Comments to Vashon Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Comment from Leila Khatapoush

Supportive. Resident of Vashon Island. Supportive of revising any laws to incorporate this industry which was legalized by the constituents of King County and Washington State as a whole. This industry has operated in the shadows for decades and we now have the opportunity to embrace this trade with integrity and regulation so that many may prosper. It seems to me it is the logical execution of the will of the people.

Comment from Tim Baer

Supportive. Add as party of record. If there is a way to allow Bakkhos to move ahead within a reasonable time frame, while simultaneously addressing overall land use planning questions and/or environmental pollution concerns within the next few years, I am in support of that. Register my position on several issues:
- I would like to see the old K2 property in productive use.
- I believe Bakkhos is the only credible party ready, willing, and able to use the site.
- I support Bakkhos' proposed use (marijuana growing and processing) at the K2 site.
- I believe there is some environmental pollution at the site and want local, state and federal agencies to carry out thorough investigation and remediation efforts.
- I would like Vashon residents to revise the town plan and have the new plan incorporated into the Comprehensive plan.
- I am concerned about the proliferation of marijuana retail operations on the island, and would like to severely restrict them at this time. I do not want Vashon to become a marijuana "destination spot."

(If you are aware of agencies that I could contact on any of these issues, I appreciate your reply.)

Comment from Don Pawlek

Undecided. A resident of the island. Fast tracking the approval of a town plan change, especially for off islanders, does not seem appropriate. It would be a shame if the only thing people will or would associate with Vashon is the Marijuana "industry". Vashon is somewhat of a throwback to a simpler time, one that has avoided issues such as these. It is also a shame that many people who appear in favor of the revised amendment are doing so to protect their own interests as they are now out of compliance with the plan as exists. I'm not sure that they are really in favor of such an industry but are seizing the opportunity for other self-serving reasons. It does seem appropriate; since Vashon is an island which should have some control over its own future, that they be given time to finish its plan to see what its priorities will be.

Comment from Ellen Trout

Opposed. Add my concerns to those of so many others here on Vashon that we object to having such a large marijuana processing plant as the main "industry" here on our small island. We already have huge problems with our teenagers using drugs at a higher percentage than other places in Washington and the situation will not be helped by giving mixed messages with condoning a facility such as being proposed. Concerned that the facility will present itself as a target for criminal activities by those who will see it as a source of potential theft of a valuable product. Security and enclosure of the site will be hard to accomplish, and have a very limited
police presence on the island. Take the many negative factors into consideration before approving this location as a site for marijuana growing and processing. Certainly there are other sites within Washington that are more remote and would have less impact than on our entire small community.

Comment from Mary Ann Beardsley

Opposed. Not able to attend the meeting last week on Vashon regarding the use of the K2 building. Opposed to a marijuana growing and processing facility on our main thoroughfare here on Vashon. I have two teenage boys and am concerned about the message that this facility sends to them and other young members of our community about the use of marijuana. It is not a healthy habit and life choice. The “Pot Candy” product is not something that I want easily available to anyone. It minimizes the effect of marijuana on the brain and looks easily enticing to children. My children are learning to drive. Now not only do we need to worry about drunk drivers on the road, texting and distracted drivers on the road, we need to also worry about more people driving under the influence of marijuana which will create a greater safety hazard for our community. Having a marijuana facility on the main road close to our schools and town center advertises the wrong message to our Vashon youth. As an involved member of this community, I am deeply opposed to having a marijuana facility in our front yard.

Comment from Deb Phillimore

Supportive. Support paving the way for Edi-Pure's purchase of the K-2 building, but I have three requests for the County Council's consideration. They are:
1. ensure that the Island aquifer is neither over used nor contaminated
2. encourage Edi-Pure to mitigate its power consumption with a large scale solar installation.
3. reconvene the Town or Island Plan work with defined goals including what activities should be barred from the town core. Recently 4 acres of woodland were clear cut within view of the town core under a DNR permit. There should be communication between County and State when landowners plan for activities that impact the town.

Comment from John Candy

Undecided. Rural town plans protect the somewhat fragile nature and identity of these increasingly rare places. They also guide possible change and development. For this reason, changes and amendments, even though they seem innocuous, must be thoroughly examined and vetted before being instituted. Please recognize that any changes you make may have a disproportionate and possibly damaging effect compared to other places in King County. In this case, it really is not one size fits all. Therefore I ask that the marijuana production and processing amendment be taken off the expedited track and given the full consideration and public process that it deserves.

Environmental concerns: Toxic chemicals were used at the K2 plant. During its high production period, regulations and enforcement concerning chemical use, handling and disposal were more lax. It is possible that there is chemical contamination at the site that needs to be addressed before permitting new uses or production there and also to prevent ground water contamination.

The use of water needs to be thoroughly examined for a growing and production facility of this size. Hard figures need to be generated about quantities captured in catchment and the possible
effect on aquifer recharge. A lot of waste water would be generated. Much of this water would likely be laden with fertilizers. How would this water be treated to meet county and state regulations?

Please take this amendment off of the fast track. Give it the thorough consideration that it deserves within the town plan mission and framework. Also please take this opportunity to work with state DOE to make sure that the site doesn't have any environmental liabilities.

**Comment from Jeffery Reid**

**Opposed** to the proposed amendments to the Vashon Island Town Plan that would allow for the mass production of marijuana candies and related edible products at the center of our Island. I understand it is the intent of King County to bring Vashon's Town Plan "in line" with the rest of the County. We don’t want the legacy of King County to be as the enabler of “pot candy” on Vashon. It’s my hope that we don’t wish to be seen this way and we’ll take steps to protect our children and our community from any disastrous decisions.

This decision is no small matter to me and my family. I am a life-long island resident raising two teenage children on Vashon. In my professional life I work as the middle school counselor on Vashon and therefore am keenly aware of the impact this decision has on the message you send to our youth regarding what they can expect of their community. Deciding to prioritize business and profit over the health of a community is, frankly, disgraceful. Vashon already struggles with youth substance abuse above the state average. We don’t need more reasons for kids to take drugs nor do we need the terribly mixed messages sent by any decision to enable the production of pot candy on Vashon.

Vashon Island has participated for years in the Healthy Youth Survey, which seeks to understand the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of our youth that are associated with a variety of "risk and protective" factors. These "risk and protective factors" are linked through extensive research to predict the likelihood that youth will engage in high risk behaviors, including drug and alcohol use.

Over many years our Island Healthy Youth Survey results have consistently shown that our youth are substantially more at risk of alcohol and drug use than other communities around the state. What we have learned is that our youth perceive:

• they live in a community with high availability and easy access to alcohol and drugs
• there is a low-risk to themselves and their peers associated with use of alcohol and other drugs
• our community is permissive to their use
• there is a low likelihood they will be "caught" and experience consequences when using alcohol and other drugs in our community

Consider how amending Vashon's Town Plan will contribute to and validate these perceptions. Given the set of findings, from our Healthy Youth Survey data, one of the "best practice" prevention strategies is to address the "community norms." In part, this means paying close attention to messages our community sends to its youth about use of alcohol and other drugs and the risks they pose to their healthy development. Please be aware, this is an uphill battle in a community already known to many as "Weed Island."
Not only has our community fallen short in communicating healthy beliefs and clear standards to our youth, we have apparently sent the wrong message to others, such as Bakkhos Holding, LLC. During a recent community meeting, the company's representative, Dan Anglin, stated that one reason the company was attracted to Vashon was our "Keep Vashon Weird" slogan, and that Bakkhos Holding "wants to be a part of our weird."

Bakkhos Holding is mistaken in its assessment of our community, and I certainly hope the same cannot be said for the King County Council as it reviews this proposed amendment.

“Keep Vashon Weird" means we take pride in being tolerant, community-minded, and creative independent thinkers. We are exactly the type of community that can gather around an issue such as this and make a decision to not have our Town Plan be "in line" with the rest of King County. Here is an opportunity to do what is in the best interest of our community and the healthy development of its youth. We can model for our youth a more intelligent and thoughtful response to this situation than "Look, everybody else is doing it…so will we."

Comment from John Sage

Opposed. Here's yet another reason why large, corporate-run factory-farmed marijuana is a bad idea.
At K2, or anywhere.
Executive summary: the carbon footprint of factory-farmed marijuana is appallingly bad.
Ref: "The carbon footprint of indoor Cannabis production” -- Evan Mills, Energy Associates, ox 1688, Mendocino, CA 95460

Ref: "PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING DEVELOPMENT TITLE TEXT AMENDMENT APPLICATION NO. PA-1300119 OF SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY REGARDING REMOVING THE TERM "STOREFRONT" TO CLARIFY THAT MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES ARE ILLEGAL REGARDLESS OF LOCATION (ALL DISTRICTS)” at "The County Has Failed to Consider Significant Environmental Impacts of the Ordinance" PDF pages 16 and onward
http://www.sjgov.org/board/Board%20Meetings/Agendas/100813/MG94645/AS94676/AI97381/DO97382/DO_97382.PDF

Ref: "The Surprising Solution for Growing Sustainable Marijuana"
http://www.alternet.org/drugs/surprising-solution-growing-sustainable-marijuana

There is far more at stake here beyond whether the King County Executive will back-door a zoning change to the Vashon Town Plan that benefits one out-of-state corporation only -- as politically offensive as that action might be.

There are significant environmental costs to large-scale, factory-farmed marijuana production that very much need to be taken into consideration.
Comment from Stephanie Johnson Blomgren

Undecided. I appreciated the opportunity to hear opinions, gather more information and generally consider the proposed changes around Vashon's former K2 plant during the recent open house. I admit that I am still somewhat confused by state/county restrictions on the production of marijuana at the former K2 site. (I had entered the meeting believing that Edi-pure would be manufacturing edibles there -- but left with the idea that they were permitted only to grow and process the crop, presumably converting it to a packaged product at another facility?)

In any event, I have a special concern with how marijuana dispensaries and growers proceed along the business corridor if only because I live in that zone. The "Cure Collective" recently opened across from the Methodist Church in town, in view of my home, across the street from my daughter's bus stop. How many other "cure collectives" will be licensed, I have no idea -- but would love some direction as to how I might be better informed (and, if there's a specific person I should contact at the LCB). My wish is simply to urge caution as you consider the revision put before you.

Several speakers mentioned the power drain on marijuana production -- something I (naively) never considered. Figures cited were incredible (15% of Vashon's total use?). And I'm concerned about transparency. The nearby distillery is another business affected by Vashon's town plan. And yet, as a community member, I have been repeatedly impressed by the distillery's commitment to opening their doors; appealing to families, local charities, responding to feedback of every sort. Yet, I still haven't seen any suitable response as to what needs to be done to adequately clean up the K2 site -- something that may negatively impact local water sources.

Comment from Lu-Ann Branch

Supportive. Supportive of proposed amendment to the Vashon Town Plan that would allow marijuana businesses at the K2 building and other locations around Vashon. I whole heartedly support this use to create local jobs, and a boost to local businesses.

I have two teenagers, a 19 year old daughter, who commutes from our home on the island to Tacoma Community College, and a 16 year old son, who is a student at Vashon Island High School. I am not worried about their exposure to the marijuana industry, any more than I am worried about them being exposed to the alcohol industry (in the form of distilleries on the island). We model appropriate behavior in our home and are steadfast that it is illegal, and against our family rules, for them to use or purchase until they turn 21.

I am active in our community as a Vashon Park District commissioner (currently serving as Chair), president of the Vashon Island Unitarian Fellowship, the Race Director for our local summer triathlon on the island, as well as a professional triathlon coach and personal trainer.

Comment from Mary O'Leary

Opposed. The King County meeting regarding proposed changes to the Vashon Town Plan was held, with one week's notice, over our public schools' winter break when many families were off Island. Due to the short notice, the Feb 19th meeting was advertised in our weekly paper on the
day of the event.

Many Vashon residents NOT in favor of a 180,000 sq. ft. pot production site, in the middle of our town and within walking distance to all 3 public schools, did not know about and/or were off Island for the meeting. Four of the seven days that Vashon residents have for public comment also overlap with Winter break. I am unable to organize informational meetings at the schools because they are closed. Our weekly local paper is available on Wednesdays. Vashon residents will learn about the Feb 19th meeting in the Beachcomber on Feb 26th - on the day that our window for public comment closes. The voices of a majority of Vashon residents associated with Vashon Island School District, VARSA & VYFS have been muted due to the Executive Office's rushed timing on this matter. We as a community DO NOT want this issue rushed. Make no mistake- the Feb 19th meeting was NOT a fair representation of Vashon Island viewpoints. One week notice is insufficient for Vashon residents to respond to our town plan being "spot-rezoned" amended for marijuana production based upon the high profile and sheer size of the former K2 site in the middle of our town.

The impact on our Island cannot be overstated. This is the largest structure, by far, on Vashon. It is in the middle of our town. As a community we are requesting a say in its footprint and not to have that footprint dictated to us as it rolls out. For you, as our County Executive, to hastily rezone our town and pave the way for the fast cash sale of K2 would deny our Island any hope of environmental remediation of the site. At the Feb 19th meeting, Edi-Pure publicly denied knowledge of contamination whereas citizens of Vashon repeatedly stated and sourced evidence of extensive contamination that is readily available and sanctioned by the State. When put under pressure, the owner of Edi-Pure talked quite a bit WITHOUT agreeing to the environmental due diligence that a lending institution would require of the site.

At the Feb 19th meeting, I appreciated your department's interest in assisting Vashon with creating an updated town plan. Let's start with a common sense timeline regarding our biggest zoning issue. Councilman McDermott stated the King County is being careful not to grant favoritism to one community over another in zoning for pot production. I am not requesting favoritism. Vashon already has a half dozen approved pot production sites on Island. I'd argue that spot rezoning to make marijuana production the grand temple of our town is a form of punishment with lasting consequences. Please grant us a timeframe to implement some safeguards that will help ensure sustainability and growth in a variety of sectors on Vashon.

Comment from Laurie Thorpe

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**Comment from Lisa Coley**

**Opposed.** We are a community whose youth are already at risk as identified by state research. We have one of the highest levels of teen substance use in the state. According to the owner of Edi-Pure, their products will be distributed off island. The message to our youth, however, will be the same regardless of where the product is sold. We will be conveying that the island as a whole is supportive of marijuana and its everyday use. By passing up an opportunity to turn K2 into a resource for the whole community we are also missing the chance to create a place for teens to gather and recreate in a positive way that does not involve drugs or alcohol.

As a community we have tried to come together to brainstorm possible, positive uses for K2, but unfortunately due to believed environmental contamination and lack of funding, these ideas have not come to fruition.

We need the county's help to reduce harm to our youth. We do not need the county to support a business plan that would, however indirectly, increase substance use and abuse in our community. As a social worker for the last 14 years, it is impossible for anyone to prove to me that there is anything positive in the legalization of a substance that harms the brain and is a gateway drug.
I am opposed to changing the Vashon Town Plan in order to make it possible for K2 to be used for marijuana production or distribution on any scale. I am in favor of the County lending support, including financial, to create a modern, state of the art community center, the likes of which I have seen in other at risk communities. Seattle, Federal Way and Lakewood have all been able to create amazing centers. Why not King County and Vashon?

Comment from Frank Jackson

Undecided. I attended the King County meeting February 19th on the proposed amendment to the Vashon Town Plan to allow marijuana processing at the K2 site. Please slow down the amendment to the town plan change so the community can vet its implications.

There are at least three important issues here, and there may be more issues discovered if there are more than a couple of weeks to consider this fast developing issue.

1. Significant changes to the Vashon Community Plan and Vashon Town Plan should include time for community input and discussion. With this fast-track amendment to accommodate the marijuana processors, there has not been time to do this. This issue was well covered in the February 19, 2014 Beachcomber editorial signed by 16 Islanders. See http://www.vashonbeachcomber.com “Slow Down …”

2. A very large edible marijuana products operation may not be supported by the community, any more than the Glacier/Cal-Portland mining operation was. Both proposals offer jobs in exchange for disadvantages.

3. There is now pretty convincing evidence that the likelihood of groundwater contamination at the K2 site is greater than previously thought. The technical memorandum from Farallon Consulting shows that there are some serious problems with the 2008 Phase 2 Environmental Assessment. Furthermore, two speakers at the Feb 19th meeting spoke of past observations of apparent contamination that was not previously public. I know both of these people as longtime responsible citizens, and their observations … regarding the apparent large spill observed in the K2 ditch and the disposal of barrels labeled as toxic substances … need to be investigated.

As a member of the Vashon-Maury Groundwater Protection Committee since 2004, and a member of the previous Vashon Ground Water Advisory Committee from 1987 to 1998, I can say that this is new information. K2 was a responsible corporate citizen and made presentations to the ground water committee showing their recognition of the importance of safeguarding Vashon’s sole source aquifer. But as we all know, accidents can happen. And now we know, maybe accidents did happen. To be certain that there are no toxics that require cleanup, I believe it’s reasonable and necessary to require K2’s parent company, the Jarden Corporation to obtain a "No Further Action" (NFA) letter from the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE). Jarden is a $7 billion/year corporation that has benefited greatly from its K2 acquisition, and now needs to clear up this potential problem BEFORE they sell the property and may no longer even gain access to it. I want to return to the second issue, that a very large edible marijuana products operation may not be supported by the community. There are a host of issues here, but I believe the most prominent is the idea of providing marijuana in candy and other edible forms is a red flag to most parents and teachers. Teachers and counselors are already dealing with a host of difficult problems in the schools, and Vashon kids have shown that it is relatively easy for them to access these tempting substances. It will now be much easier, and lunch bags will be containing a whole new set of treats that will make teachers’ jobs even more difficult. The
problems are well documented in the University of Washington’s ‘Adolescents and Marijuana’, and I urge you to read this. It’s a sobering eye-opener.

I believe that this community will not want to be a part of this particular aspect of the new marijuana world. Indeed, many at the Feb 19th meeting reported having voted to legalize marijuana, but are not in favor of these edibles, and particularly not in favor of using the high profile K2 facility near the schools to produce them. While Edi-Pure officials made multiple attempts to explain why their product would not cause problems for the community, there was general disbelief of their arguments in the audience.

There are other issues; more than I can cover here. The community needs to discuss them, and there has not been enough time allowed with this fast-track action to amend the Vashon Town Plan. I ask you to hit the ‘PAUSE BUTTON’ and give the community a chance to vet this proposal.

Comment from CC Stone

Supportive. Thanks so much for coming out to Vashon on Wednesday and hosting an informative evening for community discussion about changing the Vashon Town Plan.

I wanted to weigh in on the following:

1) I fully support Bakkos Holding's attempt to open a marijuana growing and manufacturing operation in the former K2 building on Vashon Highway. Or HIGH-way. :-) and I think King County should amend the Vashon Town Plan to allow this type of business in this area.

2) I fully support SBD (Seattle's Best Distillery) and think King County should "call off the dogs" regarding any enforcement actions pertaining to zoning problems associated with a flawed and out-of-date town plan. King County gave these folks permits, and it seems only fair to allow them to operate - without the threat of closure or continued legal expense hanging over their heads - until this issue has been completely resolved.

3) I am not concerned about possible contamination on the K2 property. People who worked at K2 and live on Vashon have had 10 years to come forward with their concerns about groundwater contamination - and God knows we've got an island full of people who would do this in a heartbeat IF it were true. If Bakkos is willing to purchase the property with the current environmental report, they should be allowed - and encouraged - to do so.

Comment from Tona Thun Taylor

Undecided. I urge you to rethink the "possible shut-down" call that was made to Vashon business, Seattle Distilling Company. As a citizen of King County, I request that the county halt all code enforcement action in Vashon, pending a review and reformulation of the Town Plan. There is no good reason to shut down a business that is in compliance with the site recommendation that was given to them by the county when the business was started. Stunting or ruining the lively-hood of three families (that own the business), by shutting down their business while the Town Plan and zoning of businesses that manufacture in that particular part of Vashon is reviewed is unjust. In King County we should be helping our business owners be successful as that is in the best interest of the vitality of our communities. I urge you to examine what King County, and the city of Vashon is gaining if the businesses in the area in question are shut down while the Town Plan is being updated, and the County looks back into their own records to see what they had originally recommended to the business in question.
Comment from Maria Clanz

**Opposed.** Resident of Vashon, and the parent of a 9 year old son who attends Chautauqua Elementary. I have been following the news of Edi-Pure’s / Bakkhos LLC purchase of the old K2 property carefully, but was unable to attend the town meeting last night.

I was at first confused, and then dismayed, to read that much loved and long-established Island businesses have been hit with a wave of difficulty around compliance or non-compliance with the Vashon Town Plan. It seems extraordinary that Minglement / The Roasterie and Seattle Distilling Company could be in danger of non-compliance - I know that SDC in particular opened in absolute good faith after seeking County approval. That they are now being threatened with non-compliance, right when Edi-pure seeks to open an operation at K2, seems very odd.

1. Halt all code enforcement action in Vashon pending a review and reformulation of the Town Plan;
2. Review and reformulate the Town Plan with the input of the people of Vashon - do not leap ahead and rubber stamp it acceptable for Edi-pure to purchase K2 and set up operations.

As I said above, I am a parent. I am not opposed to marijuana operations, at all - in another area of Vashon I would conceivably welcome Edi-Pure and Bakkhos. I can see how they would bring needed jobs to the island, perhaps - but - what I am deeply opposed to is any business, located at Center and close to schools, that requires the extensive security demands of an industrial-sized grow operation. This isn't the little family-run SDC operation, one run by Island families. It isn't the Roasterie, roasting teeny batches of coffee. This is an out-of-state corporation setting up a major business that will require 24 hour surveillance, possibly armed guards, 24 hour security lights, and more, manufacturing a HUGE amount of controlled substances. It is a world away from little SDC and the Roasterie.

Comment from Liz Sheperd

**Supportive.** It has come to my attention at a town meeting last night that the part of Vashon's town plan that applies to businesses in the Center section of our town is flawed, hopelessly out of date and should not be considered as reason to keep Edi-Pure from doing business here or enforce code on existing businesses, including Vashon Roasterie and Vashon Distillery.

The case of Vashon Distillery — a recently opened business owned by established islanders who painstakingly worked through the permit process with King County — is particularly disturbing. They are now being investigated for a code violation because islanders who oppose Edi-Pure called the town plan to King County's attention. This seems horrendously unfair, not to mention Kafkaesque. This is not the way I have come to count on King County do support small businesses on Vashon.

Vashon needs to go back to the drawing board and rework the part of the town plan that governs Center. But that is a long process. In the meantime, the plan should not be considered as a means to either harass established businesses or prevent Edi-Pure from buying a building. Please know that I and many other islanders are excited about Edi-Pure’s plans to bring jobs to Vashon and economic vitality to our small island. A small but vocal group of critics — most of whom simply oppose marijuana being produced on the island or who have some other interest in
owning and operating the K2 building — shouldn't be able to scuttle these plans because of a flawed and poorly enforced Town Plan.

**Comment from Kristen Elliott Gunn**

**Opposed.** What is the big rush on Vashon? The speed at which your office is fast-laning the conversion of the Vashon Town Plan to suit the needs of an out of state company (yes, I know there is a convenient Bainbridge Isl. address listed as a residence for the owners of Edi-Pure) makes your office seem suspect. One week The Beachcomber states that it would probably be a year before the King County Council looks at the issue of the Vashon Town Plan and its conflicts with industrial production at the site of the former K2, and the next week the paper says the Town Plan could be modified by a King County Executive Order as soon as March. It makes it look like Edi-Pure has a lot of suspect power with your office.

My biggest concern is the paltry law enforcement King County allots to our island. Yet King County is falling over backwards to help a company manufacturing a product that is illegal in 48 U.S. states. Whether legal in WA and CO, serious crime goes hand in hand with marijuana production. We don't need to add this violence-generating industry to our island that is insufficiently policed as it is. Will Edi-Pure be providing armed security to guard its product? Or is ferry-transit as our lone way off Vashon going to be touted as all the security Edi-Pure requires for their product? Will criminals think twice before stealing marijuana valued at $8,400/lb., and illegal everywhere but here in and CO!, as they will have to take a WSF ferry to flee with the marijuana.

Slow down. As a King County resident I would ask that your office never modify the Vashon Town Plan and never allow large-scale marijuana production at the former K2 site. At a minimum, listen to Vashon residents and our concerns. Don't let Edi-Pure brandish the threat of locating in Snohomish County and sharing its largesse of jobs and tax dollars with another county. Pay attention to your own constituents.

**Comment from Stephanie Lucus**

**Opposed.** I would like to share another article. The article looked at the response of the Healthy Youth Survey taken in 2006.

Among some of its conclusions are:

• Alcohol and marijuana use is higher than state levels for eighth- and 12th-graders; marijuana use is higher for 10th-graders. During a 30-day period, for instance, nearly 60 percent of Vashon’s 12th-graders reported alcohol use, compared to 41 percent statewide; and 38 percent reported marijuana use, compared to 21 percent statewide. Use of all other drugs (including methamphetamine and cocaine) is consistent with the state average.

Here is the link to the article.


Also the link to the Healthy Youth Survey
Although the survey and article are not recent, it clearly shows that Vashon is struggling to curb teen drug use in our community. Today on the front page of our newspaper, there are articles regarding the community meeting that Bakkhos Holding held on the island as well as the meeting that will take place tonight. Along with these articles is a photo of marijuana infused candy, one of the products the company would make. Marijuana candy? Really? I am outraged and do not want this production company in my town. Adults may make their own choices about marijuana, but our children do not need to be further encouraged to try drugs.

I have lived on Vashon for 15 years and currently have two grade school children. I am against the Vashon Town Plan Amendments that propose adding recreational marijuana growing to our current Commercial Business and Industrial zones. The old K2 complex that would potentially house a marijuana growing facility is right on our main road in between town and the schools. This is not something I wish to drive by on a daily basis with my children. Our small community already deals with a continuing drug problem among teenagers.

I am including a quote from Michael Soltman, our School District Superintendent, from an article regarding substance abuse among school age children on Vashon as well as the link to the article. “I think we have a really difficult drug problem here in our community,” Soltman said. “Having a focused resource that provides both intervention and prevention services has been missing in terms of us being able to deal with this problem.

Placing a marijuana facility right in the face of the community is not the correct message we need to send to our vulnerable youth. King County needs to consider the negative impact this kind of drug facility would have on our children and community.

Comment from Scott Healey

Opposed. I am unable to attend the public meeting on Vashon on February 19th but wanted to express my strong opposition to the proposed amendments to the Vashon Town Plan which would allow the growing of marijuana and production of marijuana products on such a large scale on our Island.

The proposed sale of the old K2 building to a marijuana growing and processing facility is of great concern to me; the building is in close proximity to the Vashon schools, the Vashon town center, and the main highway. The youth on Vashon have already been identified as a group with above average drug use and passing amendments to allow such a large scale marijuana growing and production facility on the Island would not help our Island youth.

My wife was born and raised on Vashon and we have returned to raise our family here. We chose to raise our family on Vashon because of the excellent schools, the opportunity for involvement in arts and athletics, the public outdoor spaces for hiking and beachcombing, and the strong sense of community. If the proposed amendments are allowed to pass the Island could
take a serious turn for the worse. I hope the County will listen closely to the concern of Islanders and think long and hard on the impact the changes could have on our small Island.

**Comment from Steve Brown**

**Supportive.** Strongly favor the change, enabling a marijuana operation to take place there. We're relative newcomers, having moved to the island from Seattle after I retired from Emergency Management just eight years ago. Even so, we are definitely not of the "now that we're there, we don't want anything to change" contingent, whose voices seem to be loud and strident. And we aren't in the NIMBY school either. How long ago were we in meetings about KC dispute resolution? Maybe this is an opportunity for an intervention. Glad to see you're the point person! Wish I could be there tomorrow.

**Comment from Jenny Bell**

**Undecided.** Object to the 'fast track' process which has only given Vashon 45 days to discuss and debate an issue of great local importance. I believe this process would normally take longer than a year. As a participant in the creation of the current town plan, the community's involvement in such an important issue is crucial to a functioning democracy. Our Town Plan is not a matter to be decided by King County Council in isolation from the desires of the Vashon community.

I speak as a member of the public, though I am also a member of Water District 19s Board. I am most concerned about the issue of possible contamination of the site proposed for large-scale marijuana production/sales on Vashon - the former K2 building. DOE online records indicate there is current contamination at the site, and I would like to see this issue resolved, in conjunction with the community by the proposed/current owners of K2 before a sale occurs.

**Comment from Greg Wessel**

**Undecided.** You are no doubt aware of the controversy that has erupted on Vashon Island as a result of a recent proposal to the County Council to amend the Vashon town plan for a private company without first obtaining agreement from the community. A number of us are concerned about this development, and I want to register my disapproval.

But first, I have to present a disclaimer. I’ve been a county employee for nearly 16 years (first at DDES and now DPER) and for the last 10 years I have been providing permitting assistance for the residents of Vashon. I know a lot about the island and the history of the K2 site as a result of my employment, but in these remarks I am not representing my employer in any way. My opinions are my own, and offered only as a concerned Vashon resident.

During my time on the island, there have been two instances when the Vashon town plan was amended. The first was when a similar comprehensive plan amendment was done to change the zoning for the K2 parcel from I to CB. That action created a controversy similar to today.

A more recent occurrence involved a committee from the Vashon-Maury Island Community Council (VMICC), which was tasked (in 2011) with updating portions of the town plan. After a lot of work, the committee sent to county staff nine approved amendments in February of 2012 (attached here, with a note to me from the committee chairman following my letter). Those
amendments do not appear to have been incorporated into the town plan as currently available on the web site. The people who did the work are perturbed about the apparent oversight.

It is clear that the town plan needs updating for more than a few reasons. The nine attached updates notwithstanding, there are also problems with parking, sidewalks, sensitive/critical areas, and forestry practices (wetlands in the town core can be logged under a state permit). To top it off, we have learned that several other established island businesses face the same problem as the marijuana producers, in that their uses are not allowed in their zone. Because these uses were recently established, they cannot easily claim to be “existing non-conforming.”

We are not contending the nature of the proposed use, but we do have serious concerns about the viability of the business plan and timetable proposed by Bakkhos Holding. It is apparent that they do not understand the complexity of the situation. Most importantly, even without the town plan restrictions, their planned manufacturing operation simply is not allowed at the K2 site under the new code (Ordinances 17710 and 17725).

Bakkhos is proposing to grow, dry, trim and package marijuana, as well as extract concentrates, infuse food products, and package those products for sale. As I read the code, this list of activities classifies them as a “recreational marijuana processor II” (21A.06). If you refer to the permitted use table (21A.08.080) for manufacturing uses, recreational marijuana processor II activities are allowed in the CB zone only inside the Urban Growth Area.

Vashon is clearly not within the Urban Growth Area. We have some urban zoning, but we are outside the Urban Growth Area. As such, I believe that Bakkhos could only accomplish their stated goals if the K2 property was rezoned to I (when we already have lots of unused I business space) and the Vashon Town Plan was amended to allow that use in the industrial zone.

To rush ahead with changing our town plan in order to accommodate one out-of-state company’s unrealistic proposal is foolhardy at best and undemocratic at worst.

That said, I’d like to offer an idea for resolving this problem. Given that the town plan was recently amended through a Town Plan Committee fielded by the VMICC, and given that we already have volunteers poised to do this again, it makes perfect sense to simply reconstitute the Town Plan Committee and have them resolve the marijuana issues, as well as the other problems with existing nonconforming businesses, through the normal process that has been established for years. With a little help from your office, we could set an ambitious schedule to identify all of the necessary fixes, call for public comment, and craft language that would then be approved by islanders through the VMICC. I believe we could accomplish all of this within one year, which given the existing permitting and zoning challenges, might actually allow commercial use of the K2 property sooner than if we did not do it.

If King County is to be truly progressive, citizens must be empowered to craft their own future with assistance from elected officials like you. Our town plan has empowered us since 1996. We have not given anyone else social license to change it, and we are not giving that up now. So we ask that you press the “delete” button on the current process and send the question back to the people.
Comment from John Caspers

Undecided. While I'm a lawyer I don't profess to know much about the King County Code. I'm hoping you can help me get up to speed. I found the Vashon Town Plan on-line. I understand that the Plan will need to be amended before a conditional use permit can be granted. Is that true? It's 99 pages long, so can you tell me what part of the Plan needs to be changed without my having to read it all?

It looks like the Vashon Town Plan is part of the King County Comprehensive Plan. Is that correct? If so, I have looked at the County web site and reviewed the requirements for amendments. Is that process being followed here? I've been told that the County Executive can do this on his own in a very short time, is that what is being proposed now? If so, what are the steps that he must take before the change becomes effective, and what's the authority in the Code for that action? Can you tell me of any others that have been done by the Executive in the last 5 years? Has the law department prepared a review of the Executive's authority to follow such a course of action either for this change or for others that have occurred in the past? If so, I'd like a copy. If there is someone in the law department who can answer these questions I'd appreciate their name and contact information.

On the merits, have there been any studies on the social, environmental, or economic impact of a marijuana-growing and distilling (if that's the right word) operation on the community? Are there any in the works? I assume the people who are proposing to do this business will be vetted by the Liquor Control Board to keep unsavory characters out of the business, has that taken place yet? I appreciate your time. If it's easier to do this over the phone feel free to give me a call. I know you're busy but I'd like as much of this before the meeting as possible.

Comment from John and Merrilee Runyan

Undecided. Slow down the process of amending the King County Comprehensive Plan and related zoning ordinance(s) and thereby altering the Vashon Town Plan.

As you know, the Vashon Town Plan was approved by the King County Council in 1996 after a two-year process initiated by the Vashon Island Community Council. King County actually paid for consultants to assist in the process which involved many island residents. Countless meetings in living rooms and public places were held in order to include as many voices and perspectives as was possible. We worked together over a long time period because we cared deeply about our community.

As 22-year Vashon residents and community leaders in organizations ranging from the Vashon Island Growers Association to the Land Trust to the All Island Forum, among many, we are just as concerned now about the plan for Vashon as we were then.

The object of the Plan “is to direct gradual growth and infill development so that it best meets the needs of the community and does not overtax infrastructure. The intent is to seek ways to reinforce Vashon’s traditional small town values, character and structure. It is also intended that the Plan provide some predictability to Vashon landowners and to future development...Most importantly, it provides a blueprint for changes.” (Vashon Town Plan, page 2)
The Town Plan goes on to say that “through input and participation, the whole Vashon Island community can influence the future shape of the Town Planning Area.” (Vashon Town Plan, page 28). Now, in order to have a ‘uniform’ approach to the growing of marijuana, the County proposes to arbitrarily change our town plan to include a new use without an adequate opportunity to gather input from community members. This is NOT the ‘blueprint for changes’ suggested by the Plan.

Many significant questions have been raised about this new use. Surely it would make sense to allow enough time to explore the views of many islanders. Only one public meeting (to be held during the week of winter break when many families are away) with just 7 days’ notice is absolutely inadequate to the significance of the change.

We are not motivated by a ‘not in our backyard’ attitude. We are very concerned about the rush to take away the opportunity for Vashon to influence the future shape of our community. This is what will happen if superficial and insignificant efforts are made to gather meaningful input and real citizen participation. We are a community that takes our responsibilities as citizens seriously, and we deserve to have the opportunity to exercise them in this arena, which is what the Vashon Town Plan requires.

Comment from Laura Neebling

**Opposed.** Resident of Vashon Island. I am extremely concerned about the County’s proposal to amend the Vashon Town Plan to allow production of marijuana and marijuana products in the Commercial Business District, which includes the K2 Building located in downtown Vashon. The County’s public meeting regarding this project has been scheduled on February 19, the middle of the Vashon School District’s Winter Break, meaning that many concerned island residents will be out of town on the meeting date. I hereby request that the meeting be rescheduled to allow greater participation by and more input from island residents regarding the County’s proposal.

I am strongly opposed to the County’s proposed Town Plan amendment. Large scale commercial production of marijuana and related products would be totally inappropriate for, and has no place on, Vashon Island. We are a small and relatively isolated rural community, serviced by minimal law enforcement and otherwise lacking the government infrastructure and oversight needed to manage the impacts of this use. The site in question is not located in an industrial park; it is located on the main street of our small town, within several hundred feet of the main intersection and within a few miles of our elementary, middle and high schools. This use is not in keeping with the historic, rural and family-oriented character of our island, and it is moreover a new use that the County has no experience in regulating or managing. I urge you to delay the date of the February 19 hearing to enable concerned residents, parents and school officials a fair opportunity to attend and express their views.

Comment from Wilson Hu

**Opposed.** I want to state for the record my **STRONG DISAPPROVAL** for the proposes changes to the Vashon Town Plan to include marijuana growing, processing and retail for the former K2 manufacturing site. It is well known that Vashon has a youth drug problem, not only in the use of drugs like marijuana, but also alcohol. Bottom line is the youth on the island do not
feel like there are enough things to do and keep their interest. The prominent main highway location and proximity to the school I believe would be on more way to lure kids to try and continue to use drugs.

Alcohol, a legalized drug but not for minors, is already a problem on the island for the youth. Despite the laws prohibiting sales to youth, there isn’t a shortage of alcohol at youth parties. It continues to cost the government dollars in programs to help youth to life that is related to alcohol related accidents. That is just alcohol “a regulated drug”. Crime on the island is often connected to drug use as well. I live right near the schools, and have seen and smelled kids smoking marijuana along the “hidden” roads and trails near the school during school hours. This would only compound the problem.

Our community is a large part of why I moved here to raise my kids. With the current proposal, I believe that the community would be compromised. What message do we send our kids? For the sake of dollars and for immediate gratification, we sacrifice our children. It is like pushing young birds out of the nest before they can fly. The ramifications are far reaching and generational. Our small community cannot bear a poor decision as the results of such a grave decision will affect the community in ways we do not yet know. People who knew Vashon already joked that there were a few more millionaires because of legalizing marijuana. It is a reputation I have long disliked. Making a growing and manufacturing location for marijuana would only serve to confirm this. It would not be a place where I would want to raise my kids.

Please for the sake of children, do not take the attitude of “it hasn’t been proven to have a negative impact”, rather take an attitude of “prove that it has a positive impact” before adopting such an amendment. By the time it has been proven to have a negative impact, it will have taken its toll.

**Comment from Robert Henry**

**Opposed.** I am unable to attend the public meeting on Vashon on February 19. I do want it to be known that I am a resident of Vashon Island that strongly opposes the proposed amendments to the Vashon Town Plan that would allow marijuana growing, processing and retail at properties zoned Community Business, and growing and processing at those zoned Industrial. I believe that allowing growing of Marijuana and production of Marijuana products on such a large scale, in such a visible location, so close to schools and town will have a permanent and negative impact upon our small community. Furthermore this will send a confusing message to the children of Vashon Island.

Vashon island is known for its love of the Arts, small organic farms, good schools, rural beauty, great biking and a cohesive community spirit. If these amendments are allowed the character of the island would be changed. I do not wish to raise my children, nor live in a community that is willing to compromise this long-standing spirit for relatively short term economic gains.

I trust that the County will reflect long and hard on the serious impact that these changes could create for our small island.

**Comment from Leslie Brown**
Undecided. I’ve read carefully the relevant portions of the ordinance and other documents. The ordinance that appears to govern Vashon’s Town Plan, Ordinance No. 12824, says, “The Vashon Town Plan Area Zoning … is adopted as the official zoning control for that portion of unincorporated King County defined herein.” So it seems to me that a change in the town plan is a zoning change. Is that right? If not, why not?

Also, I read K.C.C. 20.20.020, and it says that type 4 decisions “are quasi-judicial decisions made by the council based on a record established by the hearing examiner.” What record has been established in this instance by a hearing examiner? And again, in the chart on page 28 it says that this process requires a “hearing and recommendation by hearing examiner” — or it appears to say that (it’s hard to untangle the syntax). Finally, the footnote you reference says that “approvals consistent with Comprehensive Plan” may be considered by the Council. Has the Comp Plan been changed? If so, when did that happen?

Finally, I see that there are several exemptions made for Redmond Ridge. Can you explain the basis for those exemptions?

I attended the meeting held by Bakkhos tonight. I don’t believe anyone was there from King County. It was a deeply troubling meeting because of the many important questions Dan Anglin was unable to answer – questions about lighting, security, energy use, and the role of the owners in this process.

Comment from Carolyn Zyke

Opposed. I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed amendments to the Vashon Island Town Plan that would allow for the mass production of Marijuana and related edible products at the center of our Island. I understand it is the intent of King County to bring Vashon’s Town Plan “in line” with the rest of the County.

I plan on attending the community meeting tonight and want to share my disappointment that you will not be attending to hear first-hand the concerns of this community you are charged to represent.

This decision is no small matter to myself and my family. I am a life-long island resident raising two teenage children on Vashon. In my professional life I work as the middle school counselor on Vashon and therefore am keenly aware of the impact this decision has on the message you send to our youth regarding what they can expect of their community: deciding whether to prioritize business and profit over the health of a community.

While my concerns for our community’s health include unknown risks to public safety as well as environmental impacts, I will focus in this letter on the risks it poses to the health of our island youth.

Vashon Island has participated for years in the Healthy Youth Survey, which seeks to understand the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of our youth that are associated with a variety of "risk and protective" factors. These "risk and protective factors" are linked through extensive research to
predict the likelihood that youth will engage in high risk behaviors, including drug and alcohol use.

Over many years our Island Healthy Youth Survey results have consistently shown that our youth are substantially more at risk of alcohol and drug use than other communities around the state. What we have learned is that our youth perceive:

- they live in a community with high availability and easy access to alcohol and drugs
- there is a low-risk to themselves and their peers associated with use of alcohol and other drugs
- our community is permissive to their use
- there is a low likelihood they will be "caught" and experience consequences when using alcohol and other drugs in our community

I ask you to stop to consider how amending Vashon's Town Plan will contribute to and validate these perceptions.

Given the set of findings, from our Healthy Youth Survey data, one of the "best practice" prevention strategies is to address the "community norms." In part, this means paying close attention to messages our community sends to its youth about use of alcohol and other drugs and the risks they pose to their healthy development. Please be aware, this is an uphill battle in a community already known to many as "Weed Island."

Not only has our community fallen short in communicating healthy beliefs and clear standards to our youth, we have apparently sent the wrong message to others, such as Bakkhos Holding, LLC. During a recent community meeting, the company's representative, Dan Anglin, stated that one reason the company was attracted to Vashon was our "Keep Vashon Weird" slogan, and that Bakkhos Holding "wants to be a part of our weird."

Bakkhos Holding is mistaken in its assessment of our community, and I certainly hope the same cannot be said for the King County Council as it reviews this proposed amendment.

To me, "Keep Vashon Weird" means we take pride in being tolerant, community-minded, and creative independent thinkers. We are exactly the type of community that can gather around an issue such as this and make a decision to not have our Town Plan be "in line" with the rest of King County.

Here is an opportunity to do what is in the best interest of our community and the healthy development of its youth. We can model for our youth a more intelligent and thoughtful response to this situation than "Look, everybody else is doing it…so will we."

I hope that the County will give serious consideration to the impact that this amendment will have on our island community and decide to not amend our Town Plan.