

## **Linda Ann Kuller**

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**From:** Heather Mitchell <heatherkmitchell@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 30, 2018 11:43 AM  
**To:** Lopez Village Subarea Planning Comments  
**Cc:** Linda Ann Kuller  
**Subject:** LVSP comment

Dear Members of the LVPRC-

I am impressed with the thoughtfulness and thoroughness of the proposed plan for the Lopez Village Urban growth area.

I support and commend your inclusion of dark sky lighting regulations especially, and also appreciate your vision in terms of preserving view sheds, and improving connectivity and walkability. I also appreciate your vision that the village buildings remain at human scale and align with 'island' architecture, that open spaces, public lands, natural vegetation, and wildlife habitat and corridors are preserved and added to, and that the impact of parking is minimized. It truly is an inspiring read, this draft plan--thank you, I know this took an incredible amount of time and effort.

I do have one concern--about the affordable housing density bonus allowing 12 homes per acre. I completely understand the pressing need for affordable housing on Lopez--I live in a land trust home. Most of the land trust communities on Lopez have around 7-8 homes per acre, I believe. My experience in living in three of these communities suggests to me that this density is ideal, and that adding more homes will likely compromise many of the Goals for Healthy Community you've laid out in the draft plan--for example

### **Open Space, Natural and Scenic Resources-Goal 3**

*Protect, preserve and enhance the community's natural assets including the bay, shorelines, streams, views, wildlife habitat, riparian corridors, wetlands, steep slopes, agricultural land, and abundant natural vegetation that are key to the quality of life and the economic development of Lopez Island.*

### **Landscaping-Policy 1c**

*Preserve existing significant trees and understory vegetation during new development to the fullest extent practical.*

### **Built Environment--Goal 5**

*Implement night lighting standards to minimize light pollution and facilitate views of the stunning starry night sky.*

### **Housing-Goal 6, policy 6f**

*Provide open green ways including water features, gardens and play fields within and outside of residential developments.*

My concern is that 12 homes/acre would significantly increase noise and light pollution (homes and cars) and would decrease natural habitat beyond what is a healthy balance for the humans, wildlife

and native vegetation. At the density currently allowed, our land trust communities make room for natural vegetation and wildlife habitat between housing developments and between homes. This provides habitat for local wildlife such as bats and many species of birds--and provides those who live in these communities an experience of connection to the island's natural environment and through it 'rural tranquility'--one of the treasures called out in the plan and the reason most of us make the effort to live on this island. We can see open space out some of our windows, we have the dark sky overhead, we have wildlife corridors and wild native plants surrounding us. We have a healthy balance between affordable housing density and preservation of the connection to the natural environment--we live close to the village but still feel like we live on a rural island--this is crucial to preserve!

I'm not sure if this is included in the plan--but I would like to see a policy around requiring a habitat buffer around a certain number of homes--8 for example--to eliminate the possibility of creating dense neighborhoods that completely lose their rural tranquility, wildlife habitat and integration with the natural environment.

Thank you for helping all of us to preserve the beauty and rural character of Lopez!

Sincerely, Heather Mitchell

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