

Dear Mr Fortner,

As regards Monday evening's planning meeting, I'm attaching a good article about modern compact cities. It's not short, but a good one.

I do have comments about the master plan. The way I read the application was that roads would be built as needed. Karl and I spent thirteen years in south Orange County in Southern California. We didn't like the area or the culture, but the planners did one thing absolutely right when they were looking at new housing developments. The roads, and all the infrastructure were completed before one building was erected. This meant that the communities could grow into the roads rather than having grown out of them almost as soon as they were completed. One of the biggest weaknesses we saw on our return to the Seattle-Tacoma area was the fact that roads had not kept up with construction.

Chambers Creek road cannot support even half of the additional trips per day that 350 units of any kind would bring. Aside from the short part of the road where the mill stood, there is no feasible way to widen the road. Even then, the additional traffic would require a traffic signal directly across from the bay. The only place that could support that much traffic is the area at the top of the property. That would go past the high school and onto Steilacoom Blvd. At least one other traffic signal, either at Main and/or Union would be needed to handle the extra traffic, as well as possibly one on Steilacoom Blvd at the corner of Ira Light.

Aside from the road situation, my concerns center around the live-ability of the site itself. I am aware that Steilacoom has received some pressure to build more affordable housing. I support this completely. There are a few drawbacks to using this area or meet the demand.

First is the situation of the property itself. While there are many homes in that area that face north, the bulk of them are in the "high rent" district. Lots are larger and homes have yards and separation. The lack of adequate sunlight for half the year does not impact people as much when they have space around them. When a lot of people who already have fewer resources are put into a confined space, you get the beginnings of a slum. Much of this property lies on a north facing slope and is not conducive to a healthy populace.

As the article shows, the optimum amount of accessible green space is 90 sq meters (nearly 110 sq yd) per person. Even at a modest two people per unit, that would mean four and a half acres of accessible green space. And no, you can't count the inaccessible slopes. It doesn't all need to be developed into park areas. Actually, that would be detrimental to the ecosystem.

My final concern comes from personal experience. When we were in So Cal, I did home visits as a Clinical Nurse Specialist with high risk pregnant women, mothers and newborns. There was one affluent area where some of the homes had ocean views. Big, beautiful "starter castles." The city was being pressured to build affordable housing, so they built about 200 units on a flat spot at the bottom of the hill where the expensive homes sat and nearly surrounded the homes below. It only took about five years for that area to degrade significantly. It even affected the values of the homes that overlooked it.

I am not anti-progress, nor even anti-construction, but putting dense housing into this kind of a setting is courting future problems unless it is done very, very carefully by visionaries who are, and will remain invested in the community and in Steilacoom.

Sincerely,

Kari Albrecht
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<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6209905/>