

Sophia Cassam

From: sadie b <salim3796@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2020 4:16 PM
To: Comp Plan Update; San Juan County Council
Subject: Here are my comments on the Housing Element of the Comp Plan - hoping kept in perpetuity
Attachments: Cover Letter - Comp Plan Housing Elements.pdf; COMP PLAN Housing Element comments.pdf

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Please see attached cover letter and comments. I hope our voices will be heard and some good can come from it all that feels balanced and caring of this beautiful archipelago that we have the privilege of stewarding.

Sincerely,
B. Sadie Bailey

Cover letter for Housing Elements comments:

1/28/2020

In 7 words, a summary: NO PROTECTED FORESTED WETLANDS, NO CLEAN WATERS = NO SUSTAINABILITY - especially in UGAs.

I'm concerned about and against any further watering-down and eliminating of environmental protections in UGAs. *especially* in Eastsound UGA - as I have written to the County MANY TIMES of its unique characteristics: Only 1 mile wide, at sea level, with significant shorelines on both sides. It used to be covered with our highest-functioning forested wetlands and creek (Eastsound Swale) and the Peat Bog to the north, covered by airport runway. I'm horrified that all of our infrastructure lies here in this particular UGA. This UGA land is filled with First Nations remains and artifacts. The 3 Gates to the east, west, and north, **were specifically cited for protection in the Original Comp Plan - as was Lavender Farm Knoll. There were 1.5 pages written specifically about the value of preserving Eastsound Swale. None of the vision, by those who worked so hard on it, has been upheld.**

Victory Hill AKA Liberty Hill - the North Gate - is slated for imminent logging destruction of this last forested and ONLY hill of its size in town. A high-density, high-end development of up to 12 units per acre can be built there, due to the 12 units per acre density there - all on a place of significant importance that never should have been zoned Eastsound Village UGA Residential; it should have been bought and protected for this community in perpetuity! This planned development also takes away affordable housing with a low-impact footprint that already exists there. Liberty Hill is a significant Landmark that is historically, culturally, spiritually, geographically, (and geologically, over 100 MILLION years old and part of the Turtleback land mass) important to us. This destruction of our rural character is happening all over, and we have had no voice in slowing it down or stopping any of it.

The so called "planning" for Eastsound UGA is reprehensible and criminal toward ecosystems, amphibians, bats, and fish. This UGA should be immediately downgraded to a LAMIRD - let some of the other villages and more rural areas take the heat of development and infrastructure. We should do a moratorium on new UGA water and sewer permits before the last vestiges of our wetland watershed and forage fish habitats are ruined and polluted beyond control.

The Eastsound SubArea Plan should be *scrapped*, and the old one requiring Conditional Use Permits and SEPA reports, should be reinstated. None of the people at the top making the decisions has an inkling what Liberty Hill or Eastsound Swale is to us, or what this forested hill does for Eastsound Swale wetland; or how deforesting it will destabilize its steep-grade shale soils, or ruin its rural character. This should have been preserved for the Public! Now that April's Grove removed the last forest in town, Liberty Hill destruction will finish the sad job. Liberty Hill is a windbreak in a place that is a fierce wind tunnel. It's

so much more and if people knew what will soon be happening to it, they'd be outraged.

I'm horrified after 38 years of watching various commisioners and councilors, Friday Harbor planners, the EPRC (until about 4 years ago we had ONLY developers, architects, permitters and realtors on the EPRC), and the Planning Commission continue to fail us in such a damaging and ecologically disastrous way.

That said, I will get into specific commenting details about the Housing Element in the attached comment pdf. I will specifically address Orcas Island, since this has been my home for almost 39 years - Eastsound UGA in particular. The changes I've seen in that time are not only heartbreaking; they are completely unsustainable and permanently damaging.

Some of the policies head us in the right direction; thank you for that. We need to keep asking questions and learning how to take care of these lands and waters that we hope future generations will love, know, and steward.

Sincerely yours,
B. Sadie Bailey
Eastsound

COMP PLAN HOUSING ELEMENTS COMMENTS 1/28/2020

GOAL 1 POLICIES:

1 - **In all UGAs: No** development should be allowed in critical areas or their buffers - protect what the original Comp Plan set out to protect in *Eastsound UGA*. **DO NOT** allow dense development anywhere near Eastsound Swale. Protect Liberty Hill and the 3 Gates, as well as Lavender Farm knoll. These were all described in the original Comp Plan.

Downgrade "dense development" in the UGA - it is insane and ridiculous to allow city densities of 40 units per acre or even 12 per acre on a finite, very small, RURAL island!

2 - "Housing stock" already is top-heavy with high-income high-cost housing and vacation rentals. Enough already - too much already! We need housing for workers and year-round JOBS to go with them. **Again: No "housing stock" should be allowed near critical areas.**

3 - change "long term rental" from 31 days to year-round or at least 9 months of the year. Then #3 might make sense.

4 - housing for "seasonal" workers should not happen *only* in UGAs. There should also be this same housing for "permanent" workers. Since our economy is based on summer tourism, we should encourage and allow year-round jobs unrelated to tourism, because without a job, workers automatically falls into this "seasonal" trap, and the only people who can afford long-term housing here will be the rich - with no workers to clean their toilets or work their gardens or work the stores and restaurants and banks ETC

5 - seems unclear as written: but again, UGAs should not have to take the brunt of ALL OF THIS HOUSING. **The Growth Management Act says that rural counties can tailor the Act to THEIR needs. Where is this "tailoring?"**

Factor into your evaluation: You are still using market-driven unlimited growth models on tiny island land masses, for maximum buildout scenarios (every parcel developed) without doing a Carrying Capacity - especially in the potential events of an upcoming economic crash as bad or worse than 2008 crash, climate change, sea level rise, desertification caused by wanton deforestation, polluting and degrading our wetland watershed systems, potential disasters such as high-richter scale earthquake and potential tsunamis - for which we're due; limited water resources, AND the fact that all of the San Juan Islands are recharge system watersheds... ETC ETC ETC.

What is the evacuation plan if the Orcas airport is under flood waters, or non-functional due to wildfire? What about explosive bulk fuel tanks in the event of a

wildfire, all next to high-density housing - will they blow up, ignite, creating a firestorm? How many lives potentially could be lost?

Maximum buildout should NEVER HAVE BEEN, NOR EVER SHOULD BE, the model for our Comprehensive Plan land use regulations.

Our Council should be lobbying in Olympia on behalf of this very special and unique archipelago, in order to protect it!

GOAL 2 AND GOAL 3 POLICIES:

General: Agree with most of these policies; all are excellent, and necessary, if we are going to keep anyone here who is not wealthy - ie workers, service people, families, veterans, single moms, the poor, immigrants who seek asylum, minority races and cultures, religions and gender preferences; in a word, diversity.

Some comments/suggestions/concerns/additions:

Allow group homes, cold weather shelters, etc in places OUTSIDE of UGAs - don't force them all into UGAs! Incentivize owners to put them on their lands outside of UGAs where allowable - or change regulations to make them allowable. There should be a shelter in every hamlet or village at the least. Revise codes to allow for tiny homes and other small home solutions such as shipping containers (more about them below).

Stop building all-electric low to middle income housing in UGAs that provide NO back-up heat! With the amount of power outages we have, this could cause needless fatalities as people are clustered into all-electric housing with little option of getting to a friend with alternative heat, should we be snowed-in with high winds, for example. People with pets - especially the elderly - are reluctant to leave their pets or bring them to a cold-weather shelter; especially cats, as this stresses them to be contained and around dogs and other potentially aggressive animals. Therefore, **back-up heat sources should be required and incentivized in all new housing, and existing housing owners be helped in bringing their dwellings up to that standard.**

Cold weather shelters should also factor in WET ground in winter, which is a lot colder than DRY ground; many homeless are sleeping in tents or on the ground. We have wet winters. We should have shelters all during the "wet" season winter months, and a way for people to do laundry and shower. This could be possible at the Port of Orcas with some planning and oversight. Friday Harbor does a good job of this - not sure about Lopez. Only Orcas fails miserably at helping the homeless - except for the Community Resource Center, which does a fantastic job of helping the MANY people who fall through the cracks here.

Focus more on safe houses and housing solutions for domestic violence victims. Nothing exists for them. It takes a victim up to nine times to leave their abuser. We need to help them - most of the abused are women and children. We also need to help drug addicts and alcoholics get and stay clean, and provide them a hand-up out of addiction and homelessness; even if we have to enact a methadone program or some other things for needle addicts so they can succeed in tiny housing or other group housing.

Also, we should be looking into building tiny houses with a model such as Dignity Village in Portland, Oregon. Dignity Village has a manager, rules (like no alcohol or drugs), and creates stability for the homeless to get back onto their feet - especially addicts trying to stay clean and get a job.

Shipping containers are another great resource for building affordable houses - they are used ONCE and this would keep them here and not have to ship them back to countries that don't really want them back anyway - shipping them is cost prohibitive, when they can be used here for free - the only major cost being moving them.

Let more homes outside of UGAs qualify for remodels, attached and detached accessory units to help vulnerable populations. Again, it's suicide to let Eastsound UGA bear the burden considering its location and features.

We should add language to our vision and regulations protecting immigrants who seek asylum, as part of our vulnerable population. Many of them do the jobs that no one else wants to do, and they do them well. They are just as much a part of our community as anyone else and they belong here.

With over 95% of our population being white, we need to have meaningful dialogue about white fragility and how we can use our white privilege to help and speak out for others. We need to take a hard look at how racism and bigotry, hate speech, and discrimination play out in terms of housing and jobs here, and we need to make policy/regulatory solutions that will keep ALL of our residents safe, regardless of race, creed, color, gender, culture, sexual orientation, religion or lack of religion, ETC.

GOAL 4 POLICIES:

General comments - Still repeating myself: NO housing permits for ANYONE should degrade critical areas watersheds, forested wetlands, shorelines, and the lands and waters needed for sustainability. That said, I feel OK with all the policies EXCEPT policy 5 - it is terrifying to think of further reducing SEPAs for ANY REASON!!!! The county has done enough damage in Eastsound UGA by this very practice of exempting just about everyone from SEPAs, thus destroying our wetland watershed! No, No, NO!!!! Please scrap #5!

Also - water and sewer capabilities are FINITE. We need a water moratorium again, and soon - and we need to stop, and take stock.

The costs for setting up water and sewer, and the monthly payments to have them. fall upon those LEAST able to afford them; poor and working class people. This must change, and the expense be shared by everyone - not just UGA residents; most likely through property taxes or levies (please, NOT higher sales/use taxes! Again, these negatively impact the folks least able to afford them.)

1. Construction trades should have focused training to specifically deal with and enact the policies laid out in goals 2 and 3 - this helps workers and vulnerable populations and year-rounders who are low to middle income. That's where we need to put the focus of the housing element and take focus and permissions off of non-locals building for speculative profit, tourism related vacation rentals, and high-end housing for the rich that sits empty for much of the year.

2. I have some issues with reducing permit costs, except maybe they should be reduced ONLY for housing for vulnerable and working class/poor populations, and ONLY if critical areas don't need to be trashed to do it.

5. Should be scrapped - NO SEPA categorical exemptions for mixed-use developments, or commercial or residential developments - ESPECIALLY in UGA critical areas. (ALL of our UGAs have significant shoreline and I'll bet Eastsound UGA may have some of the MOST shoreline in all of WA. State.

5. Tiny homes should **not** just be where water and sewer services exist (ie in UGAs). We are outgrowing both water and sewer capabilities in our UGAs and risk polluting salmon/orca habitat in the process. All tiny homes should have back up heat or if clustered, a shelter nearby or on premises with back up heat.

love # 7 and 8; bravo!

GOAL 5 POLICIES: all excellent and again, BRAVO! These should be the drivers of all other housing element policies and IMO are the MOST IMPORTANT of all the policies laid out - and should inform and influence our regulations.

1 - especially important in Eastsound UGA! Been saying this for years and years and years... will keep saying it until someone gets it.

5.78 - AFFORDABILITY

GOAL 6 POLICIES:

1. - Repeat, rinse and repeat - ONLY if lands purchased do not affect Critical Areas especially in Eastsound UGA; or even valuable farmland, such as Lavender Farm property - 11.5 acres up for sale in the heart of Eastsound residential district. and NO MORE clearcutting of forests or forested wetlands IN or directly around town in our watershed basin. We should be preserving all that is left now, and support entities such as the Land Bank, Friends, and Preservation Trust in acquiring lands for preservation. Liberty Hill would be a prime perfect spot to acquire - and could be safe "high ground" in Eastsound in the event of a flood/tsunami.

2, 3, and 4 are great.

GOAL 7 POLICIES:

All of these policies, 1-4 miss their mark and force UGAs to bear the entire brunt. It is right that we need affordable housing. Forcing it all into UGAs is terrible planning.

#1 is a terrible idea in Eastsound UGA and will destroy our wetland, forest, and shoreline ecosystems if allowed; thus hastening local orca and other sensitive species extinction.

GOAL 8 POLICIES:

1 & 2 good. Financial assistance and incentives laid out are great ideas we need to implement.

#3 - grave concern, I fear this is the wrong path - as evidenced by our ecologically DISASTROUS road plan, due to taking state and federal monies! We are hurting these islands and we are hurting Eastsound Watershed Forested Wetland and Estuarine Wetland UGA with these policies.

NO LAND, NO WATER = NO PEOPLE OR SUSTAINABILITY.

In terms of state/federal grant monies: Which programs? What kind of programs? How funded and **what price will we have to pay if we take state or federal funding, in terms of degradation of Quality of Life and Critical Areas?**

4-6 seem ok and worthy of pursuit as long as no more degradation of critical areas in or affecting UGAs - Eastsound in particular.

GOAL 9

Please enact a one-year moratorium on ALL NEW VACATION RENTAL PERMITS, and come down hard on repeat violators. Also a water moratorium - we do not want a desalinization plant and we do not need MORE vacation rentals; we need LESS!

Thank you for your consideration;
B. Sadie Bailey