

Adam Zack

From: Stephanie Buffum <stephanie@sanjuans.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2018 5:20 PM
To: DL - Council
Cc: Dona Wuthnow; Elexis Fredy; Lynda Guernsey; Mark Tompkins; deChadenedes, Marcia; Comp Plan Update
Subject: FSJ Comments on the San Juan County Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement update
Attachments: Friends_of_the_San_Juans_comments_Comp_Plan_Vision_Statement_May_16_2018 Final.pdf

Dear San Juan County Council and San Juan County Planning Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the San Juan County Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement update. Friends of the San Juans is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 1979 to protect and restore the San Juan Islands and the Salish Sea for people and nature. We represent over 2,000 members and use science, policy, law, education, and citizen activism to protect, preserve, and restore the land, water, and sea of the San Juan archipelago. Our members live, work, and recreate in the San Juan Islands.

This Vision Statement is an update from 1998. The recommendations for the May 18, 2018 joint public hearing are a significant improvement to previous versions. Friends has attached our additional suggestions in track changes, to the Attachment B.

In summary we recommend:

1. Preamble: The stewardship of our common resources is a primary and essential component of “we the people.”
2. Basic Human Needs: Our water resources are at a critical juncture with increased demand from both residential and tourism growth compounded by climate change impacts: hotter summers with drought conditions while demands on water use are highest and ever increasing. Quantifying and monitoring our water resources is essential to ensure long-term water availability.
3. Basic Human Needs: Given recent and past tragic events involving inadequate mental health services in our community, I urge you to include both mental health and victim services, along with elder and child care in this section.
4. Housing: Please also include how our homes are best constructed: energy efficient and with Low Impact Development.
5. Natural Environment: Suggested change given that SJC is comprised primarily of marine waters – 174 square miles of land and 447 square miles of marine waters.
6. Energy and Resources: Our natural resources must be proactively managed for both human and animal communities.
7. Economy: SJC’s primary economic drivers are tourism and construction. Our vision should address the need to provide for these economic drivers while not impacting year-round residents.
8. Forests: The section on agriculture is excellent and a similar section for forests is also needed. There are more Forest Resource Lands in SJC than Agricultural Resource Lands.

Finally, I applaud the inclusion of climate change as a section in the vision statement. We urge the inclusion of climate change in all the elements of the Comprehensive Plan. As you begin buildout and impact assessment modeling, please be reminded that the Visitor Management Assessment has been completed by local, state and federal public land managers in the San Juan Islands. I encourage you to review these results in a separate meeting and include peak visitor use projections in your analysis.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this update to the Vision Statement.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Buffum, Executive Director

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Protecting and preserving the San Juans and Salish Sea for people and nature since 1979.



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Stephanie Buffum, Executive Director

1 **PREAMBLE: WE THE PEOPLE** of San Juan County value our healthy natural environment, vibrant and
2 diverse community, self-sufficiency, interdependence and stewardship of our common resources, privacy
3 and personal freedom. These rural islands are an extraordinary environmental treasure: as a community
4 bound together by these shared values, we declare our commitment to work towards this vision of the
5 San Juan Islands.

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

13
14 **GOVERNANCE** We are self-governed by informed citizens. We are represented by elected officials who
15 conduct the activities of government in an ethical, fair, impartial, responsive and open manner that
16 recognizes the independent, self-reliant nature of its citizens. Our county borders the Province of British
17 Columbia, including the Gulf Islands, and several Washington State counties. Our elected officials and
18 government institutions communicate with and collaborate in our areas of mutual interest. Our
19 government institutions balance responsibility with resources and costs, consolidate services where
20 practical, manage prudently, provide reliable data, are service-oriented, and perform in a timely manner.

21
22 **BASIC HUMAN NEEDS** Our islands are places where people are safe, day and night. The drinking water
23 supply is clean, adequate, quantified, monitored, and conserved as a vital resource. Health care,
24 including mental health and victim services, elder and child care, and help in time of need are accessible
25 and affordable. Making a life here is not limited by lack of access to basic human needs.

26
27 **HOUSING** There is adequate, safe, affordable, accessible and stable housing so that our community
28 thrives. There are diverse housing types and we use innovative strategies to meet the various housing
29 needs of our community members. Our homes are energy efficient and incorporate Low Impact
30 Development best practices.

31
32 **EDUCATION** Learning is a continuing lifelong process that is encouraged and aided by the community. A
33 partnership of families and community creates a supportive and challenging environment founded on
34 academic excellence, artistic expression, and availability of a wide range of educational opportunities.
35 This educational environment produces ethical, environmentally conscious, self-directed, compassionate,
36 and responsible world citizens, alive with the love of learning.

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

45
46 **ENERGY AND RESOURCES** Our community fosters resource and energy conservation. Energy
47 independence is encouraged. Water, soil, and local food production resources are proactively managed
48 to meet the needs of our community, the natural environment, and future generations. Recycling, solid
49 waste, and sewage treatment are managed in an environmentally sound manner. We use renewable,
50 energy, materials, and natural resources on a sustainable basis. Nonrenewable resources are conserved
51 wherever possible and practical.

1 **CLIMATE CHANGE** Our community-~~of islands~~ sets an example with its response to climate change. We
2 proactively address the causes and effects of climate change such as ocean acidification, sea level rise
3 and drought. Preparations to mitigate these effects are made in advance before they become crises. Our
4 community encourages voluntary efforts and enacts incentives and regulations if necessary to reduce our
5 carbon footprint. Carbon neutrality is our goal. Greenhouse gas emissions are limited and reduced.

6
7 **ECONOMY** We support a diverse, resilient, and sustainable economy while respecting the natural world.
8 This economy serves the needs of our community, and reflects the rural, residential, quiet, agricultural,
9 marine and isolated nature of the islands. Our economy comprises a wide spectrum of stable, year-round
10 activities that provide living or family wages, allowing islanders to live, work, and thrive locally. We
11 support and encourage traditional industries such as forestry, agriculture, aquaculture, construction,
12 fishing and tourism without jeopardizing resource lands and the natural environment. We plan for and
13 provide services to tourists and part-time residents without impacting the availability of affordable
14 housing, essential services, and water resources for our year-round residents. We support and
15 encourage home occupations and cottage enterprises that are compatible with surrounding areas. We
16 encourage new ideas and new technology for improving the quality and profitability of our goods and
17 services. Advanced interactive communication systems support our economy.

18
19 **AGRICULTURE** The San Juan Islands have a rich agricultural heritage that remains culturally and
20 economically significant. We invest resources to ensure that agricultural lands are preserved and to
21 maintain and enhance agricultural viability. We encourage regenerative practices and recognize the
22 integral role that agriculture plays in the stewardship of our soils and water resources. Agricultural
23 activities are essential to the health and well-being of our community, contributing to the social, economic
24 and environmental fabric of our islands.

25
26 **FORESTS** The San Juan Islands have a rich forestry heritage that remains culturally and economically
27 significant. We invest resources to ensure that forest lands are preserved and to maintain and enhance
28 their viability. We encourage regenerative forest practices and recognize the integral role that forests play
29 in the stewardship of our soils and water resources. Forests are essential to the health and well-being of
30 our community, contributing to the social, economic and environmental fabric of our islands.

31
32 **LAND USE** Hamlets, villages, towns, and other activity centers are clearly defined to conserve rural,
33 agricultural, forest, mineral resource lands and critical areas. These areas define our heritage and sense
34 of place; providing for commerce and community activities without losing their small scale and attractive
35 island ambiance. The unique character of our shorelines is protected by encouraging uses that maintain
36 or enhance the health of the shoreline environment. Through innovative land use strategies, our citizens
37 and institutions balance and protect private property rights, public rights, and our natural environment.

38
39 **TRANSPORTATION** We have reliable, affordable, local, and regional water, land, and air transportation
40 systems commensurate with our island culture. On-island circulation is by means of a system of scenic
41 rural roads with automobile, bicycle and pedestrian ways functioning without conflict. In some places, the
42 roads are unpaved, narrow, and winding, and care is taken to maintain a rustic quality in public signs.
43 Transportation plans carefully consider cyclists, pedestrians, automobiles, public transportation, and rural
44 character. Expansion or new construction of basic public transportation facilities occurs only based on
45 demonstrated local public need.

46
47 **ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION** Our community nurtures the expression of its creative talents and
48 supports diverse cultural and entertainment activities. Our cultural facilities such as libraries, museums,
49 and theaters are focal points of activity and community support. Well-managed parks, trails, and shoreline
50 access, where appropriate, provide islanders with recreation with due regard for both the rights of private
51 property owners and the natural limitations of each site.

1 **HERITAGE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION** Our community is enriched by a strong sense of identity,
2 tradition, legacy, and continuity, where past and present freely mingle. We recognize the contributions to
3 our rural, agricultural, and maritime heritage made by indigenous peoples, explorers, and island pioneers.
4 We encourage preservation of our heritage, historic sites, structures, and traditions for the enjoyment of
5 all.

6
7 **OUR COMMITMENT: AS FORTUNATE CITIZENS OF THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS, WE COMMIT**
8 ourselves individually and communally to a future for ourselves and our children that reflects this vision.
9 To this end, we, the undersigned individuals dedicate our time and our talents.