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Sent: Wednesday, July 14, 2021 4:51 PM
To: Comp Plan Update
Subject: SJC PC Meeting 6/16/21 - Public Comment

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Dear Planning Commissioners,

I'm unable to attend the meeting this Friday, so submit my comments here.

First, I want to acknowledge and express my gratitude for the hard work you are doing in challenging times. Who knew there'd be a pandemic that not only locked us down but also opened us up to the opportunity for people to work remotely? Who could have anticipated the record breaking heatwave and another extended dry period that dinged our hope that the PNW was somewhat buffered against such radical temperatures? All of this makes long term planning complex, to say the least. So, thank you for your commitment to the hard work of protecting what we love and planning for changes to come.

I recognize that all of my comments align with my love of this place, my concern about the rate of change occurring and, I guess, my fear regarding the relentless ability of money and demand to push and push against conservation and caution. I know we have all seen and perhaps loved, places where growth overwhelmed what had been the soul of the place and community and that we know well what we are at risk of losing.

Whenever possible, please be a voice for the wellbeing and integrity of the ecosystems that sustain us and for a future our children can be grateful for.

To that end;

****Docket request for a Buildout Analysis: I support the build out analysis as proposed by Joe Simmons.**

A full understanding of the implications of build-out at say 50%, 75%, 100% would provide guidance for proactive planning. I understand that this would be a complex endeavor but, as an island county, the ecosystems that sustain us are both finite and vulnerable. Protecting their integrity protects our communities' and must be a priority. As I see it, a buildout analysis will help anticipate issues and allow forward thinking planning in the context of a deeper appreciation of the needs and impacts of growth. This would be valuable for future planning across county departments.

**** re: Cap on Vacation Rental Permits: I strongly support a cap on the number of VR permits and urge you to cap VRs on Lopez at the current number. I would like to see the moratorium applied across the islands**

We have a complex housing crisis, with demand far outstripping supply of both rentals and homes for sale for full time occupants. While this problem is multifaceted, we do not need to incentivize the transfer of more housing stock or land to Vacation Rentals.

It is not a crisis for travelers to have to shift their itinerary if accommodation is hard to find - but when businesses and institutions can't fill positions because there is no housing available - schools without

teachers, clinics without RNs, etc., then we are in trouble. When families move house-sit to couch to house-sit because they can't find anything to rent, our community is destabilized.

My story: I briefly rented my house out as a VR. I was ambivalent and never submitted for a permit (and, yes, that was a costly fine) but since then I've rented out that house as a long term rental. I am glad I'm able to make housing available to a local family and respect the many benefits there, but clearly, if it were a VR, I'd take in a lot more money and I would retain access to use that house. While I can afford to do this, it does require that I live within a tighter budget, however, I confess that the permit fine made me rethink my priorities, in part because it expressed a county value of providing long term housing for fellow islanders.

The VR market creates a skewed economy and makes quasi-business zones out of neighborhoods. Is this what we want?

I would strongly support a requirement that future VR permits be limited to island residents, with no more than one per resident. We do not need to create pathways for non-residents to acquire land via VR income potential. I don't see how this serves the community. (note: at current visitor levels, our local businesses are very busy, often swamped and our ferry system is stressed.)

Also, I support making permits time limited to allow review and for the chance to consider how to achieve equity for access to permits.

****Re: Zoning changes:** In any consideration of zoning changes, I urge you to require consideration of climate impacts, the value of land as it is and what might be lost with rezoning. Due to the intensity of the heatwave, the early start of fire season and many other indicators that climate chaos is happening faster than predicted, we must, in every decision, consider climate and ecosystem impacts and to preserve and restore integrity where we can. I don't know if there is any issue more immediately pressing, nor with more significant long term effects.

Again, thank you for your dedication and commitment,
Kai Sanburn
Lopez Island