




SAN JUAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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MEMO

MEMO DATE: March 4, 2021
TO: San Juan County Planning Commission
CC: Erika Shook, AICP, DCD Director
FROM: Sophia Cassam, Planner I
Adam Zack, Planner III 
SUBJECT: San Juan County Comprehensive Plan
Element B.2 Land Use and Rural
Climate Change Land Use Goals and Policies
BRIEFING DATE: March 19, 2021
ATTACHMENT: A. Public comments received since February 18

PURPOSE: To get input from the Planning Commission on a preliminary draft of climate change goals and policies for Element 2, Land Use and Rural.

FEEDBACK REQUESTED: Please review and prepare comments on the preliminary draft of climate change land use goals and policies included with this memo. At the meeting on March 19, 2021, staff will go through the draft goals and policies and ask the Planning Commission to provide their comments. The Planning Commission will consider the comments from each member of the commission and the public. The Planning Commission will then consider whether to incorporate those comments into the draft of goals and policies. Agreed upon changes will be integrated into the draft during the discussion at the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Please send all public comments to compplancomments@sanjuanco.com. Please do not copy the County Council, Planning Commission members, or County Staff. Written public comments received by March 18th will be provided to the Planning Commission before the meeting on the 19th. Comments should refer to contents of this memo.

PREVIOUS CLIMATE CHANGE STAFF MEMOS: A staff memo dated February 4, 2021 provides a summary of how climate change is addressed throughout the Comprehensive Plan (*Plan*). It includes the goals and policies throughout the *Plan* and a summary of other ways the topic is addressed. This memo is posted online at: <https://www.sanjuanco.com/DocumentCenter/View/21876/>

BACKGROUND: Over the last few meetings, the Planning Commission has considered the response to climate change in the *Plan*. During discussion of climate change at the February 19 Planning Commission meeting, staff was asked to provide an initial draft of climate change goals and policies for the Land Use and Rural Element of the *Plan* as part of a larger effort to make the policy response more robust. Climate change goals and policies can be added to the general goals and policies of the Land Use and Rural Element, which will

apply to land use throughout the County. Staff proposes adding a new Section 2.2.O to the Land Use and Rural Element. A preliminary draft of Section 2.2.O is provided below.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF CLIMATE CHANGE GOALS AND POLICIES FOR THE LAND USE AND RURAL ELEMENT:

At the March 19, 2021 meeting, the Planning Commission can provide feedback on the staff proposed goals and policies below. At the March meeting, we will work from this memo to refine the draft goal and policies. Once the Planning Commission has refined the draft goal and policies, it will be inserted into Section 2.2.O of the Land Use and Rural Element. Please note, these goals and policies would apply countywide and not just within a single land use designation.

2.2.O Climate Change

Goal 1: Understand climate change impacts and ensure that the *Plan* and development regulations are responsive to new conditions and improved approaches to climate mitigation and resilience.

Policies:

1. Commit resources for a climate change impact study that assesses lands susceptible to climate impacts and identifies hazard areas and regulatory changes to:
 - a. Make development in these areas more resilient;
 - b. Inventory greenhouse gases from development;
 - c. Address intersections of climate impacts and social equity; and
 - d. Develop a climate mitigation action plan.
2. Periodically review and if necessary update the San Juan County Comprehensive Plan and development regulations to ensure that:
 - a. *Plan* goals and policies establish clear objectives and actions to increase climate mitigation and cultivate community resilience;
 - b. Policies and regulations are responsive when new technologies are available to account for a changing climate; and
 - c. The effects of climate change are addressed. These include:
 - i. Sea level rise;
 - ii. More frequent severe weather events and natural disasters; and
 - iii. Constraints to potable water supply.
3. Collaborate with local nonprofits, agencies, and special taxing districts when drafting land use regulations for responding to new technologies or strategies for mitigating the effects of climate change.
4. Engage the community when adopting changes to goals, policies and regulations to adapt to climate change. Public input improves amendments and strengthens community buy-in.

- 1 5. Allow uses that support natural resource industries as they adapt to the effects of climate change.
- 2
- 3 6. Establish land use patterns that:
- 4
- 5 a. Reduce demand for transportation and infrastructure;
- 6
- 7 b. Focus new development in areas less prone to climate impacts; and
- 8
- 9 c. Limit human impacts on ecosystems and habitats.

10
11 **Goal 2: The carbon footprint of new development is reduced through innovative development regulations**
12 **and programs.**

- 13
- 14 7. Incentivize green building rating system certifications (such as LEED) for development to reduce
- 15 greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience.
- 16
- 17 8. Establish development standards and incentives to support resource efficient design and construction.
- 18
- 19 9. Provide green building informational materials, checklists and other resources to property owners and
- 20 developers.
- 21
- 22 10. Incorporate energy efficiency principles into publicly funded developments.
- 23
- 24 11. Reduce waste of natural resources and decrease greenhouse gas emissions generated by the transport
- 25 of building materials by promoting the design of developments and infrastructure for disassembly and
- 26 reuse or recycling.
- 27

28 **Goal 3: Natural systems and nature-based systems in the built environment provide valuable services that**
29 **support climate mitigation and resilience.**

- 30
- 31 12. Increase resilience to climate impacts with nature-based solutions such as green infrastructure.
- 32
- 33 13. Support training for County staff on the development, incorporation, and preservation of green
- 34 infrastructure.
- 35
- 36 14. Establish landscaping standards that provide functional environmental benefits such as improved air
- 37 quality, carbon sequestration, temperature regulation, and stormwater management.
- 38
- 39 15. Promote forest stewardship activities that result in carbon sequestration, reduce wildfire risks, or a
- 40 combination of both.
- 41
- 42 16. Value ecosystem services that mitigate the effects of climate change. Ecosystem services are features of
- 43 natural areas that provide services instead of built infrastructure. Ecosystem services include:
- 44
- 45 a. Carbon sequestration;
- 46
- 47 b. Stormwater management;
- 48
- 49 c. Aquifer recharge; and
- 50
- 51 d. Erosion control.

Sophia Cassam

From: Debbie Maranville <dmaranville@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 9:07 AM
To: Comp Plan Update
Subject: Incorporate Climate Issues Into Comprehensive Plan

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I write to support the Orcas Women's Coalition's thoughtful submission proposing additional language for the Comprehensive Plan to address the many implications of ongoing climate change that is currently on a path towards catastrophic global warming.

The forest fire and weather events of the past twelve months reinforce the importance of planning, preparation and resilience.

As a part-time resident of more than twenty years hoping to make Orcas my full-time home, the healthy future of our Islands is close to my heart.

Thanks,

Debbie Maranville
(50 Raintree Lane
Eastsound)

Sophia Cassam

From: Kai Sanburn <kaisanburn@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 9:30 AM
To: Comp Plan Update
Subject: Comprehensive Plan and Climate Change

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Planning Commissioners,

It is heartening to learn that there is thoughtful attention being given to the manner in which climate change is incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan.

Whether it is best to do this via a separate Climate Change Section in the Comp Plan or by integrating strong parameters throughout the existing sections, is not something I have the expertise to weigh in on, but I do believe that climate change and its impacts will drive planning and response from now and into the future, either by choice or by force.

As we witness with some heartbreak the extreme disruptions happening in Texas, it's clear that we may not be able to get a handle on how devastating climate change will be. However, we can expect that climate change will impact everything. Even this faraway storm upended well laid plans for covid vaccination in our county by disruption of the delivery of vaccine. Climate impacts elsewhere, such as wildfires and drought, will continue to push migration to our region. This is perhaps a secondary climate impact but no less important to understand and plan for.

Our Comprehensive Plan must prioritize meaningful climate mitigation and adaptation throughout. Planning needs to be responsive to real time impacts and to changes we can't anticipate at this point in time. Accountability must be built in to assure that this pivotal issue is not sidelined in the press of 'business as usual.'

However climate change is addressed in the Comprehensive Plan specifically, I believe an Advisory Board and/or a dedicated county staff position to oversee climate plan implementation will signal our commitment as a county to honor our obligations to our children and their children as we work to assure a livable future.

Thank you, as always, for your dedication to this complex process,

Kai Sanburn
Community Rights San Juan Islands

Sophia Cassam

From: Steve Bernheim <stevebernheim@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 10:50 AM
To: Comp Plan Update
Subject: CLIMATE CHANGE COMMENTS TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Attachments: CLIMATE CHANGE COMMENTS TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.docx

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Please see attached comments on the subject of climate change.

I believe the county requires a Citizens Task Force on Climate Change, among other things.

Steve Bernheim, Box 305, Olga 98279

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMENTS TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

I propose the addition to the county's comprehensive plan of a stand-alone section devoted to the subject of global warming and its impact and effects on planning and community. ***The proposed text is below.*** Policies in brackets such as [GOVERNANCE] are proposed to be included also verbatim as new policies within the corresponding sections of the county's comprehensive plan.

This proposed amendment – a stand-alone, complete additional section with separate policies directly transferrable to existing sections of the current comprehensive plan – 1) sets an example with its response to climate change, 2) addresses negative effects before they become crises, 3) encourages voluntary efforts, and 4) authorizes incentives and regulations if necessary to reduce the County's carbon footprint.

Proposed stand-alone section devoted to the subject of global warming and its impact and effects on planning and community

Goal 1: The County will strengthen the sustainability of San Juan County's economy, natural environment, and communities by responding and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Policy 1-1 [GOVERNANCE]: The County will convene a climate impact advisory committee in 2021 to consist at least of experts in energy conservation and energy efficiency or carbon emission reduction, and representatives from San Juan County and interested community members. The CIAC will be tasked to:

- Adopt a 2022-2030 San Juan County Climate Protection and Energy Conservation Action Plan establishing carbon emission targets that meet or exceed state and federal climate impact goals;
- Evaluate San Juan County's compliance with targets set forth in the 2022 San Juan County Climate Protection and Energy Conservation Action Plan;
- Updating the Climate Plan, at minimum every five years, or as needed to meet targets;
- Recommending updates to the San Juan County Comprehensive Plan and County Code to achieve San Juan County's emission reduction targets; and
- Ensure that San Juan County government operates to meet or exceed goals and targets resolved in the Climate Protection and Energy Conservation Action Plan.

Policy 1-2 [GOVERNANCE]: The County will update San Juan County land use policies and development regulations to support renewable energy development goals.

Policy 1-3 [GOVERNANCE]: The County will consider potential long-range climate change implications in the course of its planning and implementation because San Juan County's economic sectors, ecosystems, water resources, infrastructure, emergency management, and public health and safety all face climate change related risks in the future. The County should:

1. Identify the County's vulnerability to climate change, including the resilience of natural and built environments; and,

2. Examine the County's adaptive capacity to cope with and mitigate climate change and take advantage of any beneficial opportunities.

Policy 1-4 [CAPITAL FACILITIES/GOVERNANCE]: The County will encourage adoption of conservation and sustainability practices by energy conservation and increasing the use of renewable, net-neutral carbon energy in San Juan County facilities and County vehicles, with a goal of net zero man-made carbon emission by 2030.

Policy 1-5 [ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT]: The County should develop strategies that encourage a diversified and sustainable economy that is resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Policy 1-6 [WATER RESOURCES]: The County will act to promote the efficient use, conservation, and protection of water resources.

Policy 1-7 [TRANSPORTATION]: The County will by 2030 achieve a 50% reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the county from 2020 levels by expanding availability and use of public transportation, pathways for pedestrians and self-propelled vehicles, and public education.

Policy 1-8 [LAND USE AND RURAL]: The County will establish land use patterns that minimize transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions and encourage preservation of natural resource lands and the protection of water resources.

Policy 1-9 [UTILITIES/GOVERNANCE]: The County will by 2030 reduce landfill waste from San Juan County government facilities to by 90% from 2020 levels.

Policy 1-10 [UTILITIES/HOUSING]: The County will develop strategies and practices to reduce energy use by public housing residential customers to near zero and will by 2030 help achieve island-wide reduction in electric energy use by 50% from 2020.