



## SAN JUAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

135 Rhone Street, PO Box 947, Friday Harbor, WA 98250  
(360) 378-2354 | (360) 378-2116  
dcd@sanjuanco.com | www.sanjuanco.com

### MEMO

**MEMO DATE:** February 5, 2020

**TO:** San Juan County Planning Commission

**CC:** Erika Shook, AICP, DCD Director  
Linda Kuller, AICP, DCD Deputy Director  
Victoria Compton, Economic Development Council Executive Director

**FROM:** Sophia Cassam, DCD Planner I

**SUBJECT:** 2036 Comprehensive Plan Update  
Economic Development Element

**BRIEFINGS:** February 21, 2020

**ATTACHMENTS:** A. Economic Development Element With Proposed Additions, Excerpts of p. 3 and 7  
B. Email Comment from Bill Appel

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**Purpose:** Transmittal of a public comment from Mr. Bill Appel, including suggested additions to the Economic Development Element (EDE). We will discuss the suggestions at the February 21, 2020 Planning Commission meeting.

**Background:** Bill Appel provided the following statement in a January 21, 2020 email as context for his submittal:

"These points relate to the preface of the EDE that states that ultimately, the county economy depends upon its natural assets, which to assure a healthy economy over time, must not be depleted. While increases in intensity may improve the economy in the short run, they endanger its collapse in the long run. This is supported by references in the body and footnotes already in the EDE. So the point is already made sub silentio, but I thought that somehow, somewhere, it should be clearly stated. Otherwise, it's only a genuflection to the environment followed by business as usual. My most recent additions were intended to allow some course correction to preserve the county's economic future."

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**SECTION B, ELEMENT 10**

**Economic Development Element**

**August 28, 2019 DRAFT**

Red strike out / underline: Planning Commission recommended changes

Blue underline: William Appel recommended additions

Adopted by Ordinance No \_\_\_ - 2019

## 10.2 AUTHORITY, PURPOSE, and OTHER ELEMENTS

### 10.2.A Authority

This EDE is adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070 (7) of the Washington Growth Management Act (GMA) which mandates that the county's comprehensive plan include: "[a]n economic development element establishing local goals, policies, objectives, and provisions for economic growth and vitality and a high quality of life." This is subject to an overarching instruction preceding this mandate relating specifically to the economic element: "Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities." RCW 36.70A.020(5). For purposes of this EDE, this language regarding biological resources is interpreted to include and encourage only those activities or industries whose impact on those resources does not impair their sustainability.

### 10.2.B Purpose

The purpose of this EDE is to execute the legislative mandate set forth above by setting goals and establishing policies, objectives, and actions to attain economic growth and vitality consistent with the distinctive quality of life in the county.

Economic development is the specific and concerted expenditure of time and money by communities and policy makers in order to create and maintain the economic viability of a region. Sound economic development seeks to foster sustainable wealth by creating jobs and infrastructure that sustain and enhance the quality of life of the populace without net cost to the county's natural capital.

Proactive economic development seeks out business development opportunities based on an area's competitive advantages, market characteristics, and community values. Smart economic development recognizes that prosperity both depends upon and is coupled with benign reliance on the county's natural capital supporting its quality of life. In turn, sustaining the current structure, nature, and diversity of the county community will depend on maintaining and nurturing a successful economy.

Economic resilience is essential to the wellbeing of county residents. Its elements are: diversification of industries (particularly those less reliant on fluctuations in the local, regional, and national economy); planning for foreseeable changes in the local and national economy, in population, in technology, and in the environment; and readiness for likely disasters. Economic resilience supports social resilience and the public peace. Economic resilience expressly includes provision for low-income housing for "unemployed and low-income persons" as mandated by RCW 36.70A.020(5).

The economy of the San Juan Islands is inextricably linked to its environment. Inasmuch as any enterprise that consumes or threatens to consume nonrenewable natural resources upon which the county's economy depends constricts or threatens to constrict the economic future of the county, the county's treatment of economic development is necessarily selective. The county's economic plans are

driven by county residents' goals for the future of the community itself as set forth in the Vision Statement of this comprehensive plan (<https://www.sanjuanco.com/1306/Comprehensive-Plan-Elements>).

### 10.2.C Relationship to Other Comprehensive Plan Elements

This EDE is intended to integrate with and govern the economic aspects of the other elements of this Comprehensive Plan. In addition, this EDE also provides a stand-alone action plan that recognizes that economic development affects the entire county including its marine areas, and that implementation responsibilities may be shared among the Town of Friday Harbor, San Juan County, and many other quasi- (e.g. ports, OPALCO) and non-governmental (e.g. private sector, non-profit) partners, while recognizing that the comprehensive plan's legal mandate is upon the county alone.

industries) through: information and contact sharing; land, infrastructure, facilities, or tool sharing; peer mentoring; events/programs to encourage permanent and seasonal residents and visitors to meet; and maker or incubator spaces.

15. Invest in the balanced long-term health of the primary economic sectors – construction and tourism – as consistent with preservation of natural capital and rural character of the locale involved.

16. Assist new farmers in acquiring access to capital, agricultural land, housing, equipment, knowledge, and farm infrastructure, and encourage their success by supportive commissions.

17. Identify and implement policies that facilitate the expansion of genetically modified organism (GMO)-free seed and crop production in the islands.

18. Allow agricultural activities as defined by RCW 7.48.310 (1) <sup>6</sup>.

19. Foster economic growth through allowing accessory uses identified in RCW 36.70A.177 Section (3)(b)(i) <sup>7</sup>, that enhance or preserve the overall agricultural use of the property applicable to ARL, RFF.

20. Support the expansion of the Cottage Food Operation laws and passage of food freedom legislation introduced in WA State.

21. Harmonize San Juan County Code with WA RCW to clarify that marijuana is not an agricultural product and create a regulatory framework in San Juan County for marijuana production that does not negatively impact local food and fiber production or natural resources such as shorelines, wetlands, and forests.

22. Enact zoning and regulatory changes that address farm labor and farm succession issues consistent with rural character and encourage locating housing in clusters with existing development or on non-prime agricultural soils.

~~23. Identify drivers of high rent and land prices – such as the high percentage of properties used as seasonal, recreational, or occasional use properties or investment properties and the low inventory of multi-family housing (see Housing Needs Assessment draft<sup>8</sup> in this Comprehensive Plan) – and adopt policies and actions to reduce or compensate for those drivers;~~ Engage an independent study of the economic and environmental risks and benefits of vacation rental businesses. ~~–including, but not limited to, emergency services and disaster management, visitor and owner spending, effects on the long term housing market, and water and infrastructure use – to inform future decision making regarding VRBO classification, regulation, permitting, and fees.~~

24. Regulate and avoid direct or indirect encouragement of commercial and recreational enterprises whose actions or planned actions entail consumption or harmful effects upon nonrenewable resources of or within the county upon which the county economy depends.

## **GOAL 2: DEVELOP A BROADLY COMPETENT RESIDENT WORK FORCE**

**Goal:** Train a resident work force to support and attract diverse businesses (in harmony with the county's natural resources), perform work otherwise done by labor and skills sourced from outside the county, and supplement an aging talent pool.

**Comment:** This goal is a necessary counterpart to Goal 1, "CREATE LIVING WAGE JOBS," above, as out-of-county labor causes "leakage" of local dollars. An untrained, unemployed/underemployed local population reduces economic productivity and drains public resources.

### **Policies (10.3.B.2, 1-7)**

1. In all industries, local workers need to continually hone their skills to adapt to changes in the economy, climate, natural resources, and technology; therefore, support the education, training and counseling of

## Sophia Cassam

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**From:** William A <appellb@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2020 10:08 AM  
**To:** Sophia Cassam  
**Subject:** Re: More on the Economics Unit of the CompPlan

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Certainly Sophia.

These points relate to the preface of the EDE that states that ultimately, the county economy depends upon its natural assets, which to assure a healthy economy over time, must not be depleted. While increases in intensity may improve the economy in the short run, they endanger its collapse in the long run. This is supported by references in the body and footnotes already in the EDE. So the point is already made sub silentio, but I thought that somehow, somewhere, it should be clearly stated. Otherwise, it's only a genuflection to the environment followed by business as usual. My most recent additions were intended to allow some course correction to preserve the county's economic future.

The recent proposal that I made concerning utilities that was stricken at the most recent meeting (I listened on line) was based on what I am sure were inadvertent misstatements of both law and economics expressed by the PC chair. In fact, the county has considerable control over water (and sewer) districts within its unincorporated boundaries and this affects the availability of affordable housing. I'm drafting a memo to your department dealing not only with housing but also the *causally related* Utility and Land Use Elements. This will explain how I am approaching the overall problem we all face.

Bill

On Jan 22, 2020, at 9:28 AM, Sophia Cassam <[sophiac@sanjuanico.com](mailto:sophiac@sanjuanico.com)> wrote:

Bill,

Would you please write a short statement explaining why you suggest these additions to the Economic Development Element? I would like to be able to share your intent with Planning Commission when we go over your suggestions.

Thank you,

Sophia Cassam, Planner I - Direct Line (360) 370-7589  
**SAN JUAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
360-378-2354 | 135 Rhone Street | PO Box 947 | Friday Harbor, WA 98250

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**From:** William A <[appelllb@aol.com](mailto:appelllb@aol.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2020 9:17 AM  
**To:** Sophia Cassam <[sophiac@sanjuanco.com](mailto:sophiac@sanjuanco.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: More on the Economics Unit of the CompPlan

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Thank you Sophia.

Bill

On Jan 22, 2020, at 9:13 AM, Sophia Cassam <[sophiac@sanjuanco.com](mailto:sophiac@sanjuanco.com)> wrote:

Hello Bill,

Thank you for sending DCD your proposed changes to the Economic Development Element. We will include your proposal on the February 21, 2020 Planning Commission meeting agenda to get Planning Commission's recommendation.

In the future, please be sure to send your comments and questions pertaining to the Comp Plan update to [compplancomments@sanjuanco.com](mailto:compplancomments@sanjuanco.com). Doing so helps us stay organized and ensures the right staff member gets your message.

Best,

Sophia

Sophia Cassam, Planner I - Direct Line (360) 370-7589

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**From:** William A <[appelllb@aol.com](mailto:appelllb@aol.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2020 10:05 AM  
**To:** Sophia Cassam <[sophiac@sanjuanco.com](mailto:sophiac@sanjuanco.com)>  
**Subject:** More on the Economics Unit of the CompPlan

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Hello Sophia,

I have two (more) proposed changes to the EDE that express and execute the tenor of that unit as already passed through the Planning Commission. They are set forth in the attached Word document (with changes shown) that contains the first pages of the August 28, 2019 EDE draft. The changes are evident by the altered left-hand margin.

They are:

Purpose Section 10.2.B line 32

Goal 1, Actions 10.3.B.1, adding new action 24.

f this submission is in overtime, please let me know when and how to make these proposals in the next phase of adoption.

Thank you,

Bill Appel