

From: Benoît Sandjian

Sent: May 11, 2026 3:41 PM

To: Community Input Mailbox <communityinput@ucluelet.ca>

Subject: Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 1394, 2026 / Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 1395, 2026 / Proposed Housing Project on Hyphocus Island

[External]

Madam, Sir

I am writing in reference to the zoning amendments and proposed development on Hyphocus Island that will be discussed on May 20th. As a homeowner on Hyphocus Island and a resident of Ucluelet, I would like to express my concerns regarding this project.

Numerous aspects of this proposal are controversial, beginning with the choice of Hyphocus Island as the location for such a development. Additional concerns arise from the project's design choices, including increased traffic, safety issues, the carrying capacity of existing infrastructure, the need for further infrastructure development, impacts on residents' well-being, and whether the project truly meets the current and future needs of the community. While these issues are only briefly addressed here, each deserves careful and thorough discussion.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the District for providing residents with the opportunity to voice their concerns.

Before discussing the details of the project itself, I would first like to address the location chosen for this development. It seems clear to me that the geographical situation of Hyphocus Island in relation to the town of Ucluelet makes it an unsuitable location for a development of this scale. Hyphocus Island is one of the most tranquil parts of Ucluelet and was originally intended for larger lots with single-family dwellings. The proposed project, which includes much higher-density housing on significantly smaller lots, is in direct contradiction with the original intended use and character of the island.

Secondly, the proximity of the project to the wastewater treatment plant — and on lands that had been preserved for the future expansion of this infrastructure to meet Ucluelet's long-term needs — is another reason why this development is poorly suited for Hyphocus Island. Not only would the project place additional strain on the treatment system, but it could also reduce, if not eliminate, the District's future capacity to expand water treatment infrastructure as needed.

It is also important to acknowledge that wastewater treatment facilities inevitably affect their immediate surroundings, particularly through odor. If this development proceeds, future residents will undoubtedly be impacted by these issues and will likely pressure the District to implement mitigation measures. Such modifications would almost certainly be costly, and as noted above, the very presence of these homes could make future upgrades more difficult. Ultimately, these costs would likely fall on the community long after the developers have left.

Regarding the design and scale of the proposed development, my understanding is that the project includes 85 lots. However, current zoning would also permit secondary suites and accessory dwelling units, bringing the potential number of housing units to nearly 200. Assuming an average of four residents per unit, this could result in up to 800 people living in this small part of town.

Given that Hyphocus Island currently has a 13 lots (some of which are not developed), bringing the permanent population of the island to about two dozens with additional short term renters, and that Ucluelet has a population of approximately 2,000 people, the scale of this proposal appears entirely excessive. Potentially, well over one-third of Ucluelet's population could end up living on Hyphocus Island alone.

An additional 800 residents would place significant pressure on Hyphocus Island's and Ucluelet's existing infrastructures. Of particular concern are freshwater supply, water treatment capacity, food supply systems, especially considering that the local Co-op already experiences periodic shortages of fresh produce, fire fighting, tsunami emergency system capacity and education infrastructure capacity.

The traffic impacts are equally concerning. If even half of those additional residents owned vehicles, there could be up to 400 extra cars regularly traveling across the Hyphocus Island bridge, Helen Road, and Peninsula Road. This estimate does not include additional traffic generated by short-term rentals or BnBs that may operate within the development. Tourist-related traffic would likely increase safety concerns further, as visitors are often less familiar with local roads and may be more prone to speeding or distracted driving.

The proposed project intends to link Hyphocus Island to Peninsula Road in order to accommodate the additional traffic, which developers have suggested would remain minimal. However, this does not reflect reality. Most drivers traveling to Hyphocus Island and nearby roads are likely to continue using Helen Road to avoid the speed bumps and school zone on Peninsula Road.

Helen Road is currently a small and quiet residential road serving primarily local traffic. Its low traffic volume allows it to remain a peaceful area that residents value greatly and where

local children regularly play. If this development proceeds, Helen Road would not only need to be upgraded to accommodate increased traffic and maintain acceptable safety standards, but it would also lose its current character as a tranquil neighborhood and safe gathering space for residents, pedestrians, and children.

The density and number of additional residents proposed for Hyphocus Island also raise serious safety concerns considering that both Hyphocus Island are located within a tsunami hazard zone. In the event of an emergency — whether a tsunami, fire, or another disaster — it is difficult to imagine how a single-lane access road could provide an adequate evacuation route for up to 1,000 people, even with the addition of wider sidewalks or similar modifications proposed by the developers.

With respect to the proposed Hyphocus Island bridge upgrades, which would be the only meaningful benefit of the project only if the installation of culverts would restore seawater flow around the island. However, if this work is undertaken and relying on undersized culverts that would prevent the return of natural tidal flow around Hyphocus Island, even that benefit would not be realized.

During presentations made to Helen Road residents last fall, the developers stated that the project applies development standards commonly used in large urban areas across British Columbia, including comparisons to developments in the Vancouver region. This comparison overlooks a fundamental reality that many Ucluelet residents consider essential: Ucluelet is a small West Coast community whose identity and quality of life are fundamentally different from those of large urban centers. For many residents, this distinct character and lifestyle are precisely why they chose to settle here. Allowing developments of this scale risks eroding that quality of life and raises an important question: what kind of future do we want for Ucluelet and its community?

While there is certainly a need for affordable housing in Ucluelet, I strongly believe that this project is not an appropriate solution. Not only is Hyphocus Island an unsuitable location for significantly higher-density housing, but the development itself is unlikely to provide meaningful affordable housing opportunities.

Most of the project consists of lots similar to those created through the Forbes Road development. There, the most expensive lots sold while the less expensive ones have remained unsold for months. This demonstrates that such developments primarily benefit wealthier buyers from outside Ucluelet rather than local residents in need of affordable housing. Furthermore, vacant lots priced around \$300,000 are not realistic opportunities for many local families, particularly given that financing undeveloped land generally requires significantly larger down payments.

There have already been proposals in Ucluelet for higher-density and affordable housing developments in locations that make far more sense from a planning perspective — including areas closer to the Ucluelet Community Centre and near the town entrance. These locations would significantly reduce traffic impacts on picturesque residential areas such as Helen Road and Hyphocus Island, while also avoiding the serious evacuation and safety concerns associated with this proposal.

I would also add that, while driving into town a few days ago, I noticed signs at the entrance of Ucluelet welcoming developers to invest in areas that are already zoned for housing. If there is already land designated and planned for residential development, it seems unnecessary and illogical to open another area that is, for the reasons outlined above, poorly suited to meet Ucluelet's housing needs.

As a result, I cannot help but feel that the primary motivation behind this project is the financial benefit of the landowners and developers rather than the long-term interests of the community of Ucluelet.

Ultimately, the future of Ucluelet depends on preserving the charm and character that make it such a unique coastal community — qualities that some would argue nearby communities such as Tofino have already lost to a some extent. Ucluelet's success as a prosperous and desirable community depends on maintaining, if not improving, its attractiveness both for residents and visitors while protecting the well-being of those who live here and offering suitable solutions to accommodate its most modest residents.

For all of these reasons, I strongly believe that the proposed project fails to meet these objectives and should not proceed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Benoît Sandjian

Resident and owner at [REDACTED]