

Adam Zack

From: joe symons <joesymons@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 5, 2018 12:50 PM
To: Comp Plan Update
Cc: fred klein; Natalie Menacho; Keara Axelrod; Sam Dillingham; Margie Doyle
Subject: Comments regarding Vision Statement for public hearing 11 June 2018

My comments refer to the vision statement information presented at

https://www.sanjuanco.com/DocumentCenter/View/15305/2018-05-30_DCD_Zack_CC_Memo_06-11-18_Mtg_Vision

and are directed to relevant parties prior to the joint PC/CC hearing on the Vision scheduled in Friday Harbor next Monday, June 11, at 9am.

I support the careful and hard work done by the Planning Commission to adjust the SJC Vision Statement. The adjustments reflect the importance of new topics and issues that either did not exist or were largely invisible 26 years ago in 1994 when the BOCC (former term for the CC) adopted the Vision Statement crafted by citizens committees.

The fundamental essence of the Vision has not changed. If anything, the new wording reinforces the concerns for protecting the natural environment and the local residents aspirations for a county to remain pretty much “as it is”.

This “as it is” language exists throughout the Vision Statement. As an example, from the Economy section: “which recognizes the rural, residential, quiet, agricultural, marine and isolated nature of the islands.”

The Vision statement is peppered with a word unknown to previous Visions: “proactive”.

The Vision Statement begins and ends with a commitment to creating/working for a future that reflects this vision.

I applaud these changes and urge Council to accept the Vision Statement via the resolution shown as Attachment D.

My concern is that the Vision, and it’s bookended commitments, will be largely ignored, marginalized and disregarded, as the previous Vision Statement has been. In adopting this Vision Statement modification, I urge the Council to “make it real” as the comp plan update process continues. Otherwise, the enormous work done by staff, citizens, Planning Commission and consultants will be rendered irrelevant. Should this happen, not only would this be a staggering waste of taxpayer funds, but demonstrate a continuation of the subordination of the aspirations of the citizens to the increasing pressures of market forces. This has, does, and will continue to feel like a betrayal of public process and trust. Council has the power to make the plan, which includes the UDC, conform to the Vision. Going forward toward completion of the update to the Comp Plan, I urge that Council not just rubber stamp the Planning Commission work, but honor the statement and its commitment “to a future for ourselves and our children that reflects this vision”. I would assume that by adopting this Vision, Council implicitly supports this commitment. I urge you to make a public statement to that effect, to concretize and confirm your own commitment, as citizens of the County, to the goals of the Vision.

The Vision serves as an opportunity to “change the rules of the game”, to show locals, visitors, other counties and the country that by thoughtful hard work, we can demonstrate that we do not have to follow the lemmings into the sea, allowing “the extraordinary environmental treasure” of these “rural islands” to go the way of all other small beautiful communities: to continue to be sold, gentrified and proceed unsustainably, to continue to privatize and monetize this exceptional marine archipelago.

Joni Mitchell captured the sense of loss in her 1970 song “Big Yellow Taxi”, the famous refrain of which is:

“don’t it always seem to go / you don’t know what you’ve got til it’s gone / they paved paradise / and put up a parking lot.”

Imagine the upside of moving the needle on this issue. It would restore faith in our democratic process, make the seemingly impossible possible, and truly achieve what both locals and visitors want.

I urge anyone reading this comment to put his/her oar in the water by contacting members of the Planning Commission or County Council to express their support for the Vision and its primacy.

Joe Symons, principal: Plan Ahead San Juans
Olga WA

KeepSanJuansWild.org

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carpe diem