

Memorandum

To: Linda Kuller, SJC Community Development
San Juan County Council
San Juan County Planning Commission

From: San Juan County Agricultural Resource Committee (ARC)

Date: March 17, 2020

Subject: Comments on 'Transportation Element' of Comprehensive Plan

Purpose

To provide comments adopted by the Agricultural Resources Committee on the 'Transportation Element' of the Comprehensive Plan

Advisory Committee

The Agricultural Resource Committee (ARC) is a Citizen Advisory Committee tasked with advising the County Council on issues affecting the Agricultural environment. The ARC is comprised of 15 voting seats, at least 50% of which must be farmers. ARC members act as listening posts throughout the islands and the ARC conducts formal and informal outreach throughout the year that informs the ARC's work.

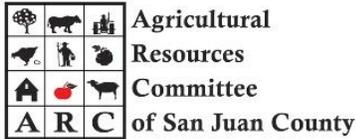
Transportation Element Recommendations

Ferries: Support safe and effective transport of livestock on ferries.

Continue support of WAC 468-300-700 that provides vehicles carrying livestock have discretionary "priority" boarding.

Why this change is important: As ferry traffic has increased the need for priority loading is needed to assure animal safety, especially on runs that do not allow reservations.

Farm Machinery and Equipment: Continue to allow unrestricted movement of Farm Equipment and Machinery on County roadways.



Why this change is important: In 2018 there were 2 documented instances of a deputy wrongfully pulling over tractors which were legally driving on county roads. The Sheriff intervened and confirmed the legal right for farm equipment to operate. This alerted the ARC to the need for these rights to be explicit.

Livestock: Continue support of SJCC 6.04.010 that allows unrestricted driving of 'stock along County roads in a reasonable and prudent manner,' while in charge of sufficient attendants.

Why this change is important: There is a practical need for the driving of stock on county roads. It is also a much beloved expression of our rural character.

Agricultural 'Share the Road Signs: Consider posting 'Share the Road' signs similar to those found in Skagit County that illustrate a tractor or perhaps a shepherd and sheep.

Why this change is important: With the increase in population and tourism our roads are busier. Investing in signage to educate about the possibility of farm equipment on the roadway, especially during hay season would improve safety and reinforce our commitment to rural character.

Roadside weed control: Support integrated control of noxious weeds along county roadways with environmentally friendly practices.

Why this change is important: Noxious weeds have a direct environmental and economic impact on agricultural lands. County roadways can be a vector of spread.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

On Behalf of the Agricultural Resource Committee

Steve Bernheim, ARC Chair

Faith Van De Putte, ARC Coordinator

