

Adam Zack

From: Jay Kimball <jay@mountaincedar.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 19, 2018 7:30 PM
To: Comp Plan Update
Cc: Foster Hildreth; Vincent Dauciunas; BrianLSilverstein
Subject: OPALCO updates to recent county comp plan vision statement
Attachments: OPALCO - Comp Plan Vision Statement Recommendations.pdf

Please see the attached PDF with recommended changes to the recent county update to the comp plan Vision Statement.

Thank you,

Jay Kimball, Vince Dauciunas, Brian Silverstein, for OPALCO

OPALCO Commentary on San Juan County Comp Plan updated Vision Statement

18 April 2018

Vision, Values and Priorities

Background Narrative

The Comp Plan has the power to transform San Juan County into a model community that values and empowers its citizens, now, and for future generations. For all of us - rich and poor, young and old, growing up, working and retired.

From an energy perspective, OPALCO's goal is to ensure reliable, secure, ample, affordable, and environmentally sound energy. OPALCO will source as much of its energy as possible from energy resources that are low carbon, renewable and, increasingly, local.

Over the past few decades, growth of the county has significantly changed the Island community and our way of life. On a finite planet, in our finite archipelago, our growth is, of course, finite.

While growth may be finite, there are things we can grow that are beyond traditional economic metrics. Like a garden, we can grow energy independence, abundance and resilience by planting the seeds for local renewable energy. We can grow clean air and water. We can grow affordable housing. We can grow more efficient homes and businesses. We can grow good jobs that pay more than just a living wage.

Our rural economy has been driven largely by tourism. As we transition to modern internet communication services, we see new opportunities for jobs beyond that legacy tourist sector. Clean tech jobs, telecommuting workers from nearby Seattle, and further south, all the way to California.

Climate change will cause a reshuffling of where people want to and can afford to live. The Southwest will become increasingly parched, driving those who are looking for a more affordable, climate friendly place to settle. This will further challenge our housing market. The Comp Plan can inspire and incentivize ways to optimize our town centers to avoid traffic congestion, increase walking and biking, maintain and celebrate our natural beauty, reduce carbon footprint.

Our population, which is about 15 years older than the WA state average, will benefit from improvements in our communications infrastructure, setting the stage for rapid improvements in telemedicine, and deepening connection with metropolitan healthcare centers.

A low-carbon economy is an interconnected economy, where energy, water, transportation, housing, and environment work as a cohesive whole, building on the synergy that springs from efficient alignment of these Comp Plan elements. For example, looking over some of the Comp Plan material below from other municipalities, we see how:

- Climate changing sea-level rise shifts how a county thinks about shoreline development
- Seashores that will be lost to sea level rise become designated as parks, freed of roads, with walking and bike paths
- An increase in electric mass transit buses and vans reduce the need for parking in town centers
- The transition to electric vehicles leads to increased deployment of charging infrastructure
- Town plans favor easy access central parking for cleaner vehicles, with fossil fuel vehicle parking on the outskirts of town centers
- Affordable housing clusters embrace all forms of energy efficiency, including heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and EV charger equipped parking, as well as EV Zip cars
- Self-healing micro-grid systems located near town centers help maintain critical community services in the presence of extended outages

For inspiration, vision and goals, the county need look no further than Washington state, who, along with California and New York, co-chair the U.S. Climate Alliance, a bipartisan coalition of states and unincorporated self-governing territories in the United States that are committed to upholding the objectives of the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change within their borders, by achieving the U.S. goal of reducing greenhouse gas (carbon dioxide equivalent) economy-wide emissions 26–28% from 2005 levels by 2025 and meeting or exceeding the targets of the federal Clean Power Plan.

San Juan County can meet and even exceed those benchmarks, with our very clean energy, powering very clean heating and transportation, which consume over 90% of county energy and produce over 70% of county carbon footprint.

Collectively, the 14 members of the U.S. Climate Alliance represent more than 33% of the US population, over \$7 Trillion of U.S. GDP, with about 1.3 million energy efficiency and renewable energy related jobs.

Alliance members strategic goals include growing clean energy economies and creating new jobs, while reducing air pollution, improving public health, and building more resilient communities.

All of those goals are pertinent to our county.

Washington state is also a member of the Pacific Coast Collaborative, With a combined population of 54 million and a GDP of \$3 trillion, Alaska, British Columbia, California, Oregon and Washington are poised to emerge as a mega-region and global economic powerhouse driven by innovation, energy, geographic location and sustainable resource management, attracting new jobs and investment while enhancing an already unparalleled quality of life.

The Pacific Coast Collaborative is a formal basis for cooperative action, a forum for leadership and information sharing, and a common voice on issues facing Pacific North America. Recent actions are aimed at combating ocean acidification and changing ocean conditions as an immediate and critical threat to coastal economies and ecosystems.

Strategic imperatives include: **Managing regional growth** – An estimated 14.6 million new residents in the next twenty years will bring population pressures to Pacific North America, including urban sprawl and congestion. Smart land use choices, water policies and transportation planning will be needed to maintain the quality of life and distinctiveness of our communities. **Addressing impacts of climate change** – Shifting precipitation patterns, accelerated sea level rise and severe weather events will threaten property and infrastructure leading to higher economic and social costs from north to south.

Again, all of this is pertinent to our county.

Climate Change Impact on Food Production

Food production in much of the US (and the world), will be negatively impacted by climate trends - extreme weather, extended droughts, extreme rainfall, temperature extremes, ocean acidification. This translates into economic stress, reduced food production, all unfolding in the presence of population growth. This will likely drive climate refugee movement from areas of maximum climate stress to areas of lesser impact. As discussed in the population section below, the Northwest may be an area of lesser impact, attracting climate refugees from the southwest and beyond. This may put pressure on our ability to import sufficient food and on local food production capabilities, resulting in food price inflation and food shortages. Developing a more robust local food production capacity is important. Exploring ways to increase an abundance of land and sea food sources in our county is essential.

Comprehensive Goals and Strategies

Make San Juan County more resilient, diverse, balanced, stable, and self-sufficient community, preserving the Island's unique natural, rural character and creating a better future for islanders and the Islands themselves.

Manage county development in ways that are sustainable and within the carrying capacities of our natural resources and community.

Stimulate a vital, balanced, local economy that is more self-reliant and more diverse.

Produce as much of our essentials, such as food and energy, as we can, and convert our waste into useful products.

Address climate change by reducing use of fossil fuels, harnessing renewable energy sources, and adapting to anticipated impacts on the Vineyard.

Sustain our year-round community by addressing housing affordability and the high cost of living.

Direct development to town and village areas and limit building in environmentally sensitive areas.

Encourage compact, mixed-use, walkable town and village centers.

Prepare for climate change - Assess the vulnerability of the county to the diverse impacts related to climate change and plan accordingly to conserve human and natural resources.

Identify lands and infrastructure most at risk to sea level rise - A Climate Action Plan should be prepared that identifies lands at greatest risk from sea-level rise, based on considerations such as previous shoreline change, topography, and a likely range of sea-level change. It should identify areas likely to become underwater, wetlands, or subject to storm surges. This Plan should identify the measures that the County should use to adapt to and/or mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Limit construction in areas at greatest risk and adopt measures to limit impacts. Construction – or reconstruction after storm damage – of buildings or infrastructure should be prohibited in the most highly susceptible areas, including areas which would prevent wetlands from migrating inland so they can continue to play their essential ecological/ environmental roles. Buildings that are damaged in storm surges may contribute significant impacts as toxins, debris and septage enter ponds and bays, affecting water quality, shellfish, and public use of these resources. Building codes should be updated to ensure higher elevations and distance from shorelines as protection from storms and flooding.

Preserve lands that are susceptible to climate change impacts as open space. Acquire lands in areas identified as highly susceptible to flooding (but not soon to be lost to erosion) – especially if they are ecologically important or serve some other open space purpose. Federal pre-disaster mitigation funds may be used acquire land to undeveloped properties that cannot be mitigated.

Carry out pre-disaster mitigation to reduce impacts from climate change, storms and flooding. For example, more aggressive fire-wise strategies such as removal of fuels and their replacement with native vegetation would help deal with the anticipated increased summer fire hazard. Floodplain regulations should be updated to address storms and coastal flooding.

Transition to a more diverse and balanced year-round economy that enables those who grow up here to stay or return, helps year-round residents lead productive lives, and fortifies the seasonal aspects of the economy.

Strengthen and balance the economy, to support local ownership, reduce dependence on imports, increasing local resilience, and to increase year-round jobs with living wages.

Encourage and develop opportunities for low-impact, home-based businesses.

Recommended Language

ATTACHMENT B. PLANNING COMMISSION'S MARCH 16 PROPOSED VISION AMENDMENTS WITHOUT STRIKEOUT/UNDERLINE FORMAT

Additional suggestions from OPALCO in ~~Strikeout/Underline~~

PREAMBLE: WE THE PEOPLE of San Juan County value our healthy natural environment, vibrant and diverse community, self-sufficiency, interdependence, privacy and personal freedom. These rural islands are an extraordinary environmental treasure: as a community bound together by these shared values, we declare our commitment to work towards this vision of the San Juan 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 people 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 community pride that has long been a part of our island character.

BASIC HUMAN NEEDS Our islands are places people are safe, day and night. The drinking water supply is clean, adequate, and conserved as a vital resource. Health care, elder and child care, and help in time of need are accessible and affordable. Making a life here is not limited by lack of access to basic human needs.

EDUCATION Learning is a continuing lifelong process that is encouraged and aided by the community. A partnership of families and community creates a supportive and challenging environment founded on academic excellence, artistic expression, and availability of a wide range of educational opportunities. This educational environment produces ethical, environmentally conscious, self-directed, compassionate, and responsible world citizens, alive with the love of learning.

ECONOMY We support a diverse, resilient, and sustainable economy while respecting the natural world on which we and our economy depends. This economy serves the needs of our community, and reflects 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 living or family wages, allowing islanders to live, work, and thrive locally. We support and encourage traditional industries such as forestry, agriculture, aquaculture, construction, fishing and tourism without jeopardizing the natural environment. We support and encourage home occupations and cottage enterprises that are compatible with surrounding areas. We encourage new ideas and new technology for improving the quality and profitability of our goods and services. Advanced interactive communication systems accessible to all are developed to support our economy and community.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT Our islands have exceptional natural beauty and healthy diverse ecosystems 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 our shorelines and critical areas, preserve open space, and take appropriate action 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.

LAND USE Hamlets, villages, towns, and other activity centers are clearly defined to conserve rural, agricultural, forest, mineral resource lands 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 enhance the health of the shoreline environment. Through innovative land use strategies, our citizens and institutions balance and protect private property rights, public rights, and our natural environment.

TRANSPORTATION We have reliable, affordable, local, and regional 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. In some places, the roads are unpaved, narrow, and winding, and care is taken to maintain a rustic quality in public signs. Transportation plans carefully consider cyclists, pedestrians, automobiles, public transportation, the electrification of transportation, and rural character. Expansion or new construction of basic public transportation facilities occurs only based on demonstrated local public need and with an objective of reducing our carbon footprint.

ENERGY AND RESOURCES Our community fosters resource and energy conservation sustainability, independence and resilience with a focus on reducing our carbon footprint. Energy independence is encouraged. Water, soil, and local food production resources are

proactively managed to meet the needs of our community and future generations. Reducing, reusing and recycling solid waste, and sewage treatment are managed in an environmentally sound manner. We use renewable, energy, materials, and natural resources on a sustainable basis. Nonrenewable resources are conserved ~~wherever possible and practical.~~ and replaced by renewable resources whenever practical.

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

HERITAGE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION Our community is enriched by a strong sense of identity, tradition, legacy, and continuity, where past and present freely mingle. We recognize the contributions to our rural and maritime heritage made by indigenous peoples, explorers, and island pioneers. We encourage preservation of our heritage, historic sites, structures, and traditions for the enjoyment of all.

GOVERNANCE We are self-governed by informed citizens. We are equally represented by elected officials who conduct the activities of government in an ethical, fair, impartial, responsive and open manner that recognizes the independent, self-reliant nature of its 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.

HOUSING There is adequate, safe, affordable and stable housing so that our community thrives. There are diverse housing types and we use innovative strategies to meet the various housing needs of our community members. New homes will incorporate contemporary best practices and building standards in efficiency and conservation of energy, water and waste resources.

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. Preparations to mitigate these effects are made in advance before they become crises. Our community encourages voluntary efforts and enacts incentives and regulations if necessary to reduce our carbon footprint. Carbon neutrality is our goal. ~~Greenhouse gas emissions are limited.~~

OUR COMMITMENT: AS FORTUNATE CITIZENS OF THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS, WE COMMIT ourselves individually and communally to a future for ourselves and our children that reflects this vision. To this end, we, the undersigned individuals dedicate our time and our talents.