

VRDs offer themselves to a community as a conundrum. Opinions are all over the map—some people are completely indifferent and some think they represent a new Ebola. So when it comes to where or how many VRDs will be “permitted”, the stage is set for acrimony. Of course, this is no secret to those committee members already toiling with the minutia of the VRD issues.

The VRD intricacies require the study of numerous other jurisdictions to avoid the pain and agony of re-invention. In my limited study of this issue, I have noticed what looks like a common remedy and a reasonable approach, the “Cap.” A Cap would potentially solve a lot of problems—control the VRD birthrate, help protect the residential housing pool and help protect housing values, to name a few. I can see that certain residential areas might end up with few VRDs allowed and some with more—each determined individually, zone by zone.

The most contentious, I’m guessing, will be Nye Beach where the highest number of VRDs are currently licensed and much of which is in the **C-2/Tourist Commercial Zone**. The Municipal Code Chapter 14.03.040 describes the intent of the zone as follows: “**The intent of this zone is to provide for tourist needs, as well as for the entertainment of permanent residents.**” Well, as a ‘permanent resident’, I must admit that I am entertained by that description—so I guess it works! No, actually I have pondered this definition for some time and have concluded that it is so trite that the real meaning must exist somewhere else—and it does. (Please see Municipal Code 14.03.070 and City’s website under Zoning District Uses.)

The best way to look at Nye Beach is not as a Mecca of commerce and tourism but simply as a mixed use neighborhood. It is, in fact, Newport’s oldest neighborhood. Great pains have been taken over the years to maintain the neighborhood feel and architecture as evidenced in volumes of documents:

- **The Seventh Amendment (Nye Beach Study, adopted 1989)**
- **Newport Peninsula Urban Design Plan(1993)**
- **Historic Nye Beach Zoning Overlay District, (adopted 1997)**

Thousands of hours of work have been put into these City documents over many years in the worthwhile attempt at neighborhood conservation—keeping Nye Beach a vibrant community (where people actually live and work.) It is feared and legitimately so, that much of that effort will have been for naught if the VRD numbers are not controlled. When Nye Beach is seen in this context—as a neighborhood— it doesn’t look terribly different from the strictly residential zones which border it.

A logical concern of Nye Beach residents is that in attempting to achieve some “acceptable” VRD/residence ratio (to determine a Cap), and with the predictable pressure to lessen the encroachment on R-1 thru R-4 zones, Nye Beach, with a large C-2 component will, by default become the VRD “dumping ground” and get tagged with a high cap.

I don’t believe that VRDs are intrinsically evil, but the measure of their objective good or evil must be determined by their impact. With high VRD numbers, relative to resident habitation, one case is easy to make that VRDs turn a neighborhood into a “ghost town” where, in the off-season, the place is empty and what used to be a neighborhood is quite dead. With closely regulated numbers, on the other hand, VRDs might barely be noticed, achieving a level of normalcy typical of a neighborhood. It is the “ghost town” scenario that is most feared and to which, I am hopeful, the Ad Hoc Committee will be most attentive.

Respectfully,  
Lon Brusselback, Newport resident