

Adam Zack

From: joe symons <joesymons@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 9:16 AM
To: Comp Plan Update; Lynda Guernsey
Subject: Additional comments regarding Vision Statement Amendments / Three separate requests
Attachments: vision statment draft.pdf

The following comments are based on the Vision Statement Amendments Draft shown at

<https://www.sanjuanco.com/DocumentCenter/View/14382>

The following comments are similar to, yet separate from, the comments sent to you on 17 February 2018. This is a separate and additional comment.

I have attached a copy of the Vision Statement Draft with highlights; please refer to this document in considering the following comments. I realize the Vision Draft is incomplete as I write. However the suggested revisions as well as the excellent public suggestions already submitted all point in the same direction. Thus I don't believe my comments are premature or irrelevant.

I have three (3) suggestions.

FIRST:

I am requesting a specific change in the language of the Vision Statement Draft.

As noted earlier in my 17 Feb 18 comments, a review of the highlights clearly indicates that the entire document is focussed, correctly and appropriately, on the desires of the full time residents of the county. Words like "People of San Juan County", "islanders", "community", "careful stewards", "small scale", "demonstrated local public need" clearly point to the intention that the Vision is directed to and for full time residents.

However, there is no direct, specific language in the Vision Statement that addresses the growth rate or maximum size of either the full time resident population which is exclusively considered by GMA, or the part-time property owner and visitor population (neither of the latter two is addressed by GMA). These 3 populations will, henceforth in my comments below, be considered as combined into the single term "population".

At the same time, the sub-text of the meaning of words found in the Vision Statement:

rural, isolated, marine, agricultural, rural islands, quiet, small scale, privacy, stable, forestry, farming, natural environment, careful stewards, conserve, protect, preserve, heritage, sense of place, public rights, scenic, rustic, unpaved, narrow (roads), demonstrated local public need, management of water resources to meet the needs of our community, tradition, legacy, continuity, natural limitations, sustainable (*)

clearly speak to the rhythms of nature, not of man, and these rhythms are slow, cyclical, and bounded by natural ecological and biological limitations. They speak to ecological harmony, dynamic natural equilibrium and by their contextual nature explicitly (if by implication) prohibit the unlimited and unregulated growth of one species over all others. The dominance of these words throughout the Vision Statement could easily be translated as an intention to harmonize with, rather than dominate, the natural rhythms of the environment, and

by extension these words imply little or no human population growth, or certainly imply restricting a rate of growth and a maximum size of human population growth and impact to levels that would not disrupt, degrade or destroy these rhythms.

It is important, therefore, to contextualize the Comprehensive Plan's obligation to the Vision Statement to ensure that both the growth rate for all 3 of these populations, and the maximum size of these cumulative human populations, is managed to ensure compliance with the Vision Statement, the Growth Management Act, best-available science regarding carrying capacity, and sustainability aspirations.

Thus, I request the addition of a sentence, perhaps best located in the Natural Environment paragraph (lines 32-38 pf page 3 of the draft), following the sentence "The natural environment is central to the ecological health, quality of life, and the economy in the islands." to read: "To ensure protection of this environment in perpetuity, we carefully choose to limit our collective human footprint by both restricting the rate of growth of human population as well as the maximum size of our population to levels well below those known to adversely impact our extraordinary treasure of natural beauty."

It is the responsibility of county staff and the Planning Commission to begin a conversation on ensuring that the stated intention of the Vision Statement is honored and **stands firm against the face of market forces**. This is the best way to honor the time the Planning Commission, staff and residents have spent crafting the Vision. There are endless examples of how other small communities have lost the qualities prized by locals. Let's insure this does not happen here.

SECOND:

The format of the Vision Statement, as with the format of the entire CP, is a massive wall of text. Think of a novel, a letter, a dictionary, or the vast majority of public comments sent to SJC. Given the importance of the Vision Statement, and given capabilities available today, I recommend that the Vision Statement be re-formatted to include photographs, graphics and images that illuminate and illustrate its fundamental intentions and aspirations. The current Vision Statement is structured to fit on one 8.5x11" page, forcing the type size to be small and concomitantly harder to read. There is no rational argument that the Vision be so structured. Indeed, no other pages in the the entire CP are so formatted.

As I was one of the author's of the original vision statement, I take some responsibility for this concept, as I argued, at the time (~1993) that we structure the Vision Statement around the same concept as the Declaration of Independence, a single page document that would be signed by all committee members following the closing language which echoed the Declaration. My idea at the time was to utilize the precedent of one of the most significant documents in American history; the other committee members agreed. At the time of the drafting, we did not contemplate that this statement would be required to fit on one "page" and thus be structured with ever smaller type to fit.

Times have changed. We have an opportunity to craft a far more visually compelling document that introduces the long standing observation that a picture is worth a thousand words. The graphics artist I have in mind to submit a sample of how the vision statement might be illustrated is currently out of the county. I am sending this request w/o a sample in order to meet the time deadline for PC deliberations, but hope to have a sample crafted and sent to you to as soon as possible for your consideration of this concept. I can imagine that a Vision Statement so reformatted would (and could) be used to celebrate our heritage and aspirations (i.e., past and future), made into a brochure, made available to the populations I've described, and used to bolster our collective desire to achieve the Vision in spite of significant pressures to ignore or devalue it. Additionally, given electronic distribution opportunities unavailable earlier, the entire Vision Statement could include URL

links to supplemental materials that any interested reader could pursue to deepen their understanding of the Vision and the county.

THIRD:

I request the inclusion of a new paragraph, titled “Implementation”, that would follow the last identified titled paragraph in the Vision Statement and precede the closing lines. The vision statement attached shows “Housing” as the last entry, although draft statements may have “Climate Change” as the last entry. In any case, “Implementation” would follow whatever is chosen as the last titled paragraph.

This paragraph’s intention would be to concretize the Vision into specific parameters and metrics that would give clearly measurable definitions to terms identified earlier—see the paragraph ending with an asterisk (*) above. Language such as “Whenever and wherever possible, proactive steps will be taken to ensure that the principles and intentions of this Vision are honored and enforced.” Those definitions and metrics would not be part of the paragraph, but would by the inclusion of this section be authorized to be designed, typically under “best-available” science and/or other established techniques. These definitions and metrics would be articulated in a new section of the CP (possibly in an Appendix) and serve as the baseline against which proposed changes that occur in the county would be compared *prior to implementation or authorization*, so that we maintain the Vision and do not have to play damage control because we permitted some activity that we knew (or should have known) would degrade or weaken our intention. This is the “death by a thousand cuts” challenge. It can be prevented by looking at any proposed “cut” in advance. Examples here include reviewing building permit applications, exempt wells, parking expansions, and endless other proposed modifications to ensure compliance and prevent actions and activities that are outside the defined ranges built into the definitions and metrics. Given the innovative nature of this request, considerable discussion of the precise language of this new paragraph and of the concomitant definitions and metrics would be required by staff, PC and with proper notice and comment periods by residents.

With appreciation for the challenges you have in navigating these waters.

Joe Symons
Olga WA

carpe diem

PROPOSED VISION STATEMENT AMENDMENTS

1 PROPOSED VISION

2 **PREAMBLE:** WE THE **PEOPLE of San Juan County** recognize that these rural islands are an extraordinary
3 treasure of natural beauty and abundance, and that independence, privacy and personal freedom are
4 values prized by **islanders**. Being a diverse people bound together by these shared values, we declare
5 our commitment to work towards this vision of the San Juan Islands in 2020 A.D.

6 **COMMUNITY** We envision a **community** that is primarily rural, made up of islands of varying character,
7 each with its own unique qualities. The islands are places of peace and mutual tolerance, where citizens
8 of differing backgrounds and beliefs respect each other's dignity, privacy, and freedoms. We
9 communicate effectively and openly and work together toward goals identified as being for the common
10 good. We foster a sense of neighborliness, of self-sufficiency, and community pride that has long been a
11 part of our island character.

12 **BASIC HUMAN NEEDS** Our islands are places where all citizens can safely walk or play, day or night. The
13 drinking water supply is clean, and adequate, and conserved as a vital resource. Health care, elder care,
14 and help in time of need are accessible and affordable. ~~The supply of affordable housing is adequate to~~
15 ~~meet the needs of our diverse population.~~ Making a life here is possible for all people and is not limited
16 by access to basic human needs. (See page 6)

17 **EDUCATION** Learning is a continuing lifelong process ~~which~~ that is encouraged and aided by the
18 community. A partnership of families and community creates a supportive and challenging environment
19 founded on academic excellence and artistic expression. This educational environment produces ethical,
20 self-directed, compassionate, responsible world citizens, alive with the love of learning. (See page 7)

21 **ECONOMY** We support a pattern of economic growth and development which serves the needs of our
22 community, and which recognizes the rural, residential, quiet, agricultural, marine and isolated nature of
23 the islands. Our economy comprises a wide spectrum of stable, year-round activities that provide family
24 wage employment for islanders. The workforce is able to live, work, and thrive locally. We support and
25 encourage traditional industries including forestry, farming, aquaculture, construction, fishing and
26 tourism without jeopardizing the resources natural environment on which they depend. We have home
27 occupations and cottage ~~industries~~ enterprises that are compatible with surrounding
28 neighborhoods. We encourage new ideas and new technology for improving the quality and profitability
29 of our goods and services. Advanced interactive communication systems are encouraged support our
30 economy. Value-added activities are encouraged. Environmental conservation and sustainable
31 development are balanced. (See page 8)

32 **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT** Our islands have exceptional natural beauty and healthy diverse ecosystems
33 surrounded by pollution-free marine waters. The air is fresh and clean, the water quality is excellent,
34 and the soil is uncontaminated. As **careful stewards of these islands**, we conserve resources, protect our
35 shorelines and critical areas, preserve open space, and take appropriate action to assure healthy land
36 and marine environments. The natural environment is central to the ecological health, quality of life,
37 and the economy in the islands. Native plants and animals of the islands thrive, and are identified,
38 appreciated and conserved. (See page 10)

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PROPOSED VISION STATEMENT AMENDMENTS

1 **LAND USE** Neighborhoods, hamlets, villages and towns are clearly defined so as to conserve agricultural,
2 forest, mineral resource and environmentally sensitive lands critical areas. These areas define our
3 heritage and sense of place, provide providing for commerce and community activities without losing
4 their small scale and attractive island ambiance. ~~There is housing for people of all incomes.~~ The unique
5 character of our shorelines is protected by encouraging uses ~~which that~~ maintain or enhance the quality
6 of the shoreline environment. Through innovative land use strategies, our citizens and institutions
7 balance and protect private property rights, public rights, and our natural environment. (See page 11)

8 **TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION** ~~We have water, land, and air transportation systems~~
9 ~~commensurate with our island culture. On-island circulation is by means of a system of scenic rural~~
10 ~~roads with automobile, bicycle and pedestrian ways functioning without conflict. In some places, the~~
11 ~~roads are unpaved, narrow, and winding, and care is taken to maintain a rustic quality in public signs.~~
12 Transportation plans equally consider cyclists, pedestrians, automobiles, public transportation, and rural
13 character. Expansion or new construction of basic public transportation facilities occurs only on the basis
14 of based on demonstrated local public need. ~~Advanced interactive communication systems are~~
15 ~~encouraged.~~ (See page 12)

16 **ENERGY AND RESOURCES** Our community fosters resource and energy conservation. Energy
17 independence is encouraged. Drinking water resources are managed to meet the needs of our
18 community and the natural environment. Recycling, solid waste, and sewage treatment are managed
19 both within the confines of each island and Countywide in an environmentally sound manner.
20 Renewable natural resources are used on a sustainable basis. Nonrenewable resources are conserved
21 wherever possible and practical. (See page 13)

22 **ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION** Our community nurtures the expression of its creative talents and
23 supports diverse cultural and entertainment activities. Our cultural facilities such as libraries, museums,
24 and theaters are focal points of activity and community support. Well-managed parks, trails, and
25 shoreline access, where appropriate, provide islanders with recreation with due regard for both the
26 rights of private property owners and the natural limitations of each site. (See page 14)

27 **HERITAGE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION** Our community is enriched by a strong sense of identity,
28 tradition, legacy, and continuity, where past and present freely mingle. We recognize the contributions
29 to our rural and maritime heritage made by indigenous peoples, explorers, and island pioneers, ~~and~~
30 ~~encourage the preservation of that heritage.~~ We encourage preservation of historic sites, heritage,
31 structures, and traditions for the enjoyment of all. (See page 15)

32 **GOVERNANCE** We are self-governed by informed citizens. We are equally represented by elected
33 officials who conduct the activities of government in an ethical, fair, impartial, responsive and open
34 manner ~~which that~~ recognizes the independent, self-reliant nature of its citizens. Our government
35 institutions balance responsibility with resources and costs, consolidate services where practical,
36 manage prudently, provide reliable data, are service-oriented, and perform in a timely manner. (See
37 page 16)

38 **HOUSING** The supply of accessible and affordable housing is adequate to meet the needs of our diverse
39 population. There is housing for people of all incomes. There is sufficient variety in housing types to
40 accommodate diverse households. Raising a family, having a good quality of life, and economic
41 opportunities are not limited by access to housing. (See page 17)