

To: Every resident of San Juan County concerned about the future of the county

From: Joe Symons, Olga WA

Re: 2019 Request for Amendment to the SJC Comprehensive Plan

You likely know that SJC is updating the Comprehensive Plan (CP) as required by the Growth Management Act.

There is very little easily digestible information about what the CP says and most importantly virtually nothing about what the CP *means*; the look, feel and sense of our future is unknown and *should be known* before we simply "update" the current CP.

I am re-submitting a request for a "truth in planning" document to be part of the CP. I originally made this formal request (as provided by law to any resident in the county) in 2001. I made another request in 2018.

In 2001 the Planning Commission unanimously voted that the "truth in planning" document be created and be given "the highest priority of county government". Links to these documents are in the text of the request attached to this letter.

In 2001 the Council ignored the recommendation.

In 2018 the Council again ignored the recommendation.

You can read the text of the 2019 application (identical to the 2018 application), attached to this letter, and determine if YOU are willing to be a co-applicant to this request.

There is no cost or obligation to you if you choose to be a co-applicant.

The purpose of gathering co-applicants is to send a message to the Planning Commission and the County Council that we want to know what our future is likely to be before we simply "update" the current CP. The more residents who choose to be co-applicants, the stronger the message.

The simple one page "co-applicant" form is attached at the end of this document

Steps to take:

1. Print the co-applicant form.
2. Fill in the information and sign it. (30 seconds)
3. Get it to me via any of the following methods: mail, scan and email, photo and email, drop off at library, or deliver it to me or any member of the PASJ steering committee. Do NOT send it to SJC. I need to include it in the formal request.

This document including cover letter (what you read here), the text of the amendment request, and the co-applicant form is available at

doebay.net/sunshine/docketapplication.pdf

email your signed co-applicant form to : joesymons@me.com

Deadline for your submission to Joe is Sunday 17 February 2019 at 5pm

NOTE: many residents agreed in 2018 to be co-applicants. Those people have been notified of this new re-submission. If you were a co-applicant in 2018 and have already contacted me that you wish to re-up for 2019, you do not need to submit a co-application form.

Information on the background, current status and future of the San Juans as determined by the CP is available at

KeepSanJuansWild.org

Text of the formal Amendment Request to the SJC Planning Commission. Note. This amendment request has not yet been sent. The information below is to assist you in deciding if you wish to be a co-applicant to this formal request. The format shown is precisely that of the required Planning Commission application.

Please Describe the Proposed Amendments (attach additional pages if you need more space):

1. Comprehensive Plan – Describe proposed amendment and/or attach proposed text changes. List Comprehensive plan section, page numbers, title and policies proposed for amendment.

Background: In 2001 I submitted a formal request to the Planning Commission via the annual Docket process. The request did not ask for a specific change in the SJC Comprehensive Plan (CP). Rather, the request asked for a thorough and comprehensive explanation of the CP in layman's terms. This could be described as a "truth in planning" document. The formal request, conforming to the docket format at the time, is available at <http://www.doebay.net/forthcoming.html> (and is attached as Exhibit B). The PC reviewed the request and unanimously voted that it should be done and be given the highest priority of county government. The PC finding is available at <http://www.doebay.net/SJC PC findings Oct 2001.pdf> (and is attached as Exhibit C). The BOCC (former term for the County Council) ignored the PC recommendation. Subsequent to this request, no action has been taken by DCD, PC or CC to re-explore, consider, implement or otherwise achieve the intent of this request.

Given that there have been significant changes experienced by SJC in the past 18 years since the request was made, I re-submit a request for a comprehensive "truth in planning" document specifically geared to communicate in language understood by residents not formally trained in law or land use planning. The current request builds upon but is not limited to the previous request. The current request explicitly requests a "Build Out Analysis" in which the fiscal, community, environmental and experience of living in the san juan islands be described, with a variety of easily understood maps, charts, graphics, photographs, spreadsheets, narratives, etc. at the point where the existing density map would no longer permit additional construction in any and all locations

within the county absent upzoning. That is, the "Build Out Analysis" would not be limited to the 20 year planning horizon but would run forward to illuminate what the full set of impacts are likely to be when all development potential currently on the books (i.e., the current density map) is exhausted.

A "truth in planning" analysis is a layman-friendly term for a Build Out Analysis (BOA). BOA's do not involve rocket science. An excellent article reviewing what a BOA is can be found at

<http://conservationtools.org/guides/42-build-out-analysis>

San Juan County has a sophisticated GIS system and highly professional staff that can perform this task.

Supportive material for this request includes the 2004 Cost of Community Services study, funded by SJC and the Friends of the San Juans (at:

<http://www.doebay.net/appeal/COCS%20Report%20Exec%20Sum%20%205%2018%2004.pdf>). This

document demonstrates the tax implications for new residential development.

In addition, in 2000 SJC funded a "Study of Socioeconomic Impacts of Growth Pressure in Selected Seasonal/Resort Communities. "

(located at <http://www.doebay.net/appeal/socioeconomicgrowth.pdf>). This has been identified as the "Nantucket" study. It's conclusion is stark: SJC is not an exception to the transformation of beautiful small rural communities into havens for the wealthy, but is simply about 20 years behind. We are now almost 20 years further down the road than when the study was authored. It should be noted that neither of these documents, paid for by SJC, is either mentioned or available on the SJC website.

These supportive materials reinforce the need for a transparent, comprehensive, easily understood "truth in planning" document that explicitly and accurately describes the likely conditions at buildout using best available technologies and communication channels and methods.

Specifically, the Introduction to the CP (page 1) at

<http://www.sanjuanco.com/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1052> states " The Vision Statement (Table 1) is the foundation upon which the entire Comprehensive Plan is based"

(please read all of page 1 for additional context). The "truth in planning" document requested would explicitly demonstrate precisely how the goals, policies and UDC regulations fulfill (or fail to fulfill) the SJC certified Vision Statement. Options for how to bring the CP into compliance with the Vision Statement would be offered as part of this 'truth in planning' document. In addition, my request specifically asks that any future CP policy or UDC changes would have to demonstrate that they meet criteria established to ensure that the Vision Statement and GMA goals are explicitly referenced and reviewed for compliance and not diluted, ignored, bypassed or marginalized.

3. Why is the amendment being proposed?

The current SJC CP fails to communicate the full extent of the development potential inherent in the density map created in 1979. The BOCC "opted in" to create the current CP under GMA in 1992 and established citizen committees in each District to craft a new CP; however, the BOCC prohibited committee discussion of the 1979 density designations. Petitioners challenged the CP before the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board over a several year period from 1999-2007; in almost all cases, SJC lost. Under duress, SJC made modifications to the density map in order to remove the burden of non-compliance under GMA. The resulting changes, however, have never been articulated in any easy-to-understand summary document. The explosive growth of second homes and tourist accommodations since 1999 shows no sign of deceleration. A first-approximation estimate of the buildout potential under the existing density regulations suggests a buildout population in excess of 70,000 for SJC; this population estimate does not include the impact of visitors. By reference the current estimated population of SJC in 2019 is ~16,000.

Consequently it is imperative that the residents of SJC have a comprehensive and thorough portrait of what their future is likely to be. This portrait needs to be compared with the resident-chosen Vision and all deficiencies explicitly documented.

4. How is the proposed amendment consistent with the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A), Comprehensive Plan and development regulations?

GMA requires that a county's CP be internally consistent. SJC has an obligation to ensure that rural lands in the county are not characterized by sprawl, generally defined as average rural lands densities less than 1 dwelling unit/5 acres. Of the 17000 legal tax parcels in SJC in 2019, 8500 are non-conforming in rural land designations, creating an estimated rural lands buildout density of 1 du/3 acres. By GMA standards, this is sprawl. Current SJC rural lands densities are approximately 1 du/4 acres.

Separately, SJC has an obligation to ensure that there is consistency between the vision statement, describing a small rural county not wanting to change much, and its development potential. A truth in planning document as requested would explicitly illuminate these and other discrepancies and provide a solid fact-based platform for public conversation.

Does this proposal increase population or employment capacity? **No.**

To:
DCD / SJC
PO Box 947
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

From (print name):

Date:

Re: Comprehensive Plan Text/SJC Code Amendment Request

I wish to add my name as a co-applicant to the "Truth in Planning" Comp Plan Amendment Docket Request submitted by Joe Symons pursuant to <http://www.sanjuanco.com/civicalerts.aspx?AID=412>.

Signed:

contact info:

address:

phone:

email: