

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

PREAMBLE

WE THE PEOPLE of San Juan County 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 towards this vision of the San Juan Islands in 2020 A.D.

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 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 where all citizens can safely walk or play, day or night. The drinking water supply is clean and adequate. Health 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.

EDUCATION

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

ECONOMY

We support a pattern of economic growth and development which serves the needs of our community, and 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 employment for islanders. We support and encourage traditional industries including forestry, farming, aquaculture, construction, fishing and tourism without jeopardizing the resources on which they depend. We have home occupations and cottage industries which are compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. We encourage new ideas and new technology for improving the quality and profitability of our goods and services. Value-added activities are encouraged. Environmental conservation and sustainable development are balanced.

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, preserve open space, and take appropriate action to assure healthy land and marine environments. Native plants and animals of the islands thrive, and are identified, appreciated and conserved.

LAND USE

Neighborhoods, hamlets, villages and towns are clearly defined so as to conserve agricultural, forest, mineral resource and environmentally sensitive lands. These areas provide for commerce and community activities without losing their small scale and attractive island ambiance. There is housing for people of all incomes. The unique character of our shorelines is protected by encouraging uses which maintain or enhance the quality 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 AND COMMUNICATION

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. In some places, the roads are unpaved, narrow, and winding, and care is taken to maintain a rustic quality in public signs. Expansion or new construction of basic public transportation facilities occurs only on the basis of demonstrated local public need. Advanced interactive communication systems are encouraged.

ENERGY AND RESOURCES

Our community fosters resource and energy conservation. Energy independence is encouraged. Recycling, solid waste, and sewage treatment are managed within the confines of each island in an environmentally sound manner. Renewable natural resources are used on a sustainable basis. Nonrenewable resources are conserved wherever possible and 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, and encourage the preservation of that heritage. We encourage preservation of 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 which recognizes the independent, self-reliant nature of its citizens. 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.

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.