

From: [Don Smith](#)
To: [MarinLCP](#)
Subject: April 19th hearing
Date: Saturday, April 09, 2016 11:11:06 AM

Dear Supervisors,

Coastal Commission Staff's proposed new restriction on downtown village residences in Marin would further worsen the affordable-housing crisis that is already threatening the very survival of these communities. Furthermore, it would draw even more visitors to communities already overburdened with trying to serve their needs for parking, drinking water, toilets, and trash cleanup.

The stated purpose of Policy C-PK-3 is to "maintain the established character of village commercial areas"; but it is not accomplishing that goal, because the people who work in these areas have nowhere to live, and they are moving away. Soon there will be no one left to wait on table, clean motel rooms, empty trash cans, or even respond to fires or medical emergencies. Most of the displaced get new jobs elsewhere, but those who commute back to their old jobs are adding to energy consumption, air pollution, and traffic congestion in contradiction to Coastal Act Sec. 30253d on adverse impacts. The village of Marshall is now 80% empty, and Bolinas and Inverness are headed the same way. The musicians, artists, craftspeople, and other creative folks who give much of the character to these villages are being priced out of town. School populations are dipping below sustainable levels because young families cannot afford to live here. The village character and the commercial services are both dying.

Why is this happening? There is so much wealth in the Bay Area, and the draw of the Coast with its bucolic landscape and charming villages is so strong, that nonresidents are making offers too good to pass up on properties formerly housing full-time residents. Renters are evicted and must move far away to make ends meet, and the new owners return to their primary home elsewhere, leaving behind another empty house that used to be home to a local. While it may not be possible for the Commission to reverse this trend, it is important that they counterbalance it by doing whatever is possible to encourage affordable housing. Indeed, the Coastal Act calls for the Commission to take into account "the social and economic needs of the people of the state" (Sec. 30001.5b) and the "capacity of the site to sustain use and at what level of intensity" (Sec. 30214a-2), to "protect special communities" (Sec. 30253e) and those "that provide existing coastal housing . . . for low- and moderate-income persons" (Sec. 30116f). Indeed, Sec. 30604 of the Act directly instructs the Commission to: f) "encourage housing opportunities for persons of low and moderate income" and "encourage the protection of existing and the provision of new affordable housing opportunities for persons of low and moderate income in the coastal zone."

Please take into account the adverse impacts of any revision to C-PK-3. Please recognize that the ever-increasing demands of coastal visitors are burying our villages and driving away the long-time residents who serve them. Please write whatever is possible into the LCPA to encourage the provision of desperately needed affordable housing, without which the village character the Commission is charged with preserving will be entirely lost. Thank you.

Donald L. Smith

Member, Board of Directors, Bolinas Community Public Utility district

Member, Affordable Home Alliance of the Bolinas Community Land Trust