

Adam Zack

From: Barbara Gurley <barbara@lifrc.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 24, 2017 5:17 PM
To: Ryan Page
Subject: RE: Please review - Preliminary draft Housing Needs Assessment
Attachments: LIFRC Response to County Housing Needs Assessment.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Ryan,

Attached please find comments from LIFRC and our housing working group.

Thanks for all the hard work on your assessment. We greatly appreciate your efforts.

Barbara

Barbara Gurley, Executive Director
Lopez Island Family Resource Center
PO Box 732, Lopez Island, WA 98261
office phone: (360) 468-4117, fax: (360) 468-4119
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From: Ryan Page [mailto:ryanp@sanjuanco.com]
Sent: Thursday, August 10, 2017 9:17 AM
Cc: Linda Ann Kuller <lindak@sanjuanco.com>; Mark Tompkins <MarkT@sanjuanco.com>
Subject: Please review - Preliminary draft Housing Needs Assessment

Good Morning,

Thank you for your interest in 2036 San Juan County Comprehensive Plan update project. This is to inform you that a preliminary draft of the Housing Needs Assessment is available for review and comment and is attached.

Please take the time to review this draft and provide any feedback on its refinement to me by Friday August 25th.

Your early comments will be incorporated into the briefing draft developed for the Planning Commission and County Council. A briefing will be likely scheduled in September.

You may comment by:

1. Marking up a copy of the section needing revisions or additions and sending it to me via email, dropping off your mark-ups at DCD at 935 Rhone Street, or sending the mark-ups to my attention at:

SJC Dept. of Community Development

HNA comments: Ryan Page
PO Box 947
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

2. Send written comments. Please provide specific comments, for example:
 - Page X, Line x should read XXXXXXXXX, or
 - Please add X to page X, Line X – after the second sentence

Thank you for your attention to and interest in this project.

Ryan Page | Affordable Housing Coordinator
Health & Community Services | San Juan County
P.O. Box 1146 Eastsound, WA 98245
Office: 360-370-0590 Email: RyanP@sanjuanco.com



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SJC Dept. of Community Development
Ryan Page: Housing Needs Assessment Comments
PO Box 947
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

August 25, 2017

Re: Comprehensive Plan Update
Draft Housing Needs Assessment

Dear Ryan,

After a review of the Draft Housing Needs Assessment, the Lopez Island Family Resource Center has the following comments and suggestions.

Each island has a story: You have done an excellent job of compiling data, but there is no story. To the extent possible, it would be helpful if the data sets could be broken out by each major island. Towards the end of the Assessment it would be valuable to have a section for each of the main islands that tells that island's particular housing story based on all of the data provided in the individual sections.

For example, Lopez Island's population is older than the County overall. It has a higher percentage of second homes and the lowest percentage of rental units of all island, less economic opportunity and a smaller, singular UGA which, at current density levels, cannot provide sufficient additional housing to address even the current need, much less the predicted future growth.

The need is NOW: The Assessment should highlight the severe shortage of affordable housing that exists right now. It does not discuss the impact that shortage has on the ability of each island to provide essential service (like schools, emergency services, and medical care) and to support economic development.

Section 5.1 estimates that the County will need an additional 230 housing units by 2036. A recently completed Lopez Island housing assessment documented the IMMEDIATE need on Lopez alone for between 55-95 affordable rental units for tenants earning less than 80% of the AMI. These potential tenants represent seniors, individuals with disabilities, laborers, school staff, elder caretakers, childcare and hospitality workers. Fifteen to thirty of those units are needed by folks who earn less the 50% AMI.

There is an IMMEDIATE documented need for between 15 and 25 additional units for people earning up to 115% AMI on Lopez Island alone. These include new hires in medicine, emergency services, and education that Lopez Island anticipates hiring in the immediate future and who are essential to making Lopez a year round sustainable community.

Evaluate the effectiveness of current policies and tools: The Puget Sound Regional Council's 2014 Housing Element Guide (<https://www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/7877-housingelementguide.pdf>) notes that, since this is the third round of Comprehensive Plan updates and each has included a Housing Element with policies and initiatives, this would be a good time to evaluate whether those policies have been effective. Data showing successful outcomes can support retention and expansion of those winning policies and initiatives, and where policies and strategies have produced weak results, they can be revised or replaced with more effective tools. The PSRC's Guide has a handy template for this purpose and we recommend this evaluation be included in the Assessment.

We recommend the assessment emphasize the current need, include an assessment of past policies and strategies to effectively address the still growing need, and note the likelihood that left unaddressed in a serious and effective way, the lack of affordable housing may render an island like Lopez unable to sustain basic services necessary to sustain a vibrant year round community.

Consider substandard housing as a separate but important issue: The PSRC Guide also raises an issue that is very relevant to our island: substandard housing. We have many families living in housing that is unhealthy or hazardous or in poor repair. While it is difficult to know the extent of this issue (and you allude to this in the draft) several recent reports listed in the Guide define the issue and show the need for policies to address the barriers. In Seattle, there is an inspection of rental housing, which allows for a more accurate assessment of how widespread the issue is and also encourages property owners to address the unsafe and hazardous conditions. We need to get a handle on landlords who rent out substandard housing and profit from the current housing shortage.

Affordable Housing Programs described in Section 5.5.6 provide very limited relief. The funding no where near meets the need for rental assistance and most are short-term programs ranging from one month to one year of assistance. They are a bandaid when what we need are long-term affordable housing solutions.

A few additional details:

5.5.8 Page 30, line 6: the Table referenced is 5-13, not 13.

The Table 5-13 on page 31 needs to include a unit of measurement in the second to the most right column "Land Bank." We imagine the unit to be acres.

Page 32, last footnote. We believe Westview Apartments loses its affordability requirement in 2020. The chart says 2040.

In conclusion, the Land Availability and Target Sections will be of great interest, once drafted. We hope there will also be a discussion of the cost of construction including the high cost of infrastructure requirements (estimated at \$20,000 per unit) and the length of time it takes to

permit a project as barriers to low income housing feasibility and also make note of the effect of increases in bank loan rates in a highly competitive construction market on the ability to build affordable housing..

These as yet undrafted sections are key to making the case for affordable housing. We imagine them to include some conclusions and recommendations to help guide the Comprehensive Plan Update for Housing. We would like another chance to review the Draft once these sections are completed and comments are incorporated.

Thank you again for your good work on this Draft.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Gurley". The ink is a light grey or blue color.

Barbara Gurley
Executive Director
Lopez Island Family Resource Center