

**BOARD OF ISLAND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS-SPECIAL SESSION**

**JOINT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND PLANNING COMMISSION GMA**

**COMP PLAN WORKSHOP - JANUARY 28, 1998**

The Board of Island County Commissioner met in Special Session on January 28, 1998, beginning at 9:30 a.m., in Hearing Room 1, Island County Courthouse, Coupeville, Washington. The specific agenda for the workshop includes: Review of Prior Workshops, Guiding Principles for Comp. Plan and Vision Statement.

Attending today's workshop were:

**Board of County Commissioners:** Wm. L. McDowell, Chairman, Mike Shelton, Member and Tom Shaughnessy, Member.

**Planning Commission:** Chairman, Tom Olsen, and Commissioners Rufus Rose and Anne Pringle. Commissioners Linda Moore, Sheilah Crider, JoAnn Silvers and Richard Hart were absent.

**Consultants:** Keith Dearborn, Bogle & Gates, Emil King, McConnell/Burke

**Staff:** Vince Moore, Director, Planning and Community Development

Others Present: Approximately 16 people were in the audience.

**Review of Prior Workshops**

Keith Dearborn - This discussion is to provide an opportunity for the Planning Commission, the public and the Board to raise any questions they have as a result of the completion of the workshops that have been done to date.

Vince Moore - Noted January 30 work shop on population projections and allocations to the various sub-areas of the county. All of the cities have adopted final Comp. Plans with final UGA areas defined. Those final UGAs have been approved by the Planning Commission but not by the Board. The cities population projections generally run out to 2010 or 2013 and the counties plan is running out to 2020. One of the issues that will be discussed is the possibility of amending the UGA boundaries to integrate another 10 years of population growth.

Commissioner Shaughnessy - What Camano Island does and how they grow has a direct impact on the City of Stanwood and he felt they should be involved in this process.

Keith Dearborn - Mukilteo is another city with a direct connection to Island County and Island County should coordinate with them on general planning issues.

Commissioner Shelton - The real issue in relation to Stanwood and Mukilteo, especially Mukilteo is not the lack of a plan. A plan was worked out in conjunction with the WSDOT, the City of Mukilteo, the City of Everett, the City of Snohomish and the ferry system, the problem is the money to implement the plan.

I am convinced that when growth management was configured in the legislature the state forgot that they were going to be a major player. They were so interested in sending directives to local governments that they forgot to send some directives to themselves. They adopted the law and they need to adopt, from their perspective, what it takes for them to comply with the law.

Vince Moore - May be appropriate for the County to send a letter to the OFM and query them as to the extent to which they have factored in the increasing transportation constraints as they effect Island County into their population projections.

Keith Dearborn - Will extend an invitation to the workshop on transportation infrastructure to the City of Stanwood

and the City of Mukilteo.

Keith Dearborn gave a brief history of the Island County Comprehensive Plan process to students from South Whidbey High School attending the workshop.

Some of the critical issues our vision has to focus on is, the importance of the Naval Air Station to the economy, preserving rural character while accommodating the projected 30,000 new residents that will move to Island County in the next 20 years, providing homes and jobs for those new residents and reducing the congestion at the bridge and ferry.

## **Island County Vision Statement**

**Handout:** Issue paper on Island County Vision Statement

Emil King - Presented the vision issue paper. He noted that on November 4, 1996, a staff draft of the land use policy plan was distributed, within that plan was a county vision statement followed by three community vision statements.

The five issues identified are:

- *How should the current County vision statement be revised to provide a stronger statement of how the County desires to look and function in 20 years?*
- *What community vision statement(s) should be included in the Island County Comprehensive Plan?*
- *Should the current community vision statement(s) be integrated into a county-wide vision?*
- *Should various geographic regions have unique vision statements formed for inclusion in the plan?*
- *Should the County use a different term for its vision statement? Perhaps guiding principles, community ideals, count goals, etc.*

The GMA does not specifically state that a vision statement is a requirement of a comprehensive plan. The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) does have four or five sections that outline what a vision statement is and we are relying on those to provide guidance. The former Department of Community Development (currently DCTED) also came out with two documents to help guide cities and counties with their vision statements.

The current Comp. Plan states that it needs to articulate a vision for the future of Island County looking forward twenty years, to set goals and policies to carry out that vision, to develop future land use patterns and maps that display that vision and to establish a specific program for plan implementation.

Forming a community vision is one of the first steps in any comprehensive planning effort, though the community vision should be periodically re-assessed to provide for changing community values and consideration of new available information.

Currently the *Whidbey News Times* is doing its own type of visioning process with what it is calling *Whidbey 2018*. The items for discussion are: *What do people want to keep? What do people want to change? and What key issues are we all facing?* In addition to these three questions, some items for discussion for possible inclusion in the Island County community vision are preserving rural character; protection of resource lands, critical areas, historic areas and the environment; transportation; building a strong economy; providing for affordable housing and special needs persons; leisure activities; continue planning; keeping government regulation from overwhelming private property rights; and other issues.

The three options identified are:

- ***Restart vision process following state manuals.*** *The county should start a full-fledged community visioning process according to the detailed examples contained in the DCTED comprehensive planning manuals.*

- **Revise current county vision statement.** *The County should re-evaluate and revise its current Vision Statement to take into account new views from citizens and the knowledge gained from additional planning information that has been developed during this comprehensive planning effort.*
- **No action.** *Keep the current Island county Vision Statement included in the Staff Draft along with some combination of other community vision statements deemed appropriate for inclusion in a County-wide comprehensive plan, located in front of the plan or in an appendix.*

Anne Pringle - Noted that the community vision statements and the County vision statement need to coordinate not conflict.

Bill Vincent - Generated the following vision statement using a bullet form:

- *Sense of Stewardship for the land*
- *Independence and self-reliance*
- *Desire for privacy and seclusion*
- *Protect rural and historic character*
- *Conserve natural resources*
- *Enhance opportunities for rural based business*
- *Preserve the rights of all Property Owners both commercial and private*
- *Preserve and protect the shorelines, open spaces and critical areas*

Vince Moore - Felt Bill's vision statement was a good approach because it applies to the present as well as the future.

Chairman McDowell - As a legal document is the vision statement binding or meant to be more of guide for the Comp. Plan which then becomes a controlling document.

Keith Dearborn - The vision statement sets the overall aspirations. The vision statement in Comp. Plans is often labeled as an introduction, preamble, or preface, it is not the statement that binds you.

Commissioner Shelton - We do not want to put something in our Vision Statement and not carry it through in our Comp. Plan.

Keith Dearborn - The three questions that the Whidbey News Times is asking are really good organizing questions for this subject. A Vision Statement has to be clear enough and focused enough that it flows and ties to goals and policies.

He suggested that each member of the Planning Commission take the three questions posed by the Whidbey News Times, (*What do people want to keep?, What doe people want to change?, What key issues are we all facing?*) and apply them to the questions starting at the bottom of Page 4 and ending on Page 6 of the vision issue paper.

## **Public Input**

**Angela Vosburg and Jillian Larsen, South Whidbey High School** - Displayed a model of Freeland in the year 2018. They said the model represents what they think Freeland will look like not necessarily what they want it to look like.

They said they expect to see a four lane highway, larger shopping center with chain stores, and a sewage system. They

said they would rather see apartments and city like housing in Freeland rather than requiring 1du/5acres.

**Kendra Hadlock, South Whidbey High School** - Noted that Whidbey Island is at risk of becoming another Mercer Island where only the rich can afford to live here and she does not want to see that happen.

She said it was ironic, that the reason people come to Whidbey Island is for the rural charm and we lose that rural charm because everyone is coming here.

**Ahna Whiteman, South Whidbey High School** - Plans to get her degree in veterinary science and feels if she wanted to live on the island she would be able to do so with that type of job.

**Bill Thorn, Camano Island** - Said we need to find non-traditional approaches to solve the job, housing, and transportation problems. We can't continue to use yesterdays solutions to solve today's and tomorrow's problems.

**Kendra Hadlock** - Said we should support local businesses and not allow businesses to come in that don't represent the identity of the south end of Whidbey Island.

**Charlie Stromberg, Freeland** - We need to think more about dwelling units because we have a lot of unoccupied dwelling units as far as the population goes. 20 to 40% of Camano, Central Whidbey and South Whidbey have dwelling units that do not have official population in them.

He said currently platted lots way exceed the population projections. We have provisions for building units far in access of what the state is saying we have to think about.

Part of the puzzle is how to stay in a frugal fiscal sense and not create the need for enormous investments in infrastructure.

He said he felt that the shorelines in Island County were part of the rural character.

In regards to inviting other jurisdictions into the discussions he agreed that we do have major regional implications that we have to be concerned about. He said he was pleased that we are now turning the corner towards comprehensive and looking at the whole picture.

**Chairman McDowell** - Asked Mr. Stromberg if he was suggesting not allowing any more subdivision.

**Charlie Stromberg** - I think we need to be very careful about allowing additional subdivisions.

**John Graham, Citizens Growth Management Coalition** - In my view a vision is simply a strong, clear, concrete picture of how citizens want their county to look 20 years from now. It should motivate people to make better decisions, to deal with conflicts and to look ahead and try and work together.

The challenge is to preserve the rural character and build a strong economy and provide affordable housing at the same time. Rural character is our economic future. Tourists are attracted by the way Island County looks and feels.

**Frank Milkowski, Freeland** - Noted that he was the caretaker for one of the big chunks of Trillium land that is left in Island County. He said he was spearheading a private effort to try to preserve it. He said he believed that we have to preserve what is perceivable but we also have to provide for some growth and there are a tremendous amount of property out there right now that cannot have anything done with it because of the log jam that we are seeing here.

He said he worked as a forester and his vision is the Trillium property will become a tree farm modeled after the Wildwood Tree Farm on Vancouver Island. He believed it should continue to be harvested but on a sustainable yield basis as opposed to a clearcutting basis.

**Commissioner Shelton** - My fear is that because we do not tolerate tree harvesting companies they will take their money out of the property and go elsewhere and then that big tract of property will be subject to great pressures to divide into much smaller parcels then it is now. My point is that being a large critic of Trillium and their forest

practices may be what pushes them towards divesting themselves of this large piece of property and maybe that is what pushes that property towards development.

**Frank Milkowski** - Keep in mind that Trillium this past year divested itself of 65,000 of the 90,000 acres they hold in Washington. The island piece was not one they sold and he believed they did not sell it specifically because of its potential to a developer.

**Commissioner Shelton** - My point is if Trillium kept this property in one piece and continued to grow trees, 25 or 40 years from now when they clearcut and replanted it again it is my opinion that is better than having it carved up.

**Frank Milkowski** - Agreed wholeheartedly.

**Greg Ballog, Teacher, South Whidbey High School** - Noted that a lot of future problems had been presented today and he wondered what control the community has to do something about those future problems.

**Keith Dearborn** - Said he would be happy to come to the school and discuss that with the students.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 a.m.

Following the workshop the Board of County Commissioner's went into executive session.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF ISLAND COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

W. L. McDowell, Chairman

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Mike Shelton, Member

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**ATTEST:** Tom Shaughnessy, Member

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Margaret Rosenkranz, Clerk of the Board