

Adam Zack

From: joe symons <joesymons@me.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 17, 2018 2:57 PM
To: Comp Plan Update; Lynda Guernsey
Cc: Natalie Menacho
Subject: Additional comments regarding Vision Statement Amendments
Attachments: vision statment draft.pdf

The following comments are based on the Vision Statement Amendments Draft shown at

<https://www.sanjuanco.com/DocumentCenter/View/14382>

I have attached a copy of the Vision Statement Draft with highlights; please refer to this document in considering the following comments. I realize the Vision Draft is incomplete as I write. However the suggested revisions as well as the excellent public suggestions all point in the same direction. Thus I don't believe my comments are premature or irrelevant.

I am not requesting any specific change in the language of the Vision Statement Draft.

However, a review of the highlights clearly indicates that the entire document is focussed, correctly and appropriately, on the desires of the full time residents of the county. Words like "People of San Juan County", "islanders", "community", "careful stewards", "small scale", "demonstrated local public need" clearly point to the intention that the Vision is directed to and for full time residents. There are two other population groups that impact SJC: part time property owners and visitors. Page 3, line 26 of the Draft Vision Statement makes the only reference to visitors in the entire Vision Statement with the single word "tourism" in the context that the tourism and other traditional industries economy is encouraged "without jeopardizing the natural environment on which they depend."

It is important, therefore, to contextualize the Comprehensive Plan's obligation to the Vision Statement to ensure that the visitor population is managed to ensure compliance with Vision Statements such as:

"rural islands are an extraordinary treasure"

and an economy

"which recognizes the rural, residential, quiet, agricultural, marine and isolated nature of the islands."

and

"providing for commerce...without losing their small scale and attractive island ambiance"

This context would naturally lead to finding a way to manage the impact of visitors so the "tail" doesn't wag the dog. One logical way to begin a conversation about how to meet this obligation is to discuss a quota or limitation on the issuance of Transient Rental Permits in order to ensure that the Vision Statement is honored and not just window dressing on an economy increasingly dominated by market forces that run counter to the overall tone and meaning of the Vision Statement. Staff reports on the impact of visitors over the past few decades have consistently demonstrated that the county population doubles or more than doubles during the

summer season, which itself is stretching to include shoulder seasons. The impacts of visitors on community values such as described in the Vision Statement, as well as on hard and soft infrastructure (from water, sewer and transportation to emergency services and food), are significant and unrestrained by any existing policies in the CP or code in the UDC.

Failure to discuss, and then appropriately respond to, the impact of visitors (which often include part-time property owners who use their properties either for personal use or as an income source via platforms such as airbnb) emasculates the Vision and continues the transition of the county from what the residents, who are the voters, want to what the non-resident private sector wants.

It is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to begin a conversation on ensuring that the stated intention of the Vision Statement is not degraded, disrespected, marginalized or ignored by market forces. Otherwise the CP is a futile waste of PC, staff and resident time. There are endless examples of how other small communities have lost the qualities prized by locals. Let's insure this does not happen here.

With appreciation for the challenges you have in navigating these waters.

Joe Symons
Olga WA

PROPOSED VISION STATEMENT AMENDMENTS

1 PROPOSED VISION

2 **PREAMBLE:** WE THE **PEOPLE of San Juan County** recognize that these rural islands are an extraordinary
3 treasure of natural beauty and abundance, and that independence, privacy and personal freedom are
4 values prized by **islanders**. Being a diverse people bound together by these shared values, we declare
5 our commitment to work towards this vision of the San Juan Islands in 2020 A.D.

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

12 **BASIC HUMAN NEEDS** Our islands are places where all citizens can safely walk or play, day or night. The
13 drinking water supply is clean, and adequate, and conserved as a vital resource. Health care, elder care,
14 and help in time of need are accessible and affordable. ~~The supply of affordable housing is adequate to~~
15 ~~meet the needs of our diverse population.~~ Making a life here is possible for all people and is not limited
16 by access to basic human needs. (See page 6)

17 **EDUCATION** Learning is a continuing lifelong process ~~which~~ that is encouraged and aided by the
18 community. A partnership of families and community creates a supportive and challenging environment
19 founded on academic excellence and artistic expression. This educational environment produces ethical,
20 self-directed, compassionate, responsible world citizens, alive with the love of learning. (See page 7)

21 **ECONOMY** We support a pattern of economic growth and development which serves the needs of our
22 community, and which recognizes the rural, residential, quiet, agricultural, marine and isolated nature of
23 the islands. Our economy comprises a wide spectrum of stable, year-round activities that provide family
24 wage employment for islanders. The workforce is able to live, work, and thrive locally. We support and
25 encourage traditional industries including forestry, farming, aquaculture, construction, fishing and
26 tourism without jeopardizing the resources natural environment on which they depend. We have home
27 occupations and cottage ~~industries~~ enterprises that are compatible with surrounding
28 neighborhoods. We encourage new ideas and new technology for improving the quality and profitability
29 of our goods and services. Advanced interactive communication systems ~~are encouraged~~ support our
30 economy. Value-added activities are encouraged. Environmental conservation and sustainable
31 development are balanced. (See page 8)

32 **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT** Our islands have exceptional natural beauty and healthy diverse ecosystems
33 surrounded by pollution-free marine waters. The air is fresh and clean, the water quality is excellent,
34 and the soil is uncontaminated. As careful stewards of these islands, we conserve resources, protect our
35 shorelines and critical areas, preserve open space, and take appropriate action to assure healthy land
36 and marine environments. The natural environment is central to the ecological health, quality of life,
37 and the economy in the islands. Native plants and animals of the islands thrive, and are identified,
38 appreciated and conserved. (See page 10)

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PROPOSED VISION STATEMENT AMENDMENTS

1 **LAND USE** Neighborhoods, hamlets, villages and towns are clearly defined so as to conserve agricultural,
2 forest, mineral resource and environmentally sensitive lands critical areas. These areas define our
3 heritage and sense of place, provide providing for commerce and community activities without losing
4 their small scale and attractive island ambiance. ~~There is housing for people of all incomes.~~ The unique
5 character of our shorelines is protected by encouraging uses ~~which that~~ maintain or enhance the quality
6 of the shoreline environment. Through innovative land use strategies, our citizens and institutions
7 balance and protect private property rights, public rights, and our natural environment. (See page 11)

8 **TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION** We have water, land, and air transportation systems
9 commensurate with our island culture. On-island circulation is by means of a system of scenic rural
10 roads with automobile, bicycle and pedestrian ways functioning without conflict. In some places, the
11 roads are unpaved, narrow, and winding, and care is taken to maintain a rustic quality in public signs.
12 Transportation plans equally consider cyclists, pedestrians, automobiles, public transportation, and rural
13 character. Expansion or new construction of basic public transportation facilities occurs only on the basis
14 of based on demonstrated local public need. ~~Advanced interactive communication systems are~~
15 ~~encouraged~~. (See page 12)

16 **ENERGY AND RESOURCES** Our community fosters resource and energy conservation. Energy
17 independence is encouraged. Drinking water resources are managed to meet the needs of our
18 community and the natural environment. Recycling, solid waste, and sewage treatment are managed
19 both within the confines of each island and Countywide in an environmentally sound manner.
20 Renewable natural resources are used on a sustainable basis. Nonrenewable resources are conserved
21 wherever possible and practical. (See page 13)

22 **ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION** Our community nurtures the expression of its creative talents and
23 supports diverse cultural and entertainment activities. Our cultural facilities such as libraries, museums,
24 and theaters are focal points of activity and community support. Well-managed parks, trails, and
25 shoreline access, where appropriate, provide islanders with recreation with due regard for both the
26 rights of private property owners and the natural limitations of each site. (See page 14)

27 **HERITAGE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION** Our community is enriched by a strong sense of identity,
28 tradition, legacy, and continuity, where past and present freely mingle. We recognize the contributions
29 to our rural and maritime heritage made by indigenous peoples, explorers, and island pioneers, ~~and~~
30 ~~encourage the preservation of that heritage~~. We encourage preservation of historic sites, heritage,
31 structures, and traditions for the enjoyment of all. (See page 15)

32 **GOVERNANCE** We are self-governed by informed citizens. We are equally represented by elected
33 officials who conduct the activities of government in an ethical, fair, impartial, responsive and open
34 manner ~~which that~~ recognizes the independent, self-reliant nature of its citizens. Our government
35 institutions balance responsibility with resources and costs, consolidate services where practical,
36 manage prudently, provide reliable data, are service-oriented, and perform in a timely manner. (See
37 page 16)

38 **HOUSING** The supply of accessible and affordable housing is adequate to meet the needs of our diverse
39 population. There is housing for people of all incomes. There is sufficient variety in housing types to
40 accommodate diverse households. Raising a family, having a good quality of life, and economic
41 opportunities are not limited by access to housing. (See page 17)