

Sophia Cassam

From: David Turnoy <davidgeri@rockisland.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 9, 2021 5:52 PM
To: Sophia Cassam
Subject: Fwd: Docket Request for Buildout Analysis

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From: "davidgeri" <davidgeri@rockisland.com>
To: "council" <council@sanjuanco.com>, "sophia" <sophia@sanjuanco.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 9, 2021 5:48:26 PM
Subject: Docket Request for Buildout Analysis

Dear County Council and Sophia,

A small group of people has been working for 30 years to preserve the quality of life we enjoy here in the San Juan Islands. Participants have come and gone, but the one constant throughout this whole period has been Joe Symons. Joe and a few others spent the 1990's working to try to get the county to bring the Comprehensive Plan (CP) into compliance with the Growth Management Act (GMA). Joe and friends eventually won in court, but nothing of substance was done to address the violations. (You can read about this at <http://www.doebay.net/appeal.html>.) Next Joe submitted a formal docket request to the Planning Commission (PC) in 2001 asking for a truth in planning document, basically a version of the Comprehensive Plan in layman's terms. The PC reviewed the request and unanimously voted that it should be done and be given the highest priority of county government. Unfortunately, this request was ignored by the County Council (CC), and there has been no further action taken in the last 20 years. Joe renewed his request in 2018 and 2019, but both applications were rejected by the CC. We now have a new council, and Joe is renewing his request once again including a request for a Build-Out Analysis (BOA).

If you have ever looked at the Vision Statement that is supposed to be the guide for the rest of the Comprehensive Plan, the following sentence encapsulates the vision well: "We...recognize that these rural islands are an extraordinary treasure of natural beauty and abundance, and that independence, privacy and personal freedom are values prized by islanders." The vision calls for all of us to be good stewards of our primarily rural environment. Unfortunately, the Vision Statement has never been operationalized into specific actions, rather, it sits on a shelf while the county continues to grow. Instead, the density map still on the books from 1980 has never been examined for consistency with the Vision Statement, and these regulations could easily lead to an eventual full-time population of 70,000 in the county; visitors would be in addition to that.

How many people can live in our county while still being true to the Vision Statement? We don't know, as a BOA has never been done. The BOA would include an impact analysis focused on themes from the official Vision Statement including the environment, transportation, housing, sense of community cohesiveness and the fiscal implications of new development on government services. [For every new residence bringing in \$1 in tax revenue, the county spends \$1.32; in other words, growth does not pay for itself.] And how about water? How many people can our available water resources support without expensive desalination and water hauling? Hopefully a water inventory will be done shortly, as Senator Lovelett sponsored and got approved funding for this in the state senate.

As of last year, our population was 17,340. Our population easily doubles in the summer. If build-out could reach 70,000, we are looking at possibly 140,000 people here in the summer. If we are to plan intelligently for the future, we need to know what our county will look like when the build-out population is reached, which is why we need a BOA completed. If the impacts found from the BOA violate our Vision Statement, we must change our regulations to honor the Vision Statement.

If you would like to look at Joe's docket request to read more detail about his BOA request, go to doebay.net/sunshine/Docketsubmission2021.pdf. Two other good links where you can explore the context of the big issues involved can be found at <http://www.doebay.net/appeal.html> and at doebay.net/bigpicture.pdf. In addition, <http://doebay.net/appeal/pathlessibook.pdf> is a site where you can find related essays.

I would like the county to do an analysis of how many people can live here without changing our quality of life. This may be called a build-out analysis, a carrying capacity analysis, or a truth in planning document. I encourage the Commissioners to ask the county council to direct county staff to undertake this study.

Thank you,
David Turnoy Orcas Island