewynd