email to SJC agencies re population growth potential and maps:

At the SJC/DCD Orcas Island Comprehensive Plan workshop held at the Eastsound Fire Station last Wednesday (Oct 12, 2018), I showed a map (see: http://doebay.net/sunshine/DensityCalculations36x3610Kjs.pdf) to Pete Moe. He requested that the map be made available to the Planning Commission (PC).

The map shows the development potential at buildout for ***rural*** parcels in San Juan County. A more detailed map for just Orcas Island can be found at http://doebay.net/sunshine/OrcasAdditionalDevelopmentpotential.pdf

BACKGROUND:

Dean Dougherty, San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT) GIS guru, has at my request reviewed all rural lands parcels in SJC. He has adjusted their development potential to exclude all conservation easements (Land Bank and SJPT) and any Exempt parcels such as parks, roads, public lands, etc.

He has created maps to show the extent of development potential.

The maps show San Juan County as well as detailed map info for Orcas Island. (see links above)

According to Dean's arc-view stats feature of the SJC parcels database, there are 8035 rural lands parcels that meet the criteria of being available for development, based on an assessor assigned building value of $10,000 or less for that parcel. This would mean that any structures (a pump house, a barn, etc.) would render the parcel as having development potential if they are valued at less than $10k. It implies that there are no livable structures worth less than 10k or, conversely, that if the parcel's building value exceeds $10k, it has a habitable structure on it and therefore has no further development potential.

Personally I feel that 10k is way too low a number. I know 2 parcels in my neighborhood that are being lived in, although the structures are worth next to nothing (less than $20k according to the assessor) that, were the owner to sell, the new owner would have to either be a survivalist (no power, no running water, no bathrooms), rehab extensively, or scrape. I believe that a more realistic value for an "undeveloped" lot would be $50,000. There are no "real" houses for sale in SJC that have a building value <$50,000.

At the Wednesday workshop, Erika Shook, Department of Community Development (DCD) head, told me that DCD is revising its threshold—for whether a parcel has development potential or not based on the assesor's assignment of building value—upward from $10,000 to a building value of $42,000. The impact of this redefinition is to increase the number of developable parcels. The referenced maps do NOT show this change: they were created in July 2018 and are based on the $10,000 building value threshold; consequently the maps under-represent the buildout potential.

The SJC database is incomplete, so accurate estimates of the additional development potential created by this redefinition are unavailable. Of the ~1000 parcels that fall in the $10k to $42k range, (comprising about 5600 acres), the calculated subdivision potential is 1120 new parcels. Greater accuracy and granularity is needed, although to a first approximation this number is likely to be close.

Assuming his modification of the parcel data is correct (Dean gave me the 17,201 parcel database which he obtained from the GIS area of the SJC web site), then about 9150 (8035 plus 1120) **rural** parcels (assuming a parcel is undeveloped if the structures on it are worth less than $42k) would be available for development at buildout using the current density map. At 2 people/house, the long-standing SJC average, that would be ~18,300 more people IN RURAL AREAS ONLY. The county's total population today is about 16,000.

No careful development potential at buildout has been done for activity centers. There is huge development potential here, so much so that one wonders if the data could possibly be right.

Of course, these are hypothetical, but nevertheless legally possible, buildout numbers for rural lands. These numbers do not include the population impact of visitors.

Parcels that are already developed (ie have structures who's assessed value >$10,000) or are exempt, like parks, are, in the county map, shown in a light green/yellow (such as Moran State Park). On the Orcas map, already developed parcels are in a light bluish purple. (use Moran State Park as a clue). The maps are drawn to a scale allowing for printing up to 36"x48"; the

reader can zoom in to a very fine level without losing resolution. If the county has a printer or plotter with large format capability, copies can be made. A large format copy of the all-county map is currently on display in the Orcas Island Library.

I am sending these out for your review, analysis and *comment*. Visually they show the scale and scope (the where) of what remains to be developed in/on rural lands. Obviously there is nothing here about water availability or rural lands density considerations ("rural character") or other factors and considerations (like tax implications).

SUMMARY:

The total additional ***rural*** development potential (parcels at 2 people/parcel) for SJC at buildout is the current population (16k) plus an estimated population based on the legally potential rural parcel development (~18k) or ~34,000 people.

Data anomalies prevent more than a first approximation estimate of ***activity center buildout*** population. Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA) mandates that activity center population "availability" must be 50% of development potential. Currently (given the activity center parcel buildout potential from the database), all SJC activity centers consume ~17,400 acres and contain 3144 parcels. The **development potential** of these parcels is over 45,000 (equivalent to a population potential of 90,000). The numbers here are so large as to question their accuracy. Even if this potential were cut by 50%, that would be a population increase of 45,000 (for activity centers) over the current estimated size of activity center population. Assuming that half of the 3144 existing activity center parcels are residential and are occupied with 2 people (this assumption assumes that 50% of parcels in activity centers have commercial use), the total buildout population of activity centers would be 3144 plus 50% of 90k (45k) or ~48k.

Thus the total estimated full time population at buildout using the current density map would be activity center (48k) plus rural lands (34k) or ~82,000.

The visitor population has traditionally been equal to the full time residential population (ie., total population is doubled), so the estimated visitor population for several months of the summer would be 82,000 resulting in a full time summer population at buildout of over 160,000.

CONCLUSION:

While there is some data uncertainty, the implications of this growth potential are of such magnitude that sufficient resources should be allocated to calibrate and confirm at least a first order approximation of this county-wide development potential.

Once calibrated, the full **impact** of this growth potential should be assessed, as requested in the docket request that I submitted for a thorough buildout/impact analysis currently before the PC.

This analysis, once performed, should be reconciled with GMA, with our Vision statement, with our resource limitations (hard resources like water, soft resources like silence and community cohesion), and with our intention to be sustainable.

While I don't mind doing the work as shown here, I do not represent myself as a planner or data analyst. This work is of such importance that it should be done by professionals qualified to do it. The process of analysis should be made entirely transparent with all assumptions described and justified.

Assuming a common and agreed upon analysis, steps to accept it as is (i.e., under current regulations, the market is the driving force) or to develop a regulatory framework to modify the development potential to conform to public concerns (i.e, a real plan-driven future) should be discussed and approved by the citizens of the county.

Joe Symons
Olga WA
KeepSanJuansWild.org

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