

BOARD OF ISLAND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS-SPECIAL SESSION

JOINT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND PLANNING COMMISSION GMA

COMP PLAN WORKSHOP - JANUARY 30, 1998

The Board of Island County Commissioners met in Special Session on January 30, 1998, beginning at 9:30 a.m., in Hearing Room 1, Island County Courthouse, Coupeville, Washington. The specific agenda for the workshop includes: Population Projections and Allocations, Implementation Schedule (Sub-Area Planning Process).

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, Anne Pringle, Linda Moore and Sheilah Crider. JoAnne Silvers, Richard Hart and Bill Vincent were absent.

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

Staff: Vince Moore, Director, Planning and Community Development, Mike Morton, Transportation Planner, Island County Public Works, Lew Legat, Assistant County Engineer

Population Projections

Handout: Island County GMA Population Projections, Population Projection Policy Choices for Growth Management

Vince Moore presented the issue paper. The four issues include:

Planning Period

- *What should the County Planning Period be, 2020 or 2018?*
- *Should the County use the OFM high, medium or low range projections?*
- *Should the County-wide Planning Policies be amended to include the projections?*

Validity of the Projections

- *Are the OFM projections valid given the transportation constraints and other resource and infrastructure limitations of the County to accommodate growth?*
- *Given such constraints, should the County petition the State to request a lower population projection?*

Application of the Projections

- *What portion of the County's population growth should be designated as "urban growth"?*
- *What criteria should be used to determine the allocation of populations to the cities and the unincorporated areas?*

Consistency with the Land Use Plan

- *Should the densities permitted by the rural element land use and zoning designations be proportional to the population allocations to the various types of rural areas (i.e. RAIDS, Rural Residential, Rural Farm and Rural Forest)?*

He noted that GMA requirements are found in RCW 36.70A.110(2), "Based upon the growth management population projection made for the county by the Office of Financial Management, the county and each city within the county shall include areas and densities sufficient to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the county or city for the succeeding twenty-year period."

Under the County Wide Planning Policy, RCW 36.70A.210(3), "A county-wide planning policy shall at a minimum address the following: (a) Policies to implement RCW 36.70A.110..."

In terms of changing the population projections the authority is given to the growth management hearings board under 36.70A.280(1)(b), "A growth management hearings board shall hear and determine only those petitions alleging... (b) That the twenty year growth management planning projections adopted by the office of financial management pursuant to RCW 43.62.035 should be adjusted..."

WAC 365-195-210 defines "Planning Period" as the twenty-year period following the adoption of a comprehensive plan or such longer period as may have been selected as the initial planning horizon by the planning jurisdiction."

The high on the OFM projection is roughly 120,000, the medium 106,600, the low 90,000. By 1995 we were already well above the high population projected by OFM. In our discussion with the Public Works Department we adopted a figure of 81,500 which is above the OFM high even for the year 2000. Some discussion has been held about the impact of the failure to make improvements to the transportation infrastructure serving the County as well as potential impacts from other infrastructure restraints and possibly resource constraints like ground water. Conceivably we could be looking at a trend that would bring the County back to the low range by 2020.

Keith Dearborn - Asked how the figure of 81,500 was determined and what is it being used for.

Vince Moore - The Public Works Department is using that for their Transportation Plan update. Basically as we looked at the population curve in an effort to get it back into some kind of rational line that is what appeared to be the appropriate trend.

Keith Dearborn - You have assumed that the rate of growth that we are experiencing now is going to reduce between now and 2000.

Vince Moore - The rate would be very slightly reduced. To get it back within the OFM ranges we would continue that rate reduction by 2005 we may want to petition the board to revise our population projections upward.

Keith Dearborn - What factors did you take into account to conclude that the current rate is going to decline?

Vince Moore - The transportation infrastructure constraints and the lack of economic development in the county to support that infrastructure.

Commissioner Shelton - If the RTA is successful in providing transportation, not only at Mukilteo but also for Camano, then the transportation constraints become null.

Vince Moore - I agree. There are a lot of things that are subject to change. We are not saying that we should adopt the constraints we are just putting them in as an illustration of how the trend might be affected by things that are happening now.

Chairman McDowell - Are you talking about voluntary constraints or ones the county would put on.

Vince Moore - Voluntary constraints. A slow down in growth because it is not as accessible as it used to be.

Rufus Rose - People go where they can afford to live, as close as they can to their work and it is cheaper to live in Island County dollar wise, even though you may have to sit in a ferry line, then it is to live in King County.

Vince Moore - This is not the planning horizon that we are recommending it is just put in there to indicate that there could be factors that will effect the trends.

Rufus Rose - If we are going to have a document in our record it should conjecture in every direction not just one direction.

Vince Moore - We have the choice here if we want to use a higher projection then the OFM high we must go before the OFM and request that the projections be adjusted upward and the same applies if we want to request a lower one.

Keith Dearborn - I am not sure that is true. It is true for the UGAs. The OFM projection is used for sizing the UGA and it can be used for transportation, utility and capital facility planning. There is nothing in the GMA that says it has to be used for those three planning activities but it has to be used for the UGA.

Vince Moore - The cases that I have read indicate that the counties projections must be consistent with the OFM projections.

Keith Dearborn - That was before the Clark County case.

Vince Moore - Which is on appeal and does not apply to us.

Keith Dearborn - It does apply to us. I think we have already said that it does apply to us. They are our hearings board and the Superior Court decision we are taking as a decision that is binding on us as a matter of law until it is changed. We thought it was going to be addressed in the Skagit County decision by the WWGMHB but there is nothing in it that addresses the Clark County Superior Court Case so we have no more guidance other than the Superior Court decision which says that the OFM forecast is to be used for urban growth area planning but is not used for rural growth area planning. Which leaves open the question of if it is used for transportation planning as well. Though it is logical to do that I don't know that we necessarily have to go to the growth board and ask for a modification if OFM won't make a modification.

Linda Moore - There is an issue here of whether we are going to develop our population allocations based on Mr. Dearborn's current reading of the law which says we do not have to use those projections for allocations in the rural area or if we say we are going to use them because we are going to take more of a defensive posture. The problem I continually have relative to these growth rates is that I don't want to be steered to a policy result by assumptions and statistics that I do not understand and I am concerned that we are doing that relative to the constraints on the growth rates. I would like to get some clarity on what the legal standard is we are trying to hit and then come back and understand the assumptions.

Keith Dearborn - Before the Clark County case everyone was taking the population forecast and dividing it into a rural and urban number and then looking at the capacity in the UGAs to accommodate the urban number and looking at the capacity in the rural area to accommodate the rural number. Based upon a WWGMHB determination Clark County downzoned a large portion of their rural area because the WSGMHB determined that had too much capacity in the rural area compared to the population forecast. The downzone is on appeal by parties who were downzoned and has gone to Superior Court. Superior Court said there is nothing in the GMA that requires you to do a land capacity analysis in the rural area. The OFM forecast is intended to be used to size and determine the capacity of the UGA and has nothing to do with the rural area.

No one has dealt with the question of transportation and capital facilities since the Clark County case to tell us if the OFM forecast is intended for that use as well. Prior to the Clark County case I believe only one county has appealed the OFM population determination to the growth board and that was Kitsap County. Kitsap had concluded that they were growing much faster then the OFM forecast was projecting and they wanted an increase in their numbers. Kitsap County's appeal was denied by the growth board.

Once they were told they could not increase the forecast Kitsap County went to the 1995 legislature because at that time about 80% of the counties were already over the 2000 or 2010 OFM forecast. The legislature modified the OFM requirements to create this high, medium and low number and allowed the counties the discretion to work within that number.

Commissioner Shaughnessy - If you exceed the high what is the bottom line. Is the bottom line that you are simply

going to stop issuing permits.

Keith Dearborn - Obviously not. If our projection shows us at any point in time exceeding the OFM forecast we need to document that and establish the reasons why we expect that to be occurring and then we need to plan accordingly.

Keith Dearborn - Bill Thorn proposed that the cities accommodate at least half of our projected 20 year growth and we need to walk through that scenario to determine what the impact on the cities would be to do that as well as taking what the cities have adopted. We are in a very unusual circumstance here as you can see all the cities have adopted their plans, established their population and employment growth target, and any change we propose requires them to do something, maybe we don't know the answer to that yet. We have to show our work which means one approach will be to take the numbers they have used and treat that as our urban growth projection. Another scenario is increasing that number.

Chairman McDowell - The City of Oak Harbor was very clear at the workshop yesterday saying they had the maximum population that they could accommodate.

Keith Dearborn - We still have to do that analysis and look at the question of what the impact would be in order to be able to show our work.

Linda Moore - Asked Mr. Dearborn to outline the policy basis for why we would want to analyze population densities in rural areas and plan accordingly from a policy prospective not a legal prospective and then also give us your prognostications on the future of the Clark County case.

Keith Dearborn - Does not have the ability to give a good judgment on Clark County case. He said planning staff would be the ones to provide the policy basis.

Vince Moore continued with his presentation. Staff has been using the OFM mid-range as the planning base line. He noted that the charts showing subarea trend and allocations and sub-area proportionate shares were base on census information and trends.

He noted that OFM does not have 1996 actual figures, they have a 1995 projection, the only actuals that exist are census figures for 1990. OFM made projections off of those 1990 trends based on certain assumptions relative to economic growth and distribution of the population in the State of Washington. For 1996 we took a look at the different building permit issuance in different sections of the county to see what was happening in terms of the sub-areas within the county because OFM only acknowledges Island County as a whole. The sub-area proportionate shares chart shows that from 1970 to 1996 there has been a decline in the percentage of the counties total population for North and Central Whidbey, and a significant increase in Camano as well as an increase in South Whidbey.

Keith Dearborn - OFM every April first does a population determination for every city and every county in the state and we need to use that as our frame of reference. We can make modifications based on building permits.

Vince Moore - We have modified OFM's 1997 projected estimate for the county because the initial estimate that they came out with were too low. They said because of the change over in NAS Whidbey the county had lost a significant amount of population.

Rich Melaas, NAS Whidbey - Recalled that the state estimated that the Naval Air Station had lost about 3,000 to 4,000 people but we still maintained about 10,000 people and the state had projected 6,000 to 8,000. The Navy sent that information to the State and they redid their numbers.

Reflected in the assumptions is that the County policy would be not to allow North Whidbey to continue to decline as a percentage of the counties population and to level off. On the other hand we have the residents of Camano Island opposing any more growth and they want to level the growth rate off. They don't want the continuing exeleration of 40% of the counties growth until they are overwhelmed. The same thing with respect to Central Whidbey and South Whidbey.

In terms of allocations to the sub-areas of the county and then within the sub-areas of the county you have some

choices.

Scenario One

Expanded Urban Growth Areas

Advantages

- *Most consistent with GMA goals*
- *Most preserving of remaining rural character*
- *Most protective of environmental resources*

Disadvantages

- *Requires minimal RAID infill and stringent downzoning of rural areas*
- *Highest cost public services and infrastructure*
- *UGA's (Langley/Coupeville) require expansion*

Keith Dearborn - It is not true that expanded UGAs would require minimal RAID infill and stringent downzoning of rural areas. It may be as a matter of policy but not as a matter of law because the size we make the UGA has no connection to what we do regarding the rural areas.

Vince Moore - I am not talking about law I am talking about policy.

Commissioner Shelton - Requires sounds legal.

Keith Dearborn - The only disadvantage of an expanded UGA is that every city would have to go back and change their adopted Comp. Plan. Island County has no legal ability to make them do that.

We don't want to leave people with the impression that if we get more people in the cities then we can downzone the rural area.

We need to go through the effort of looking at what the impacts would be of an expanded UGA allocation. We would do it in conjunction with the cities to establish a record that shows us that it cannot be done. the expanded UGA scenario in terms of reality may only have a potential in Oak Harbor to actually capture increased population.

Commissioner Shelton - Oak Harbor has clearly made an legitimate attempt as an UGA to capture some growth in their planning period. On the other hand Langley has planned for some growth but they have not made it part of their plan to try to capture more growth so as to avoid population increases in the rural areas. Langley has the capability of expanding infrastructure, they have a sewer treatment plant that is way below capacity, they have an excellent watershed. So if there was a change in the mentality of the decision makers in Langley they could vastly expand their area.

Keith Dearborn - I was speaking to the preferences that people have for living opportunities. Clearly Oak Harbor is capturing a larger share of the growth of North Whidbey on a relative basis then the Coupeville and Langley are.

Sheilah Crider - Oak Harbor has projected how it will fund the growth that is allocated to it during this planning period. Also how it will pay for the infrastructure as it is needed. We know that there will be no additional funds to pay for any additional growth.

It was decided to pull the words *advantages* and *disadvantages* out of the scenario and classify them all as assumptions.

Vince Moore - Under the expanded UGA scenario the assumption is about half (15,000) of the total projected growth for

the 20 year period would be absorbed by Oak Harbor.

The Coupeville UGA would go from roughly 1,600 in 1996 to 5,200 in 2020 which is clearly outside the limits of the current Coupeville UGA. The Langley UGA would go from 1,000 people up to about 8,000 people. A new UGA on Camano going from zero to 4,300. The total of the unincorporated county population would go from 53,100 to 54,400.

Keith Dearborn - Suggested that Scenario One be taken out completely as an option as it is not realistic enough to even be considered as an option.

Vince Moore- The public has raised this issue and we need to respond to it.

Scenario Two

Infill in Rural Areas of Intensive Development

Assumptions

- *Reflective of historic pattern of growth (Langley and Coupeville UGAs acceptable)*
- *Distributes growth yet contains sprawl*
- *More moderate zoning requirement*
- *Difficult to service efficiently*
- *Potential for future sprawl inherent in pattern*
- *Needs strong controls over RAID infill*

Keith Dearborn - RAIDS by definition are not areas that have to be concerned about sprawl. The RAID boundaries have been designed to contain them to ensure that we do not have sprawl. He felt the statement "*Potential for future sprawl inherent in pattern*", should be removed.

Vince Moore - In this scenario we are still fitting into the Oak Harbor UGA plan and what it does beyond the year 2010 is keep a more moderate increase similar to what they are anticipating. Oak Harbor would go from 19,200 to 31,000 in 2020. The Coupeville UGA would go from 1,600 to 2,000 over the 20 year planning period. They only go to 1,800 by the year 2010 which is in keeping with their current UGA plan. Langley would go from 1,000 to 2,200 in 2020. Freeland under this scenario would go from 1,400 to 3,700. Clinton would go from 900 to 3,300. The unincorporated population of the county would go from 53,100 in 1996 to 71,400 in 2020, an increase of about 17,000. The RAIDS on Camano would go from 9,800 to 14,200.

Keith Dearborn - In total around 13,000 of the projected 32,000 population would go to the UGAs.

Scenario Three

Rural Dispersion

Assumptions

- *Most laissez-faire in terms of market*
- *Least controls on rural dispersion*
- *Least cost public utilities*
- *Requires strong measures to protect remaining rural character and*

- *environmental resources*
- *Potential for future sprawl inherent in pattern*
- *Most conflict with GMA goals*

OPTIONS

Planning Period

- *Establish 1998-2018 as the Planning Period*
- *Establish 1998-2020 as the Planning Period*

Planning Baseline

- *Adopt the OFM High Range Projection*
- *Adopt the OFM Medium Range Projection*
- *Adopt the OFM Low Range Projection*
- *Petition the GMHB to adjust the OFM Projection*

Application of the Projections

- *Adopt Scenario One- Expand the UGA's, sharply limit growth in the Rural areas*
- *Adopt Scenario Two - Accept current UGA plans and promote intensive infill in Rural areas of more intensive development*
- *Adopt Scenario Three - Accept current UGA plans, restrict RAID infill, and permit new growth in the non-RAID Rural areas.*

Department Recommendation

- *Adopt the OFM middle range projection, 2020 horizon, and RAID infill scenario.*
- *Amend the CWPP's to incorporate the projection and allocations.*
- *Carefully monitor growth trends and patterns.*
- *If infrastructure constraints indicate growth slowing, petition GMHB for OFM propulsion revision before 2008 - 2010 plan review and amendment program.*

Keith Dearborn - Skagit County tried to do something like RAIDS and they were using them as an argument to soak up a portion of the 20 year forecast and the GMHB said you cannot justify RAIDS in that way. You can't argue they need to be larger in order to accommodate a larger share of your growth forecast. You have to design the boundaries based on existing patterns which is what we are doing. I think we need to be clear, from a record standpoint, that we are not defining RAIDS in order to soak up a portion of our growth forecast. They are already here, the fact that they may be readily able to accommodate a portion of that forecast is important to recognize but not a driving force for their definition and boundary establishment.

He asked Mr. Moore what kind of actions the county would take to promote infill in RAIDS.

Vince Moore - Provide for a cheaper and faster permit process, provide facilities and assist in infrastructure or other services.

Commissioner Shelton - When we talk about promoting the infilling of RAIDS we need to accept up front that some of those platted communities will not support residential development.

Linda Moore - Noted that a list of tables with actual numbers rather than charts would be helpful along with a current list of the RAIDS.

Mike Morton, Island County Public Works, noted that they were using the 2020 timeframe and the medium OFM population projections for the transportation element.

Public Input

Charlie Stromberg, Freeland - 20 to 40% of the dwelling units in Central, South Whidbey and Camano don't have federal kind of population in them. They are there, they are livable, some of them are rented and a lot of them are being converted or moved into by retirement people. He said a lot of these very nice vacation homes or homes that have been built for future retirement are being converted into permanent population.

There are an awful lot of platted lots in the unincorporated area. One number that supposedly came from a county staff person estimated 47,000 lots in the unincorporated area.

He said it was very important to review the locations for light industrial sites. He noted that a lot of the industrial sites are not connected with UGAs or RAIDS.

Commissioner Shelton - Noted that Mr. Stromberg's figure of 47,000 lots was way off base when you consider there are only 55,000 parcels of property in the entire county.

Bill Thorne, Camano - Encouraged them to differentiate between the legal issues and the policy issues.

A point to keep in mind is that RAIDS are rural enclaves and he was concerned that there is a tendency to begin looking at RAIDS as urban enclaves.

The whole issue of population projections really centers around vision. You have to know where you are going before you can make rational decisions about where you are going to encourage people to go and what we are going to do in the way of land use regulations to encourage that.

Thomas Noyes, Department of Transportation - The Department of Transportation understands the fact that Island County has transportation facilities that are going to have capacity constraints on them in the future and that could have an impact on growth, but the general feeling at the Department of Transportation is that despite the fact that the congestion is going to get worse in the future the growth is going to come and the medium range OFM population projections are reasonable despite that issue.

Dean Enell - Need a mechanism in place to influence people to live in the UGAs. He encouraged looking into impact fees to help provide the infrastructure.

Jack Sikma, Freeland - Second home owners need to be part of the population projection calculations.

Due to time constraints sub-area planning was continued to Thursday, February 5, 1998.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m., with the next regular meeting of the Board scheduled for February 2, 1998 beginning at 9:30 a.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

ISLAND COUNTY, WASHINGTON

W. L. McDowell, Chairman

Mike Shelton, Member

ATTEST:

Tom Shaughnessy, Member

Margaret Rosenkranz

Clerk of the Board