SAN JUAN COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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cdp@sanjuanco.com | www.sanjuanco.com

MEMO

REPORT DATE:	September 14, 2021 San
TO:	Juan County Council
FROM:	Sophia Cassam, Planner I SC
SUBJECT:	2021 Annual Docket Public Hearing Public Comments
HEARING:	September 14, 2021
ATTACHMENTS:	Public Comments on the 2021 Docket

PURPOSE: Transmittal of written public comments on the 2021 Docket for the September 14, 2021 County Council public hearing. The comments attached were received between September 13 and 14, 2021.

Sophia Cassam

From: Faith Van De Putte
Sent: Monday, September 13, 2021 4:18 PM
To: Christine Minney; Jamie Stephens; Cindy Wolf
Cc: Mike Thomas; Sophia Cassam
Subject: Emailing - Compost Memo (1).pdf
Attachments: Compost Memo (1).pdf

Dear County Council,
Please find attached the ARC's recommendation concerning docket request 21-0001.

Thank you,
Faith Van De Putte

Faith Van De Putte
Agriculture Resource Committee of San Juan County
Co-ordinator
360-370-7666
faithv@sanjuanco.com

Agricultural Resources Committee of San Juan County

Memorandum

To: Christine Minney, County Council
Jamie Stephens, County Council
Cindy Wolf, County Council

CC: Mike Thomas, County Manager
Planning Commission

From: San Juan County Agricultural Resource Committee (ARC)

Date: September 13, 2021

Subject: Docket Request 21-0001

Background

San Juan County Planning Commission reviewed Docket Request 21-0001 (Commercial Composting) - Allow commercial composting by Provisional/Conditional use permit in the Agricultural (AG) Resource land use designation. The Planning Commission recommended that this be added to the DCD future work as a number two priority.

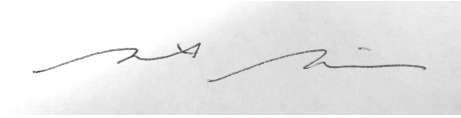
Recommendation

The ARC recommends that Council follow the recommendations of the Planning Commission and add Docket Request 21-0001 to the DCD future work as a code project to allow commercial composting on Agricultural Resource land.

This docket request is in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan Land Use policy recommendation submitted by the ARC on 10/9/2019: “Encourage the recycling and beneficial use of island biomass and retention of nutrients through innovative zoning that allows composting and biochar production.” The ARC hosted Listening Sessions where we asked the question, “What barriers do you [Agricultural Producers] face, and what do you want organizations that support agriculture to be working on?” Twenty percent of participating farmers responded “access to local compost”.

On Behalf of the Agricultural Resource Committee,

Agricultural
Resources
Committee
of San Juan County



Meike Meissner, ARC Chair

Faith Van De Putte, ARC Coordinator

Sophia Cassam

From: Marc Cohen <smarcster@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 13, 2021 5:28 PM
To: Sophia Cassam; San Juan County Council
Subject: Docket Request 21-0003

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I urge the County Council to put Docket Request #21-0003 by Joe Symons on the work plan for the Department of Community Development as part of the process for completing the Comprehensive Plan update now under revision.

The sustainability of our resources here in San Juan County hangs in the balance. It is your duty to address these issues now, while there is still time for remedial action.

Sincerely,

Marc Cohen
98 Lohman Lane
Eastsound, WA 98245

Sophia Cassam

From: Darcie Nielsen <darciensjc@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, September 13, 2021 5:30 PM
To: Sophia Cassam
Subject: Docket: re 21-0003

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Dear San Juan County Council,

Now IS the time for the County to conduct a buildout analysis. The County certainly has the tools and technology to do this which we didn't have back in the 90s during the initial GMA planning. And, now we have the latest census data that can feed into this important work. The County needs this analysis in order for citizens and community leaders to have a sensible discussion about potential tools to reduce potential buildout as likely the numbers will result in something unsustainable for the islands ecosystems and sense of community.

Thank you for all your hard work serving the citizens of SJC!

Best regards,

Darcie L. Nielsen

Property owner at 887 Boyce Road, San Juan Island

Sent from my iPhone

Sophia Cassam

From: Eleanor Hoague <echoague@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 13, 2021 9:49 PM
To: Sophia Cassam; San Juan County Council
Subject: Build Out Analysis: Do further work

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Dear Councilmembers and Ms. Cassam,

The determination of the degree to which our islands can be developed is of utmost importance. We cannot blindly continue to build in the islands without knowing firmly what capacity of essential services can be provided.

I plead with the Planning Dept. and the CDC to take Symon's analysis very seriously and that further data be compiled prior to the Comp Plan being adopted. I further urge you to make your findings PUBLIC.

Please, members of the Council, remember that this will impact all of us. Future generations will examine our rush to approve further development without in-depth analysis and wonder "WHAT WERE THEY THINKING??"

Thank you for your consideration.

Eleanor Hoague

Sophia Cassam

From: Jill Patten <jillgentlew@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 13, 2021 8:26 PM
To: Sophia Cassam
Subject: Build-out analysis

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Hello, Sophia,

I support the county conducting a detailed build-out analysis prior to expanding the UGA. Adequate and accurate information is crucial for the Planning Commission and the community when it comes to making decisions that will affect us all far into the future.
I appreciate your hard work and thank you for your consideration,

Jill M. Patten
jillgentlew@gmail.com
San Juan Island

Sophia Cassam

From: Guy Timmons <gtimmons61@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 13, 2021 6:56 PM
To: Sophia Cassam
Subject: UGA Public Comments
Attachments: UGA letter.pages.pdf

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Please make part of public comments.

Thank you very much!

Guy Timmons

TO San Juan County Council
FROM Guy Timmons, 9-13-2021
RE 21-0003 BUILD-OUT ANALYSIS

I ask that the County Council provide a full build-out analysis prior to considering expansion of the UGA for community development. The Planning Commission and the community deserve to have accurate information before making further recommendations to the Council.

I believe real data showing a need for UGA expansion needs to be produced and studied before even considering whether to allow irreversible development and urban sprawl that will affect our unique rural environment.

I live in the Cedar Street neighborhood. My neighbors and I suffer the effects of the insufficient or total lack of past planning in regards to water run off. In the winter months we have water flowing through our properties uprooting trees and causing general damage. The water ends up flooding across the 10 acre field at the bottom of Argyle Street and dumping into the lagoon taking all the road runoff with it. It's an environmental disaster that seems to get swept under the rug.

Please require a full build out analysis so we all have the facts to then discuss options that will help us all maintain our lifestyle. It seems like there is a rush to do this on the down low.

Thank you for your time

Best regards,
Guy Timmons
98 Apple Tree Ln
360 317 6934

Sophia Cassam

From: Alexandra Gayek <gayek07@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 12:53 AM
To: Sophia Cassam; Cindy Wolf; Christine Minney; Jamie Stephens
Subject: Letters on 2021 Docket Requests
Attachments: Docket Request 8 to County Council.pdf; Docket Request 1 to County Council.pdf; Docket Request 3 to County Council.pdf

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Hello Sophia,

Thank you for all your work on the 2021 Docket Requests, including your presentations to the Planning Commission and tomorrow to the County Council.

Attached please find three letters, addressing three different docket requests: #8, #1, and #3.
Thank you so much!

With appreciation,
Alexandra Gayek

2021 Docket Request 1, Composting on Agricultural Resource Lands

Dear Council Members Wolf, Stephens, and Minney,

I think our small island farmers should be able to create compost on their land, advertise for other islanders to contribute compostable yard waste that would otherwise go to the dump or be burned, and sell the resulting compost to other islanders.

As Mr. Bennett states in his Docket Request, healthy soil is fundamental to healthy ecosystems, healthy farms and gardens, and is a huge carbon sink. Farmers can also benefit from the additional income stream, islanders could support their neighbors, and new jobs could result. I love that islanders want to create this kind of thing themselves and not rely on county government to do it for us.

But I do not agree that this Docket Request should be passed as is, because simply adding "Commercial Composting" to allowable uses of Ag Resource land would allow our precious agricultural resource land needed to grow food to be converted into huge industrial composting operations.

We need limits to what is allowed.

I would favor Ag Resource zoning to allow very small scale organic composting operations, restricted so that they result in:

-no new impervious surfaces (roads, parking areas, roofs, etc)
-no loss of land available for cultivation of plants and other agricultural use
-no shipping of compost off of the island where it is created
-limits to the numbers of trucks coming and going, and to the hours of operation
-limit to the amount (not percentage) of a parcel that could be devoted to creating compost as opposed to growing food for islanders.

This would be an important contribution to regenerative, self-sustaining islands.

Thank you for your consideration.

With appreciation,
Alexandra Gayek
Orcas Island

2021 Docket Request 3, Land Capacity Analysis

Dear County Council Members Wolf, Minney, and Stephens,

There is enormous anger and desperation on the part of the thousands of frustrated islanders who are watching our ocean, forests, meadows, shorelines, rural communities, and the open spaces in our towns be eaten away, parcel by parcel, tree by tree, and replaced by new and wider roads and parking areas and lawns, and more and more buildings, more and more boat and air traffic. Our peaceful neighborhoods and surrounding waters and skies are filled with more and more traffic, tourists, tourist attractions, and noise.

We want the county to adopt limits to growth in the form of restictions on development so that our islands don't become even more than they already are like "paradise paved over for a parking lot."

We don't want those restrictions to be limited to the minimum requirements of the GMA.

But many islanders feel county staff don't seem to understand this.

Meanwhile, county staff look at Joe Symons's annual pleas to at the very least be forthright in the comprehensive plan about what is possible with development on our islands as market forces appear to be the only thing guiding development, with frustrations of their own.

"But we've already done a Land Capacity Analysis!"

"But 2019 statistics show county population isn't growing much."

"But building permit applications are about the same number they were last year."

"Joe Symons' number of 132,000 future islanders at maximum buildout is just a scare tactic."

These are all statements I have heard in public meetings from county staff in response to Joe Symons' annual docket requests. It would seem that to staff those same islanders just don't see the reality, don't appreciate what county staff have done, and are only reacting based on fear.

Where is the disconnect?

It seems the county staff are trying to meet the strict requirements of the GMA, while taking into account the fact that we aren't starting from a blank slate. We're starting from a situation in which half a century ago, land division and development popped up all over the county in ways that don't match current rules.

County staff are also under huge pressure to not only do more tasks than they can accomplish with their budget and number of employees, but also to respond to pressure from those who clamor for growth and development.

Staff also feel pressure to justify their positions with statistics and existing laws.

But we islanders can see that statistics always lag behind what we can see with our own eyes happening around us. We want forward thinking *prevention* of problems before they become entrenched, not

responses that can't be implemented because it's too late or too expensive.

We see that every existing law that attempts to control environmental destruction is routinely disregarded by people all around us, and that there are inadequate county staff to enforce the laws, and inadequate will to reinforce the spirit of the laws without strong, clear, unified support and guidance in that direction from County Council.

We see that federal, state, and county laws are written with the assumption that growth is an unquestionable goal, that economic growth is more important than the lives of human beings and all other forms of life, that the earth is an infinite natural resource that should be used without limitation for the pleasure and profit of humans, that humans are the supreme life form, and technology can surely solve any problem.

We see that these assumptions have created a way of life that is completely unsustainable on a planetary scale, and very visibly on our small islands.

We see clearly that we do not have enough water or power generation or waste management infrastructure or an adequate stormwater management system to support the existing population of residents plus tourists with the accompanying level of development, much less a growing population with growing development.

We see that our lifestyle has killed off the salmon, the whales, the toads and native frogs, and countless other species that once created the biodiversity on land and in the oceans necessary to sustain a livable planet, and we are now experiencing the beginning of an unlivable planet.

More studies are not needed to justify a massive change in the way we approach development.

We need to reach far beyond the minimum requirements of the GMA.

We need to find a way to balance past development that is denser than currently allowed with future development LESS dense than currently allowed.

Let's start with a moratorium on new development and divert county staff resources from processing building permits to doing the kind of tight land and water and power use planning we actually need to create a regenerative economy and regenerative land use, and begin to restore the ecosystems we have destroyed.

Fulfilling the Stormwater Management Docket Request and doing the assessment requested by Joe Symons in his Land Capacity Analysis Docket Request are good next steps.

Thank you for being brave enough to face the opposition of those who prefer short term gains for the few at the expense of both short and long term protection for the many, creative enough to find new ways of managing development, and doing what is smart and necessary for the future of our islands even if not politically popular in the moment.

With appreciation,
Alexandra Gayek
Orcas Island

2021 Docket Request 8, Stormwater Management

Dear County Council Members Stephens, Minney, and Wolf,

I am grateful that the Planning Commission has approved and Environmental Stewardship staff are already planning to begin implementation of the Stormwater Management Docket Request I submitted.

I am writing to thank the County Council in advance for also supporting it.

I would like to highlight three aspects of this docket request:

1) That changes need to be made not only in the storm and surface water sections of the comp plan and county code, but also **Code section 18.60.050 Density, dimension, and open space requirements.**
2) That the regulations must take into account the actual nature of development—that not only newly developed parcels, but gradual development over time, both permitted and unpermitted, on already developed parcels, is impacting surface and stormwater, and aquifer recharge. Therefore, the changes must apply to existing as well as new development.
3) That human behavior other than development is impacting our ground, surface, and stormwater as it reaches streams, lakes, and ocean. This behavior, such as use of pesticides and other pollutants, must be regulated in order to protect the ecosystems on which we depend.

Thank you for your consideration.

With appreciation,
Alexandra Gayek
Orcas Island

Sophia Cassam

From: sadie b <salim3796@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 7:12 AM
To: Sophia Cassam
Cc: Ingrid Gabriel
Subject: comment to council for this morning's hearing on the 2021 docket
Attachments: council hearing 9-14-21 - comments on 2021 docket.pdf

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Hi Sophia; Sorry I can't attend today's hearing.

I hope this comment letter will be considered - better yet, I hope it will be read at the council meeting by a council member or Ingrid, who I copied. Thanks much. Hope you all are well over there.

B. Sadie Bailey

Dear County Council; 9/15/21
Thank you for taking comment on the 2021 Docket.

These 3things need to be prioritized for the 2021 Docket and completed ASAP, as all are inter-related and dependent on each other:

1) 21-0005 Tree Protection Reguations – agree with PC recommendation. Should be top priority in UGAs. Regulations need to include when logging can and can't be done. Much logging around Eastsound happens in the midst of migratory songbird nesting and breeding season, which violates the 1918 MBTA. UGAs should have the strictest laws to protect what little forest habitats remain.
2) 21-0008 – Create New Stormwater Management Regulations – agree with PC recommendation. Again, priority should be concentrated *first* in UGAs where our salt water nearshore habitat gets the brunt of our stormwater pollution. All of our UGAs have shorelines on at least one side. Eastsound UGA gets hit from both sides of the one-mile wide land mass that is also a wetland watershed and source of our drinking water.
3) 21-2003 – full buildout analysis – Disagree with PC recommendations. We have asked for this for 30+ years, and it keeps getting kicked down the road. Many permits granted in UGAs violate the GMA guidelines for the purpose of UGAs – which are to house minimum of 54% of our year round population. Given the glut of speculative development and VR's impacting UGAs, it's appalling that no thought has been given to protecting the wetland forested watershed in Eastsound UGA, its ecosystems, where to put industrial sprawl, and the like. Now, our UGA lands are now "prime" real estate sold to the highest bidder to make future VR's , luxury condos, and the like, while pushing workers off the island.

Lastly;
21-0001 – Commercial Composting on Ag resource Lands – disagree with PC recommendation. It makes much more sense to incentivize small-scale commercial operations at more suitable sites - at ORS, for example. Don't allow Big Industry to move in under some shill LLC. Remember the competitors to ORS for running the dump/Exchange? Turns out, they were affiliated with a global mining conglomerate that gobbles up small and mid size garbage and recycling facilities.
It's a bad idea to tempt fate.

Thanks for listening.
B. Sadie Bailey

Sophia Cassam

From: Joseph Bettis <josephbettis@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 7:41 AM
To: Sophia Cassam
Subject: 2021 docket comments--bettis

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Ref 0005 tree protection.

It does little good to pass more regulations when existing regulations are ignored or not enforced. For example, Garrison Drive #95,(?) Maler property. Percent of trees removed, tree protection zone one and two, were violated by the developer/owner, Maler, with the aquiescence of the planning director. No wonder that Ms. Shoop has resigned.

The commissioners should look at enforcement—only one officer in the entire county?