

## Adam Zack

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**From:** Transition Lopez Island <info@transitionlopezisland.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 12:53 PM  
**To:** Comp Plan Update  
**Cc:** Dale Roundy; Steven Rubey  
**Subject:** Fwd: Comments on the Current Draft of the Vision Statement of the Comprehensive Plan  
**Attachments:** joint letter TLI-CRSJI on Comp Plan Vision Statement 2018.3.13.docx

Attached is a joint letter from Transition Lopez Island and Community Rights San Juan Islands with suggested changes to the current draft of the Vision Statement. Several of our members will be attending the Planning Commission meeting on Friday, March 16th to speak briefly about this letter during the Public Comments segment. In April, a larger group of us plan to attend the joint Public Hearing of the Planning Commission and the County Council to present our views directly.

Thanks for your attention,

Transition Lopez Island  
Community Rights San Juan Islands



# Community Rights San Juan Islands

March 14, 2018

San Juan County Council  
350 Court Street, No. 1  
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

Dear Council Members and Planning Commissioners,

We, Transition Lopez Island and Community Rights San Juan Islands, wish to jointly submit comments on the current draft of Vision Statement of the Comprehensive Plan.

Transition Lopez Island, established in 2012 as the 152<sup>nd</sup> Initiative in the U.S., is part of a worldwide movement that strives to thrive and build resilience in its communities in the face of climate and other changes. Our membership comprises almost 140 Lopez residents and 10 of us, among the undersigned, participate in the Steering Committee.

Community Rights San Juan Islands is a recently established group, comprising individuals from across San Juan County. We are part of a national community rights movement supported by Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, and we aspire to co-create a regional alliance to honor the rights of the Salish Sea.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide inputs into the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan. We have the following comments on the current draft of the Vision Statement being considered by the Planning Commission.

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## **A DECLARATION OF VISION AND COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE OF SAN JUAN COUNTY**

**PREAMBLE: WE THE PEOPLE** of San Juan County are a vibrant and diverse community that is connected, healthy, free-spirited, independent, sustainable and equitable. Compassionate residents and healthy natural environment under our careful stewardship are among our greatest assets. All our residents are able to achieve their full potential. ~~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.~~ Being a diverse people bound together by these shared values, we declare our commitment to work together towards this vision of the San Juan Islands ~~in 2020 A.D.~~

*RATIONALE: Preamble is the most important part of the vision statement. We would love to see one that inspires, unifies and uplifts. We understand that an immense amount of work and thoughts have been put into this, and the current outcome came out as result of much negotiation and deliberation. It however reads like a compromise in its current form. Vision statement is about what we aspire to become, to be the best we could be as a county and people.*

*While independence, privacy and freedom are important to us, there are other equally or more important values that we all hold dear about our island community that should be included in the preamble as well. We all want to be healthy, our society equitable, our way of life sustainable so that what we enjoy now can also be enjoyed by our children, grandchildren and beyond. We are not isolated individuals but rather are connected to each other and care deeply about our community, the well-being of our neighbors and fellow islanders. Checking in on each other, organizing meals, work parties or donations for the sick or afflicted are great examples of our compassionate island living.*

*On beauty: while we cherish the natural beauty in which we live, the current language, here and throughout the vision statement, is reminiscent of the way women used to be regarded (or still are by some): for their appearance. We are inter-connected with nature, our land, our sea and our forests in so many profound ways. Nature is not only valued for its beauty. It inspires in us reverence, peace and sense of wonder. It heals, nourishes and sustains us. Our well-being and the health of our natural world are inseparable. We thus believe that shifting away from the language of aesthetics toward the language of health is more reflective of our values on and relationship with our natural world here on the islands.*

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

*RATIONALE: There are many residents who are invested in the community, and contribute greatly to the healthy functioning and well-being of our community and economy despite not having U.S. citizenship. The word "citizens" throughout the document should therefore be replaced with "residents" to be more inclusive.*

*RATIONALE: The sense of community that we so cherish is the feeling that we have each other's back, that we take care of each other when someone is in a tough spot. Our sense of self-sufficiency can only be strengthened when we support each other in time of need (and hence "mutual support" instead of "community pride").*

**BASIC HUMAN NEEDS** Our islands are places where all residentscitizens can safely walk or play, day or night. The drinking water supply is clean, and adequate, and conserved as a vital resource. Health care, elder care, and help in time of need are accessible and affordable. The supply of affordable housing is adequate to- meet the needs of our diverse population. Making a life here is possible for all residentspeople and is not limited by lack of access to basic human needs.

*RATIONALE: There are many residents who are invested in the community, and contribute greatly to the healthy functioning and well-being of our community and economy despite not*

having U.S. citizenship. The word “citizens” throughout the document should therefore be replaced with “residents” to be more inclusive.

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

**RATIONALE:** *Our economy and well-being depend on the health of the Salish Sea, the thriving of orcas and other marine life, clean air, clean water, fertile soil and robust forests. While it is important to recognize the aesthetic aspects of the landscape and maintain the rural, quiet character of the islands, it is not enough. For our island community to thrive now and for generations to come, we must take responsibility to steward our natural world so it can sustain our economy. Tourism, related services and agriculture, the mainstays of our economy, all depend on healthy waters, shorelines and soil to flourish.*

**NATURAL ENVIRONMENT** Our islands have ~~exceptional natural beauty and~~ healthy diverse ecosystems ~~and exceptional natural beauty~~ surrounded by pollution-free marine waters. The air is fresh and clean, the water quality is excellent, and the soil is uncontaminated. As careful stewards of these islands, we conserve resources, protect ~~and restore~~ our shorelines and critical areas, preserve open space, and take appropriate action based on the best available science to assure healthy land and marine environments. The natural environment is central to the ecological health, quality of life, and the economy in the islands. Native plants and animals of the islands thrive, and are identified, appreciated and conserved.

**RATIONALE:** *We believe the health of the natural environment should come before its aesthetic value. Our perceived natural beauty of the islands and the sea comes from a deeper knowing that our natural environment is healthy and treated with respect and reverence.*

**LAND USE** Neighborhoods, hamlets, villages and towns are clearly defined so as to conserve agricultural, forest, mineral resource and critical areas. These areas define our heritage and sense of place; providing for commerce and community activities without losing their small scale and attractive island ambiance. The unique character of our shorelines is protected ~~by encouraging uses that maintain or to~~ enhance the quality of the shoreline environment. Through innovative land use strategies, our ~~citizens-residents~~ and

institutions balance and protect the rights of nature/living communities, private property rights, and public rights, ~~and our natural environment~~.

**RATIONALE:** *We feel strongly that the health of the land and the shoreline that borders it should be considered above its material use as a resource. Therefore, merely encouraging protective measures is not adequate and the language should be adjusted to state this categorically. Additionally, the natural environment has inherent rights which should be safeguarded and balanced against other private and public property rights.*

**TRANSPORTATION** We have water, land, and air transportation systems commensurate with our island culture. On-island circulation is by means of a system of ~~scenic~~ rural roads with automobile, bicycle and pedestrian ways functioning without conflict. Our town and village centers are compact, mixed-use and walkable. In some places, the roads are unpaved, narrow, and winding, and care is taken to maintain a rustic quality in public signs. Transportation plans equally consider cyclists, pedestrians, electric vehicles, automobiles, and public transportation, ~~and rural character~~. Expansion or new construction of basic public transportation and electric charging facilities occurs only on the basis of demonstrated local public need.

**RATIONALE:** *With transportation being the single largest contributor to greenhouse gases in San Juan County, how we move people and goods is extremely important to our future. The goal in creating and maintaining our system of rural roads is functionality, without emphasis on making them pretty or attractive to tourists. This practical approach is especially important in or near our towns and villages, where residents and tourists have the opportunity to get where they need to on foot or by bicycle, sharing the road with motorized vehicles. The use of public transportation and electric vehicles will become increasingly important as climate change accelerates.*

**ENERGY AND RESOURCES** Our community fosters resource and energy conservation. Energy independence is pursued through investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy. ~~encouraged.~~ Drinking water resources are managed to meet the needs of our community ~~and~~ future generations and the natural environment. Composting, Recycling, solid waste, and sewage treatment are managed both within the confines of each island and Countywide in an environmentally sound manner. Renewable natural resources are used on a sustainable basis. Nonrenewable resources are conserved and replaced by renewable alternatives ~~wherever possible and practical.~~

**RATIONALE:** *Given the current fragile state of our planet, this is one of the most critical sections of the Comprehensive Plan. Without reservation, we must commit as a county to pursuit of a transition to energy independence. Likewise, the maintenance of healthy and well-managed water resources and composting, solid waste, and sewage facilities and the widespread use of renewable resources are no longer merely green options, but imperative to ensure a viable future for those who come after us.*

**GOVERNANCE** We are self-governed by informed, caring residents~~citizens~~. We are equally represented by elected officials who conduct the activities of government in an ethical, fair, impartial, responsive, participatory and open manner that recognizes the compassionate, free-spirited, independent~~self-reliant~~ nature of its residents~~citizens~~. Our county borders the Province of British Columbia, including the Gulf Islands, and several Washington State counties. Our elected officials and government institutions communicate with and collaborate in our areas of mutual interest. Our government institutions balance responsibility with resources and costs, consolidate services where practical, manage prudently, provide reliable data, are service-oriented, and perform in a timely manner.

**RATIONALE:** *We, islanders, are not only independent and self-reliant, we also care deeply about our community and each other. Hence, the added “caring” and “compassionate”. The terms “independent” and “self-reliant” also seem very close in meaning, so we suggest replacing one with “free-spirited” which captures the sense of freedom we enjoy and value. On the manner in which the government conducts its activities, it is important that the process is participatory as well. After all, broad-based participation is a main underpinning of a well-functioning democratic governance.*

*There are many residents who are invested in the community, and contribute greatly to the healthy functioning and well-being of our community and economy despite not having U.S. citizenship. The word “citizens” throughout the document should therefore be replaced with “residents” to be more inclusive.*

**HOUSING** There is adequate, safe, affordable and stable housing so that our community thrives, and all our residents are given an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential, long-term economic success and a healthy quality of life. There are diverse housing types and innovative strategies to meet various housing needs of our community members with diverse socio-economic situations. The supply of affordable housing is adequate to meet the needs of our diverse population. There is housing for people of all incomes. There is sufficient variety in housing types. Raising a family, having a good quality of life, and economic opportunities are not limited by access to housing.

**RATIONALE:** *The current language can be tightened and strengthened by emphasizing the positive aspects of housing that we wish to see.*

**CLIMATE CHANGE** Our community of islands sets an example with its response to climate change. We proactively address the causes and effects of climate change~~such as sea level rise and drought~~. We make Preparations to mitigate ~~these~~ effects, such as sea level rise and drought are made in advance before they become crises. Our community encourages ~~voluntary~~ efforts to, enacting incentives and regulations to reduce our carbon footprint, and applies climate resiliency planning in all aspects of governance. We limit Greenhouse gas emissions~~are limited~~. All new development will be carbon neutral.

**RATIONALE:** *The statement is stronger when it is changed from a passive to an active form. On action we take to address climate change, it is inadequate to only focus on the effects. We need to add the “causes” as well. This is consistent with the sentences that follow, in which mitigation*

*efforts to address the causes of climate change are already mentioned. And carbon neutral development is an important part of this effort.*

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Thank you for your kind consideration. We are available to provide further clarification and respond to questions if needed. Our contact persons are Chom Greacen (email: [chomsgreacen@gmail.com](mailto:chomsgreacen@gmail.com), tel. 468-3189) and Kai Sanburn (email: [kaisanburn@gmail.com](mailto:kaisanburn@gmail.com), tel. 468-4400).

Yours sincerely,

**Transition Lopez Island Steering Committee  
Community Rights San Juan Islands**

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