

## Linda Ann Kuller

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**From:** joe symons <joesymons@me.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 6, 2017 5:07 PM  
**To:** DL - Council; Erika Shook; Lynda Guernsey; Comp Plan Update  
**Cc:** Stephanie Buffum; Kyle Loring  
**Subject:** Lack of knowledge and availability of Resort Communities Study done by SJC

Given the relatively recent history that each of you has as an official in San Juan County, you may not know that in 2000 the SJC planning department commissioned a study of San Juan County specifically to be compared with other island counties on the U.S. East Coast (Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and Block Island) as well as Aspen, CO.

The SJC planners presumed that the study would show that San Juan County (SJC) was not and would not be on the same economic, environmental and social demographic pathway as these "resort communities" had taken.

The SJC planners stated:

"Staff's expectation from this analysis was that the consultant might find some characteristic of the San Juan Islands that differentiated it from the situations in these communities that have transitioned to a dual market in which long-term residents and local workers are squeezed into narrower choices and disrupted lives. The report does not provide such hope for the San Juans. On the contrary, the similarities in size, scale, access, environment, and trends make us look very much like these communities as they were 20 to 30 years ago. The San Juans appear to be headed the direction of Aspen and Nantucket."

This study is neither mentioned anywhere on the SJC web site nor is the study made available there. The *only* place the study exists on line, easily known to and accessible by the public, is here:

<http://www.doebay.net/appeal/socioeconomicgrowth.pdf>

The report concluded:

"While there are a number of lessons which might be gleaned from this investigation, and indeed from a more detailed analysis of these communities and their growth issues and response, **the most telling would seem to be that the earlier the problems are confronted and consensus developed, the better.** That is, action in advance of a crisis will assure that more of the character and natural environment will be saved and that the controls to do this may be easier to install. (emphasis mine)

Other more specific control mechanisms that seem to be generally recognized include:

- 1.) Reduce the rate of development through a point-scored cap or another similar growth rate reduction system.
- 2.) Decrease the level of capacity at which buildout is reached.

3.) Create a vital, affordable housing market for long-term, permanent residents with perpetual deed restrictions; and do the same for seasonal workers.

4.) Diversify the economic base beyond tourism and construction using multiple strategies including marketing made-in-the-community products.

5.) Use the slower rate of growth to increase the rate of acquisition of key parcels, through the development and implementation of a unified greenspace/open space plan. Use this in conjunction with TDR's and infill mechanisms to focus growth away from the countryside and concentrate it within urban growth boundaries.

6.) Establish a peak carrying capacity for the area using both objective and subjective criteria.

There are a number of ways to accomplish these tasks. **What is important is that no matter how they are done, we believe they must be done if these types of communities are to remain vibrant and retain a significant amount of what made them desirable in the first place. The sooner they are done, the better.**" (emphasis mine)

17 years have passed, putting SJC very close to what those communities looked like then. Please read pages 2,3, and 4 to see details of their findings.

As SJC approaches the starting line on updating the CP, this study should be placed front and center on the county's web site in the "Update CP" section.

Further, the CC, PC and DCD should craft a vibrant and comprehensive public process to discuss the implications of this study prior to a simple perfunctory "update" to a CP that is already *significantly out of alignment* with the Vision Statement and with GMA goals.

I encourage you to take a proactive leadership position on this topic in order to offer the highest level of public service for which you were elected.

Joe Symons

Olga, WA

