

From: [Karen McKnight](#)
To: [EIS](#)
Subject: Written Comment for Sammamish BLUMA
Date: Monday, September 27, 2021 3:53:59 PM
Attachments: [Sammamish BLUMA Comments_Karen McKnight_9-27-2021.pdf](#)

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To whom it may concern, my comments are attached.

Karen McKnight

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From Karen McKnight, 22329 NE 28th St, Sammamish, WA 98074

To: Sammamish City Council

Subject Sammamish Balanced Land Use and Mobility Analysis (BLUMA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement

My request:

Redirect the scope of the BLUMA EIS to include alternatives that alleviate housing imbalances by means of optimizing housing supplies. Or pivot the entire BLUMA EIS away from symptom-based concurrency to cause based land use and sustainable, internal housing supplies for lifetimes.

Why? Because all three alternatives presented in the BLUMA start with the wrong beginning, a faulty transportation Level of Service (LOS) based on manipulated math that had a goal to stop city growth.

Starting with a transportation LOS to determine a comprehensive plan for land use is a backwards process.

It's time to do the surveys and research necessary to create smart growth, the type of growth that will create a prosperous city, aka strong town (see <http://www.strongtowns.org>), with optimized housing balance for all demographics and economic levels with ample services and multi modal transportation.

For years, during the pre-pandemic, some Sammamish political activists made traffic the predominate issue. I wondered, "What are they talking about? I travel the roads at varying times of the day. The only time I experience slowing of traffic is during school start and dismissal hours, and during commute hours when entering roads outside our boundaries."

That pre-pandemic slower traffic was caused by traffic on highway 202 and East Lake Sammamish Parkway SE. Improvements have now been started at congestion points: the Sahalee Way intersection entering Highway 202, Issaquah-Fall City Road and plans in process for Issaquah Pine Like Road. Predictions are the pandemic created permanent hybrid office – home - work patterns will lessen traffic. Compared to our neighboring cities, our pre-pandemic traffic was no big deal. Currently, Sammamish traffic is no big deal.

It is counterproductive to our reputation in the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) area of King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap. to keep spending millions on legal fees fighting the GMA Hearing board when the PSRC 2050 Vision is to protect our rural areas and create an environmentally proactive region, inclusive of the cities within this region. Our city council majority pretends they are environmentalists. Yet the council fights the expertly researched guidance from the GMA regulations and the PSRC 2050 Vision. I feel our current city council has a hidden agenda and is manipulating the system.

My firsthand experience, in conversations with area elected officials, candidates for office, and active citizens representing businesses, is hearing the question, "What is going on in Sammamish?" and the statement, "Sammamish hasn't taken its share of growth for years". I've learned it is common knowledge that Sammamish is not participating fairly in our regional growth, which is predicted to be 1.8 million by 2050. It's time for us to do our smart planning and become a respected member city in the PSRC region.

Transportation is a symptom. Alleviating housing imbalances is the ailment and the root cause is land use. All alternatives based on Transportation LOS are inappropriate. Optimally alleviating housing imbalances is the appropriate approach for many, if not all, EIS alternatives.

If we do land use right, most of the traffic challenges get resolved. Erroneously, the BLUMA is all about traffic, and the language is circular. I quote Page 1, the last bullet, "Before the City are choices regarding

the comprehensiveness of the LOS and Concurrency approaches that guide transportation system improvements that support the City's future land use. The adoption of the alternative policy [which one?] would lead to Comprehensive Plan and code amendments that would mean some projects included in the Capital Facility Plan by 2035 as well as beyond". What does this mean?

Alternatives based on Concurrency LOS are premature at this time. Desired, holistic land uses must be determined first. Let's alter our city's housing land use policies based on external numbers, capacity numbers, and internal gap numbers. **Then** set supportive concurrency LOS.

There is nothing in the entire BLUMA Impact Statement about addressing housing needs, business needs and related infrastructure needs. We have a golden opportunity right in the center of town, to create more services, a gathering place, and a transit center on already zoned 200+ acres. We are stagnant when this opportunity is right in front of us with plans long ago researched and vetted by our citizens. Why can't we move forward into the present and honestly prepare for the future?

My wish for Sammamish is prosperity. By right sizing our land use, we can create optimal growth which allows us to provide the services our citizens want and implement better transit and multi modal transportation. Our community hasn't been able to reach consensus on desired land uses to optimize growth chiefly because we've never had all the information necessary to do so. We must get the missing information, which has been missing since Sammamish incorporated in 1999.

What information has been missing? The city's current land use plan only factors in external growth targets negotiated with King County. Below is the missing information, the unbiased and objective internal data our city needs to analyze (The Chew).

1. Housing gap surplus and shortages for all economic and demographic groups
2. Statistically valid survey housing "Wants" numbers, informed by all the housing need gap numbers
3. Pros and Cons of proportionally altering housing supplies informed by "Needs" and "Wants"
4. Consequences over time of the various growth options, after they have been fully researched.
5. Community input after being informed by "Needs, "Wants", Pro's/Cons" and "Consequences"

We also need to know where we are now by determining near absolute build out of single-family homes (SF Buildout). There are four currently zoned groups of additional single-family housing capacity in these categories:

1. Vacant lands zoned R4 and R6 (zoned for 4 and 6 homes per acre)
2. Underdeveloped lands (tracts over 1 acre in size with a house) zoned R4 and R6.
3. Redevelopment subdivided lots (from 1/3 to 1 acre in size with a house) zoned R4 and R6.
4. R1 lands that do not have critical area impacts (both vacant land and sites with homes) that are likely to seek R4/R6 up zone requests, as they are not impacted by sensitive areas.

I agree with the Enrich and Sustain concept that our elected officials must obtain both sets of numbers, The "Chew" and the "SF Buildout". Then our elected officials must reassess positions on growth and appropriately change land-uses in our Comprehensive plan to make Sammamish better, stronger, and more prosperous than it is today. The "Chew" and the "SF Buildout" are vital to reach fully informed legislative decisions on growth, desired land uses, and infrastructure solutions.

Sammamish housing supplies are currently out of proportional balance relative to demands for different, diverse, and smaller housing needs and wants over citizen cycles of life.

There are 22,500 dwellings in Sammamish. Contrasting existing housing supplies with the economic and demographic makeup of those living in Sammamish, over time, Enrich and sustain recommends decreasing additional projected large single-family homes by about 2000. Based on internal housing shortage gaps, over recurring cycles of life, estimated between 4,000 and 16,000, Enrich & Sustain suggests increasing housing supplies in our Centers by about 8000 different, diverse and smaller homes, over 20+ years. The current Comprehensive plan is for "Minimized Growth". The BLUMA is pushing for "Very Low Growth" – less than the growth allowed for in our current comprehensive plan. I believe what our citizens, if asked, want is "Optimized Growth".

This will help alleviate our existing internal housing imbalances based on our current needs. It will also enable more assets. Our housing is imbalanced without enough local services. Since incorporation, Sammamish has miss-developed with too many large lots, not enough houses in all income levels, not enough services. We need to right size our growth. transit, shopping and services, and multimodal transit.

The most important question for Sammamish residents is which direction of growth is desired? The cart is before the horse in this EIS. The cart is legislative concurrency LOS standards. The horse is legislatively determined, optimally balance internal housing supplies, citywide. Once desired housing numbers are resolved, then set concurrency LOS accordingly.

This entire EIS is way off the mark. It must be paused. The community must first obtain sufficient information, including the "Chew" and SF Buildout". Next evaluate well-versed community input. Then make wholly informed legislative decisions to establish desirable inspirational, housing supplies. After suitable housing adjustment are made, then select transportation LOS standards to support these beneficial, community supported changes and thus attain holistic, sustainable enrichments.

It's erroneous to set arbitrary concurrency LOS first to reverse engineer prescriptive, holistic land uses. It's correct to use sufficient information to select desirable, sustainable, holistic land uses, then set LOS.

Steps to achieve a strong prosperous town:

1. Reduce additional supplies of housing types the city has internal surpluses of
2. Quickly add supplies of housing types the city has internal past and present shortages of
3. Sustainably plan for optimally balanced internal housing supplies for recurring generations
4. Suitably size desirable and convenient economic services based on parts 1, 2, and 3.
5. Determine city wide transportation and transit systems based on parts 1,2,3, and 4.
6. Effectively manage and leverage wealth and benefits created by parts 1,2,3,4, and 5.
7. Then, only if needed, add major lane capacity road widening projects in the future.

Per StrongTowns.org, "The way we build our cities now squanders precious resources that should be used to make our communities more prosperous. We are trading short-term growth for long-term liabilities and it's slowly bankrupting us. We deserve better. The good news: there is a better way."

The main ailments in Sammamish are out of balance, unoptimized housing supplies, unoptimized economic services and not having suitable transportation and transit systems. The remedy is to optimize all three. The time is now. We are long overdue.