

Karla Robison, [REDACTED]

March 23, 2026

**To: Mayor and Council, District of Ucluelet Re: Opposition to Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 1382, 2025 – 560 Marine Drive (Big Beach)**

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to express my opposition to Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 1382, 2025, regarding the proposed rezoning of Big Beach—one of Ucluelet’s most cherished natural assets—and urge Council to reconsider the direction of this project. Council has a legal and ethical responsibility to ensure that all rezoning decisions are consistent with the Official Community Plan and uphold the public interest, particularly when they affect unique public assets such as Big Beach.

The proposal would increase permitted density from a pub and 6 rental units to a pub and 29 units across four subdivided lots—an excessive amount of development for such a limited, sensitive area. The original zoning is far more appropriate. While many in the community would welcome a thoughtfully designed restaurant/pub and a handful of residences, a fivefold increase is simply too much. With Marine Drive north already slated for additional resorts and restaurants, along with the Lot 16 proposal, the town’s core needs space to breathe—for people, for wildlife, and to preserve the unique character that makes Ucluelet special.

Key concerns include:

**Unsustainable Density and Character Impacts:**

This proposal, in tandem with the proposed adjacent high-density Lot 16 project, would fundamentally alter Big Beach, the neighbourhood, and its surroundings. Clustering two major developments in a small area will intensify parking, traffic, and livability issues—problems already evident even in the off-season. The scale and commercialization risk eroding the West Coast and fishing village character, impacting wildlife, reducing tranquillity, and undermining enjoyment for both residents and visitors. The plan to place a pub in a residential neighbourhood next to the community centre may be a poor fit for a peaceful, family-oriented environment.

**Infrastructure, Servicing, and Engineering Risks:**

Key infrastructure considerations require greater detail and clarity. Experience with nearby proposed developments, like Lot 16, has highlighted the risks of exceeding site capacity and demonstrated the importance of expert advice, particularly regarding gravity sewer mains, road widths, and confirmation of adequate utility and emergency services. These recurring challenges warrant caution and reinforce the need for thorough, independent review and approval of infrastructure plans.

**Parking, Traffic, and Underground Construction Challenges:**

The proposed underground parking is likely impractical due to extensive bedrock, as established in the Lot 16 review. Pursuing this solution could require costly, disruptive blasting, bringing significant construction, environmental, and financial risks—especially near sensitive habitats. If underground parking proves unfeasible, unresolved congestion and public safety issues will only worsen.

**Questionable Community Benefit and Affordability:**

The proposed benefits do not justify the scale of the loss. Most new units are likely to be short-term rentals or micro-apartments, offering little meaningful housing for local families. The 20% park dedication is largely undevelopable, and ongoing maintenance may fall to taxpayers. Oceanfront rentals remain unaffordable for most and will likely serve mainly as staff accommodation rather than broader community needs.

Given this site's proximity to a park, a more creative, community-oriented use—such as offering a much-needed recreational amenity, as highlighted at the upcoming Multi-Purpose Sports Facility Open House—would offer far greater and more lasting value to residents than additional short-term rentals. My understanding is that the original zoning for Big Beach allowed for this type of community benefit.

**Environmental and Public Safety Concerns:**

The site is bordered by streams, wetlands, and old-growth Sitka spruce. Increasing density here risks major disruption to sensitive habitats. Environmental impacts must be independently and thoroughly evaluated through a transparent process, and a high duty of care is required, given the site's sensitivity.

The property is within Ucluelet's tsunami hazard zone. While the developer claims residential units will be above 14m, Ucluelet's accepted safety standard is 20m. With no provincial tsunami standard and variable scientific modelling, adhering to the higher local benchmark is advisable for public safety.

**Risk of Undelivered Promises, Cumulative Impact, and Precedent:**

Ucluelet has several lots cleared for development that remain vacant, scarred by the landscape and diminishing natural beauty. There is no guarantee the proposed pub or commercial elements will be viable or maintained. Approving these rezonings risks leaving another high-profile site only partially developed or abandoned, resulting in permanent loss of green space and community value. Council should also carefully consider the cumulative impact of multiple high-density developments in this area, as each decision compounds the effects on infrastructure, environment, and community character.

**Lack of Public Engagement and Accountability:**

Major projects that reshape Ucluelet require broad, meaningful public input. To date, engagement has been inadequate, with most residents unaware and therefore unable to provide feedback. There has been no open house or transparent process, and lessons from past developments show that unanswered questions and a lack of accountability contribute to ongoing concern.

Approving this rezoning would set a difficult-to-reverse precedent, with lasting impacts on Ucluelet's character, environment, and livability. The District must document the rationale for any decision that departs from established zoning or community planning priorities. I urge Council to reject Bylaw No. 1382, 2025, or, at the very least, scale back density to align with the original community vision and zoning intent for Big Beach, and increase the park designation area as a buffer.

Thank you for prioritizing the long-term interests of Ucluelet's residents, environment, and public safety.

Sincerely,



Karla Robison