Island County Comprehensive Plan

Adopted
September 28, 1998

[Updated through Ord. C-46-11 (April 11, 2011)]
Island County Comprehensive Plan

1. Policy Plan and Land Use Element

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2nd Grade
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Adopted
September 28, 1998
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Special thanks to Jeff Tate of the Island County
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The Island County Comprehensive Plan is made up of ten elements.

1. Policy Plan and Land Use Element
   Island County Policy Plan/Land Use Element

2. Water Resources Element
   Island County Water Resources Element
   Island County Ground Water Management Program

3. Shoreline Management Element
   Island County Shoreline Master Program Update

4. Housing Element
   Island County Housing Element

5. Historic Preservation Element
   Ebey’s Landing National Historic Reserve Comprehensive Plan

6. Natural Lands Element
   Island County Natural Lands Plan

7. Parks and Recreation Element
   Island County Parks and Recreation Plan Update

8. Transportation Element
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   Island County Non-Motorized Trail Plan
   Six Year Road Program

9. Utilities Element
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10. Capital Facilities Element
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AICUZ: Air Installation Compatible Use Zones
APZ: Accident Potential Zone
BICC: Board of Island County Commissioners
CHAS: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy
CWPP: County Wide Planning Policies
CWSP: Coordinated Water Systems Plan
DCTED: Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development
DNR: Washington State Department of Natural Resources
DOE: Washington State Department of Ecology
DOT: Washington State Department of Transportation
DU: Dwelling Unit
EDC: Island County Economic Development Council
ELNHR: Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve
FmHA: Farmers Home Administration
GMA: Growth Management Act
GWMP: Ground Water Management Program
ICC: Island County Code
ICPC: Island County Planning Commission
LID: Local Improvement District
LOB: Logical Outer Boundary
LOS: Level of Service
UGA: Municipal Urban Growth Area
NUGA: Non-municipal Urban Growth Area
PDR: Purchased Development Rights
PRD: Planned Residential Development
PUD: Public Utility District
RAID: Rural Area of Intense Development
RCW: Revised Code of Washington
REET: Real Estate Excise Tax
RTPO: Regional Transportation Planning Organization
SEPA: Washington State Environmental Policy Act
SMA: Shoreline Management Act
SMP: Shoreline Master Program
TDM: Transportation Demand Management
TDR: Transferable Development Right
ULID: Utility Local Improvement District
USFWS: United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WAC: Washington Administrative Code
WDFW: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
WUTC: Washington Utilities Transportation Commission
I. OVERVIEW

ISLAND COUNTY VISION STATEMENT

Allure of the County. Island County’s natural beauty and unique character are powerful magnets. Many lifestyles mesh well in a cohesive rural environment. Residents comprise a diversified population representing many nationalities, spanning all age groups. Many local families have been part of the county for generations. Reflecting consistency and change at the same time is part of what makes Island County unique.

Comprehensive Planning. Through comprehensive planning, Island County has taken measures to manage growth. This will ensure that the quality of life, traditional values, desirable rural lifestyle, and small town character which have created a “feeling of community” throughout Island County for over a hundred years, are protected and maintained for current and future generations.

Impact of Past Decisions. Many of the options available to Island County have been shaped by the land use decisions made in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Very few large parcels of land remain in the County. Parcel sizes are mixed, with smaller lots predominating along the shoreline - most of these small lots are developed. While the County has large areas that are forested and appear undeveloped with an average density less than one person per acre, the average County lot size is less than three acres. Thus, traditional zoning actions (such as large lot zoning) will be ineffectual in preserving rural character.

Challenge. Planning through the year 2020 poses a significant challenge: containing existing areas of more intensive development, experiencing continuous growth, and attempting to maintain rural character. The overall goals seek to preserve the historic rural economy and character, protect the environment, conserve critical areas, and to build a strong modern economy and provide for affordable housing—all while keeping government regulation from overwhelming private property rights.

Rural character is one of Island County’s most valued assets, providing diversity, a sense of community, and the quality of life desired by many island residents. Longtime residents and newcomers agree that a slow-paced, rural character has attracted and kept them here. Rural lifestyles provide privacy and individuality, allow people to set their own pace, bring people closer to nature and their neighbors, and offer the opportunity for family development in a safe environment. Many of the families who own and manage the county’s farms and forest properties hope to see their livelihoods continue for generations to come, but fear over-regulation will drive them out.

The Future of Island County: A Vision for 2020. Through planning, the County will take steps to ensure that Island County’s rural character and natural beauty is protected, while meeting the housing and service needs of both existing and future county residents. When traveling through Island County one will see forests, farmlands with crops and livestock, and open space that provides for varied wildlife and flora.
A safe transportation system will continue to be improved to first meet the needs of county residents as well as to provide for visitors. Two-lane roads that offer views of forests, farms, fields, snow capped mountains, and water characterize the transportation system in the rural area.

Farming plays a very important role in Island County, even though many farms are small in scale. Large or small, throughout both islands, all farms in Island County, including tree farms, have unique value by contributing to the County’s rural character.

Though it is hard to describe in words, “rural character” is a crucial element of the County’s economy and culture – and one of the few things virtually all residents agree is essential to the quality of life here. Rural character not only makes people “feel good” about the place where they live and provides a cultural connection to the County’s past – it also has a very clear dollars-and-cents benefit. Rural character (which would not exist without the County’s farms and forests) is the basis for the County’s important tourist industry. It is also a magnet for retirees and their dollars, as well as for businesses that consider locating here to provide a higher quality of life for their employees.

For all these reasons, it is important as a matter of policy for the County to help keep farmers here farming, including those on limited acreage, especially in the face of growing pressures for residential and commercial development. Tax incentives, extension programs and “Right-to-Farm” measures help. So too does a regulatory approach that protects the environment as mandated by the State’s Growth Management Act, but does so in fair, science-based ways that are flexible as the law allows, and that give farmers as much say as possible in the management of their lands.

Under zoning standards only farmland in the ag tax program is classified by the County as “commercial”. However, both commercial and noncommercial farming play an important role in preserving the rural character of Island County. Commercial farming can be either of long-term or local commercial significance to County residents. Noncommercial farming, including raising of livestock, continues to be a wide spread activity of local importance in the rural area of the County, providing a cultural connection to both the historic past and future of Island County.

Standards that protect wetlands, streams, steep slopes, beaches, wildlife habitat, and other critical areas have been implemented for rural development. Public beaches and forests, bicycle paths, hiking trails and other assets for low-impact recreation have been added. Public funding for open space acquisition has continued. Restoration and enhancement of important ecological features has occurred throughout the County, primarily along shorelines.

Island County successfully encouraged more growth in urban growth areas and defined areas of more intensive rural development with permanent boundaries. Langley and Coupeville have maintained their unique small town character and Oak Harbor has accepted the majority of UGA growth in Island County.

Island County has instituted measures which allow for the continuing utilization of existing lots without unnecessary sacrifice of rural character, a strong economy, and environmental protection. Island County’s tradition remains evident as new development occurs. Large tracts of land, providing wildlife habitat and assistance with aquifer recharge, surround compact,
dispersed settlements. Compact settlements are moderately dense and tend to reduce development pressure
in more rural areas, which dominate the landscape while providing connectivity of natural areas for wildlife habitat.

Innovative affordable housing and clustering techniques allow for the efficient placement of services, protection of critical areas, and provide high-quality open space, while not detracting from the County’s rural character. Land use and housing policies, including affordable housing density bonuses provide for the development of housing units for that segment of the population which could otherwise be priced out of the County.

The County continues to diversify its economy while NAS Whidbey remains the economic engine of the County and light manufacturing increases as an important economic factor. The County has successfully expanded job opportunities so that more local residents have the opportunity to live and work in the County. These actions have helped to relieve the pressures in off-island transportation linkages. Island County has become increasingly attractive to low-impact, appropriately scaled manufacturing, professional and service businesses, and craftspeople and artists. New businesses fit easily into both urban and rural lifestyles and provide improved wages, advancement, and career opportunities for our youth.

Island County coordinates and cooperates with its incorporated towns. Regulatory and non-regulatory options and incentives that respect the property rights of owners as well as community needs are balanced.

(Ord. C-150-05 [PLG-021-05], May 15, 2006)
The greatest challenge facing Island County is to mesh this vision of the future with the county’s past and the view we see today. The task is formidable, but nothing less will do.

**PLAN HISTORY**

Island County’s first comprehensive plan was completed in 1964 when the General Plan was published and adopted. This General Plan was followed by the adoption of an Interim Zoning Ordinance in 1966.

In 1973, efforts were begun to update the General Plan by conducting a two phased planning program. Phase I comprised a detailed analysis of natural and cultural characteristics of the County as well as documentation of features posing limitations for urban development. The expertise of several disciplines was drawn upon and referenced during formulation of the program’s first phase. This basic inventory was completed in December, 1974, resulting in a publication entitled *Phase I: Existing Conditions*.

The planning program of 1975 focused upon maximizing community and local officials’ participation in the planning process during composition of *Phase II: Planning Policy*. Community meetings were held throughout planning areas of the County, encouraging local citizens to become involved in the planning process. Major planning problems, issues, and desires were identified as the outcome of these meetings.

The County’s Interim Zoning Ordinance was not amended or updated concurrently with the adoption of Phase II. The differences between the Optimal Land Use Map and the zoning designations, as well as the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, were reconciled in favor of zoning.

In 1983-84, the County prepared and adopted a Planning and Zoning Strategy as a precursor to a plan amendment. The plan amendment and its implementing official controls (i.e. a performance based zoning ordinance supported by a Legislative Intent and Findings of Fact together with land development standards) were adopted in 1984. These 1984 amendments were a precursor to the State’s Growth Management Act of 1990, as it embodied many of the basic principles used in the development of the Act. A significant public hearing and public participation process accompanied the plan amendment and official control adoption.

Work on the Island County Comprehensive Plan revision began immediately following the enactment of the State’s Growth Management Act. Several ordinances were enacted by the county to establish compliance with respect to matters such as the County-wide Planning Policies and Critical Areas. In the course of preparing this plan 33 public workshop sessions were held by the Planning Commission during the period of February 1993 to May 1994. Subsequently, 10 public hearings with public input were held from May 1994 to July 1994. A first draft of a County Comprehensive Plan was sent to the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development and distributed to other state government agencies for review and comment. Comments were received from DCTED and several of the other agencies. At that time, initial decisions were being made by the state Growth Management Hearing Boards relative to petitions filed in other jurisdictions. Most notably, the decisions of the Central Puget Sound and Western Washington Boards in the cases of *Rural Residents vs. Kitsap County* (93-3-0010), and the Port Townsend et. al. vs. Jefferson County (94-2-0006) had...
a significant impact on Island County’s planning program. The implications related to the threshold densities allowable for development in the rural areas were of most concern. The Kitsap County decision indicated that densities of one dwelling unit per acre or greater were defined as urban densities which would not be permitted outside of the urban growth areas. The Jefferson County decision generally reflected that decision but indicated that the Western Washington Board would not establish the one dwelling unit per acre as a definitive policy and that a variety of uses and densities could be located in rural areas. The Board advised, however, that the counties would have to “show their work” and conduct detailed analyses to justify their decisions to locate such a variety of uses and densities outside of the UGAs. DCTED comments also noted a significant issue regarding the location of urban development in Island County outside of the incorporated areas.

After this evaluation of the plan as originally proposed, the Planning Commission instructed the Department of Planning and Community Development to revise the optimal land use plan. As part of this process the county planning department requested funding to assist in generating the maps and statistical information regarding existing land uses in the county that would be required in a detailed presentation of the county’s existing development pattern and justify the elements of a future land use plan.

The Board of Island County Commissioners subsequently authorized a mapping and database development program to be conducted by the Island County Assessor’s Office and the County Department of Central Services. In August, 1996, the Island County Assessor’s office and the Department of Central Services completed the revision of the master database containing information on all parcels of land in the County along with the development of a system to graphically portray this information on a County-wide base map. Shortly thereafter, the Department of Planning and Community Development presented the results of the preliminary existing land use analysis and a proposed future land use plan concept. The latter was presented to the Planning Commission on October 8th, 1996.

In the meantime, the Planning Commission began an in-depth review of the public comment on the initial draft and began revising the text portion of the Comprehensive Plan.

Citizen involvement has occurred at every phase of plan development, reference the Citizen Participation Summary Report, 1992. Workshop sessions have been informal to allow maximum citizen input. Written testimony has also been solicited, collected and considered. Public meetings have been held throughout the County, newspaper articles written and general input sought from every source.

A scoping notice for the Island Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Statement was published on January 11 and 12, 1994. A public hearing was held on February 3, 1994, to address the scoping document and receive public comment. The scoping document describes the programmatic non-project EIS (WAC 197-11-441) approach used to address the impacts of anticipated population increases in Island County consistent with GMA requirements. As a result of the Emergency Rule for SEPA (GMA Integration effective May 25, 1994), the SEPA EIS was integrated with the November 12, 1996 Staff Draft of the Policy Plan/Land Use Element.
SEPA comments regarding the integrated environmental analysis were received during November and December of 1996. Plan comments were accepted during the end of 1996 and all of 1997.

The Team Draft of the Policy Plan/Land Use Element represented a year of Planning Commission meetings on the Staff Draft for additional studies and suggestions for new policy language. During this time, there were changes to the GMA which substantially changed the manner in which the County could address the more densely populated residential areas. The GMA changes which allowed for identifying “areas of more intensive rural development” provided an opportunity to acknowledge existing development in a manner not available before. The reassessment of the entire plan was done from November 1997 through June of 1998. Major issues that were necessary to reassess in the comprehensive planning effort were identified, and a process of Planning Commission, Board of County Commissioners and extensive public involvement was undertaken. Issue papers were used as a method for the public, Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners to better understand the key areas for further plan refinement. Between November 1997 and July 1998, 20 workshops, Planning Commission hearings and Board of County Commissioner hearings were held. The information presented and discussed during these workshops and public hearings has been an integral part of the overall planning process. During the latter part of 1997, a database of all items in the record for the Comprehensive Plan, dating back to 1994, was established so that queries could be performed by the public on a number of specific topics for which they might wish to further examine the documents. In addition, numerous studies have been undertaken during this planning process including: Camano Island Annex Non-Municipal Urban Growth Area Study; Camano Island Country Club Non-Municipal Urban Growth Area Study; Clinton Non-Municipal Urban Growth Area Study; Freeland Non-Municipal Urban Growth Area Study; Goldie Road Light Industrial/Business Park Area Study; Island County Commercial Agriculture Land Study; Island County Commercial Forest Land Study; Planned Residential Development Analysis; Potential Rural Service Lands Study; Site Plan Review Analysis; and Rural Residential and Rural Lands Analysis.

In the beginning of September 1998, the Planning Commission presented their final Comprehensive Plan recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. The Board held two subsequent public hearings to allow for final plan refinements on key issues. This adopted Comprehensive Plan represents the culmination of years of hard work and will provide a sound basis for growth management in the years to come.

**OVERVIEW OF WORK PLAN**

The goals of the Planning Commission from the beginning of its work were to:

1. Solicit and capture citizen input in a “bottoms up” approach;
2. Plan in a coordinated fashion with other jurisdictions within the County; and
3. Meet State Growth Management Act requirements.

The existing comprehensive plan was carefully analyzed. Subcommittees were formed in such areas as economic development, airports, affordable housing and the potential use of TDRs to
ensure detailed review and study of options. To a substantial degree, this plan is a refinement of
Island County’s current Comprehensive Plan. What emerged met the test of public discussion
and debate, and fit with our collective vision for the future.

This Plan, and its attendant goals and policies and future land use plan, represent a balance of the
views and opinions expressed by the many citizens who took time to participate in workshops or
write letters for the record, and the goals outlined in the Growth Management Act.

**PURPOSE AND COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN**

This Comprehensive Plan has been developed in accordance with the State of Washington’s
Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A, to address growth issues in Island County. It
represents the community’s policy plan for growth through the year 2020.

Formulation of a plan that is responsive to the future needs and challenges of Island County
residents is the primary objective of this planning effort. The essence of policy planning is that it
provides the community with an expressed set of statements defining the direction and character
of future development which clearly integrate the goals and objectives of the Growth Management Act.

The benefits of a policy plan are as follows:

- Public understanding and participation in the planning process are facilitated by the
  uncomplicated character of the policy statements.
- Elected officials become closely involved in the planning process through definition of
  explicit policy statements.
- Several diverse agencies and interests making development decisions in the community
  may utilize the policy plan as a coordinating device.
- Policy planning provides stability and consistency in the planning program
  notwithstanding changes in conditions of a community.

The guiding functions of the policy plan are:

- Useful in the adoption of land use codes by legislative bodies.
- Applicable in the administration of development controls and incentives by responsible
  officials.
- Necessary to provide a reasonable and fair means of enacting legislation or controls
  which will be legally defensible in a court of law.

The role of this plan is:

- To set goals and policies to guide growth in the County through the year 2020;
- To develop future land use patterns and maps; and
- To establish a specific program for plan implementation.
The mandatory elements that shall be addressed in a comprehensive plan as stated in the RCW 36.70A.070 are as follows:

- **Land Use Element:** Island County Policy Plan and Land Use Element
- **Rural Element:** Island County Policy Plan and Land Use Element
- **Housing Element:** Island County Housing Element
- **Capital Facilities Element:** Island County Capital Facilities Plan and Capital Facilities Improvement Program (under separate cover)
- **Utilities Element:** Island County Utilities Element
- **Transportation Element:** Island County Transportation Plan, Non-Motorized Trail Plan and Six Year Road Program
- **Shoreline Management Element:** Shoreline Master Program (under separate cover)

Optional planning elements that are part of this comprehensive plan are:

- **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element:** Island County Parks and Recreation Plan
- **Natural Lands Element:** Island County Natural Lands Element
- **Historic Preservation Element:** Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve Comprehensive Plan (under separate cover)
- **Water Resources Element:** Island County Water Resources Element and Ground Water Management Program (under separate cover)

The goals and policies of all of the elements listed above, are incorporated into Chapter VI, and the associated implementation strategies are outlined in Chapter V.

Central themes that run throughout this plan are:

- Citizen input as an essential part of the comprehensive planning process. The process of publicly debating sensitive issues is valuable in forming a viable outcome. Citizen involvement engenders commitment and willingness to find solutions.
- Identification the historic development pattern has become more easily recognizable with the advent of new geographic information system capabilities and database query techniques. Carefully defining and containing this historic development pattern is now recognized by the Growth Management Act as a method for planning for “areas of more intensive rural development”.
- Housing and land prices have risen dramatically in Island County over the past 10 years to a point where affordable housing has become a scarcity. Providing incentives for the development of affordable housing for all County residents is a priority of this plan.
• Farm and forest lands are a valued resource for the County. The County is committed to provide planning options and incentives to help sustain the productivity and economic viability of farms and forests.

• Regulatory measures must be balanced with non-regulatory options and incentives. It is not easy to convince individual property owners or developers that they should put the interests of the County as a whole above their needs and interests. Finding ways to offer incentives and options is essential to bridging the gap between individual rights and community needs. It is important to develop innovative ways to create win-win situations. The presence of a critical area on private property must not be viewed by government or the property owner as a potential loss of property value or rights. These assets, under the owners control, must be recognized as features that enhance the value of the property.

• Clustering is the preferred alternative to large lot development in order to conserve open space in the rural area and to preserve the ability to expand urban growth areas in an orderly fashion in adjacent areas. Clustered residential development is a way to provide more affordable, easier to serve, less disruptive development that can preserve significant amounts of open space. Clustering can also be very effective in siting a development to protect critical areas. In-filling of development in existing built-up areas such as Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) or areas of more intensive rural development must be encouraged as another important tool for maintaining open space, limiting sprawl and protecting rural character.

• Job opportunities in the County are fairly limited in many areas. Providing employment opportunities for an increasing population which will also allow an increased percentage of residents to work in the County and not have to commute, is of great importance in this planning effort.

• The Navy is a very large part of the County’s economic, social and cultural make-up. The County wants to do everything within its capabilities to assure that land use decisions it makes will not in any way conflict with on-going naval operations.

• Finally, as outlined in the County-wide Planning Policies, it is essential to successful plan implementation that the County continue to work closely with all jurisdictions and districts within its boundaries. Close coordination and cooperation is necessary to ensure effective land use planning and ensure full and efficient use of Urban Growth Areas.

County-wide Planning Policies (CWPP) establish the framework from which county, town and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted. The CWPP provide the foundation for assuring that consistency criteria, required between county and city planning under the GMA are fulfilled. The CWPP were jointly and collaboratively developed and adopted by Island County and the cities of Coupeville, Oak Harbor, and Langley on June 22, 1992. The CWPP provided guidance in development of this Comprehensive Plan.

**STATE PLANNING GOALS**

The State of Washington’s Growth Management Act sets forth statutory goals for the guidance of the cities and counties required to plan under the act in RCW 36.70A.020. In addition, RCW 36.70A.480 states that the goals and policies of the state shoreline management act as set forth is

*Adopted September 28, 1998*
RCW 90.58.020 are added as one of the goals as presented in RCW 36.70A.020. A matrix identifying the location in the Plan or the accompanying volume of where the GMA goals, in addition to other requirements of the GMA, are addressed is provided in Appendix A. The Growth Management Act goals as presented in RCW 36.70A.020 and RCW 36.70A.480 are outlined below.

- **Urban Growth:** Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.

- **Reduce Sprawl:** Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low density development.

- **Transportation:** Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

- **Housing:** Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of the existing housing stock.

- **Economic Development:** Encourage economic development that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunities for all citizens, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

- **Property Rights:** Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.

- **Permits:** Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.

- **Natural Resource Industries:** Maintain and enhance natural resource based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.

- **Open Space and Recreation:** Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks.

- **Environment:** Protect the environment and enhance quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

- **Citizen Participation and Coordination:** Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.
- **Public Facilities and Services:** Ensure that those public facilitates and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

- **Historic Preservation:** Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archeological significance.

- **Shorelines.** The goals and policies of the state shoreline management act (RCW 90.58.020) are goals and policies of the Growth Management Act.

### MAJOR ISSUES

**Introduction**

As Island County prepares its Comprehensive Plan, a number of critical issues stand out. The following discussion focuses on these issues, providing background and context for the County’s future land use plan, and for the goals and policies that appear in later sections of the Plan.

**Population Growth**

Population growth in Island County has been driven largely by the in-migration of people from other sections of the state and country. Figure 1.1 displays the county’s population growth from 1900 to 2000, while Figure 1.2 displays growth rates for each decade. Island County has experienced rapid population growth in every decade, except the years between 1920 and 1930. The most dramatic increases occurred between 1940 and 1960, a result of establishing Whidbey Naval Air Station on North Whidbey; and between 1970 and 1980, as the Everett Boeing plant expanded within close commuting distance to South Whidbey.

(Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)
Figure 1.1 Island County Population, 1900-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Pop.</th>
<th>Incorp. %</th>
<th>Oak Harbor %</th>
<th>Coupeville %</th>
<th>Langley %</th>
<th>Unincorp. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1,870</td>
<td>- 0%</td>
<td>- 0%</td>
<td>- 0%</td>
<td>- 0%</td>
<td>1,870 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>4,704</td>
<td>310 7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>310 7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4,394 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>5,489</td>
<td>954 17%</td>
<td>337 6%</td>
<td>343 6%</td>
<td>274 5%</td>
<td>4,535 83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>5,369</td>
<td>907 17%</td>
<td>362 7%</td>
<td>277 5%</td>
<td>268 5%</td>
<td>4,462 83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>6,096</td>
<td>1,039 17%</td>
<td>376 6%</td>
<td>325 5%</td>
<td>338 6%</td>
<td>5,059 83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>11,079</td>
<td>1,999 18%</td>
<td>1,193 11%</td>
<td>379 3%</td>
<td>427 4%</td>
<td>9,080 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>19,638</td>
<td>5,130 26%</td>
<td>3,942 20%</td>
<td>740 4%</td>
<td>448 2%</td>
<td>14,508 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>27,011</td>
<td>10,392 38%</td>
<td>9,167 34%</td>
<td>678 3%</td>
<td>547 2%</td>
<td>16,619 62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>44,048</td>
<td>13,931 32%</td>
<td>12,271 28%</td>
<td>1,006 2%</td>
<td>654 1%</td>
<td>30,117 68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>60,195</td>
<td>19,398 32%</td>
<td>17,176 29%</td>
<td>1,377 2%</td>
<td>845 1%</td>
<td>40,797 68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>71,558</td>
<td>22,477 31%</td>
<td>19,795 28%</td>
<td>1,723 2%</td>
<td>959 1%</td>
<td>49,081 69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since 1900, most of Island County’s population has resided in rural unincorporated portions of the county. Even so, the incorporated areas (until 1970) traditionally had attracted a larger share of in-migration than unincorporated areas. Between 1970 and 1980 this trend reversed. In the last three decades, unincorporated areas have maintained a constant 68% share of the total Island County population.

(Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)
Between 1980 and 2000, population in both the incorporated and unincorporated parts of Island County has increased by more than 50%. This is consistent with statewide trends of continued migration from more urban counties to rural counties.

**Housing Price and Availability**

Even if economic opportunity and high quality of life make an area a desirable place to move, in-migration will not occur if housing is not available or is too highly priced. Affordability is a serious problem in Island County. The County ranked second in the state to San Juan County in sales prices out of the range of affordability for most residents. Island County’s growing popularity for retirees and vacationers, and the amount of shoreline property available, has contributed to high housing costs, keeping a significant amount of the available stock off the market.¹

**Planning Area Population Allocation**

For more accurate and useful population projections, the County has been divided into four planning areas: North Whidbey, Central Whidbey, South Whidbey and Camano Island (Map A). The division between North and Central Whidbey corresponds to census tract boundaries delineated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The division between Central and South Whidbey follows a voting district boundary requiring that one census block be divided between the two regions. After establishing the boundaries, each region can be analyzed to better prepare all parts of the county for expected growth demands. It is essential to understand where in the county growth is expected to occur. Planning area growth is predicted using the proportionate share method and growth rate method. By looking at what proportion of the total population each region has held in the past, a more accurate picture emerges of what the County will look like in the future.

(Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Whidbey</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Whidbey</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Whidbey</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camano Island</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Map A Island County Planning Areas
Measures to Protect Rural Character

Rural character is one of Island County’s most valued assets, providing the quality of life desired by many island residents. Rural areas simply have a different “feeling” than urban centers. Lacking the constant pressures that people experience in crowded urban areas, a rural atmosphere allows people to set their own pace. Spacious living environments foster privacy, individuality, and a sense of personal freedom while community centers, such as shops and convenience stores, provide places for spontaneous or planned visits with neighbors and friends. People in rural areas expect, tolerate, and prepare for the minor inconveniences that come with living in widely scattered and sparsely developed areas (e.g., many homes have alternative heat and power sources).

Transportation patterns in rural areas are characterized by meandering two-lane roads that offer pleasant views of forests, farms, fields, and water. Travelers typically experience only short waits at stop signs while very few (or no) stop lights exist. Traffic flows smoothly with few delays and pedestrians walk on shoulders beside the road, rather than sidewalks.

Compact, dispersed settlements with many homes on small lots are surrounded by large tracts of land, much of which is undeveloped. Scattered convenience stores and small commercial centers serve these dispersed rural clusters. Small towns or cities exist nearby, and the attractions of metropolitan areas generally are within a 1½ hour drive or less. Although these compact settlements are moderately dense in scale, the surrounding rural areas dominate the landscape.

Wildlife sightings are common in rural areas. Bald eagles soar along the shorelines while deer feed in fields and gardens. Rabbits dart across open fields as raptors survey overhead. Raccoons scavenge on the fringes of the forests and Great Blue Herons fish along the edges of large wetlands. Large, undeveloped areas provide habitat and assist with aquifer recharge. Lakes, ponds, wetlands, and streams are critical habitat areas as well as recreational amenities. Formal recreational facilities, such as ball fields, bowling alleys and golf courses, are fewer than informal facilities utilizing large open areas. Passive recreation takes the form of pedestrian and equestrian trails winding through private and public lands, and beaches.

Agricultural and forest lands, as well as undeveloped open space, contribute to rural character. This environment provides diverse and significant cultural/natural amenities. Views of old farm houses and barns, historic buildings, and the cultural landscape attract many tourists and please Whidbey and Camano residents. Island County’s heritage remains evident, even as new development mixes with existing homes.

The historical pattern of growth in Island County has led to very few remaining large parcels of land. Though since 1984, five acre lots have been required for new development in the rural portion of the county, much of the county was subdivided into much smaller parcels prior to 1984. Residential development encompasses much of the County’s shoreline. Communities comprising small lots are interspersed with areas of suburban-sized lots, as well as rural lots of 5, 10, and 20 acres. Although parcel sizes are widely mixed in the County, very small lots predominate in shoreline areas. This historical pattern satisfies the
desire of many to live along the shoreline while preserving a degree of rural character throughout.

Rural areas provide an opportunity for different life styles to exist side-by-side in security and privacy. Diversity in life styles and land uses is part of the rural character. Each landowner uses his/her property differently. Driving down a road, one might see hobby farms with large gardens and several animals (cows, horses, and goats) as well as home industries and residential estates. Private wells and small community water systems are the norm, as are individual septic systems.

Island County’s historic development patterns—particularly along shorelines and other water bodies—are a product of local circumstance, inclined to differ from the State definition of rural character. Previous comprehensive planning efforts have characterized rural area development in Island County as traditional rural patterns, in which concentrations of population (or centers) are surrounded by working or natural open spaces. Towns and commercial centers have emerged at significant crossroads along highway corridors and shorelines. Some isolated businesses serve outlying neighborhoods. These centers are interspersed with areas of farming and forestry activities. More concentrated nodes of residential subdivisions occur on the peripheral shorelines. Within the island interior, a patchwork of open agricultural fields and forested hinterlands is punctuated by areas of more intensive development. Increasingly, as shoreline lands become scarce, these rural areas have been divided into small farms, wood lots, and large-lot residential estate development; estates often are constructed to obtain views of scenic vistas.

Island County faces a dual challenge: contain its existing areas of more intensive development, while experiencing high growth rates, yet maintain a strong degree of rural character.

**Municipal Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)**

To meet GMA requirements, Island County must designate an Urban Growth Area (UGA) or areas in which urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which only non-urban growth can occur. Municipal UGAs will contain each of the incorporated cities plus designated areas of unincorporated county adjacent to the cities.

A key issue regarding the municipal UGAs is how large each area will be. Based on the GMA and Growth Management Hearings Board decisions, the size of the final UGAs is to be based on population, land capacity, fiscal impacts, and capital facilities. The population allocated by the County, in conjunction with the cities/town and overall County population, must be based on figures certified by the Office of Financial Management. For consistency, the County and cities must use the same OFM forecast, and the fiscal impact analysis must recognize the cost of providing facilities and services outside of municipal boundaries. One of the challenges is that Island County is planning for the year 2020. However, the cities has adopted their comprehensive plans to the year 2010 or 2013.

Another issue involves developing appropriate land use designations and regulations for unincorporated portions of the Urban Growth Areas. The GMA indicates that Forest, Agriculture, and Mineral lands are not normally located within Urban Growth Areas. Open
space and green belts must be identified and mapped within the UGAs. Residential densities within UGAs should be consistent with urban growth. Major Industrial Developments may be located outside a UGA only if a detailed land inventory demonstrates that there is no land suitable to site the development within a UGA, and other requirements can be met. Although some rural land uses may be appropriate in the UGAs, careful analysis and a reason for including them within UGAs will be required.

Land use designations, densities, and regulations for all types of development must be formulated within the unincorporated UGAs. Both the Oak Harbor and Langley comprehensive plans contain proposed land uses and densities within the unincorporated UGAs. The County Wide Planning Policies (CWPPs) indicate that the County and Cities will conduct a joint development review of the unincorporated UGAs, with the County making the ultimate decision.

The GMA also indicates that it is up to local governments to establish which public facilities and services are needed to support development. Municipalities are assumed to be the logical urban services providers under GMA. Policies and regulations must be adopted to ensure that public facilities and services needed for urban development are adequate and available within appropriately specified (and financially feasible) time frames. The CWPPs state that, “It is the policy of the County and Municipalities to provide new municipal public works facilities only within, and not beyond Urban Growth Areas. Such facilities include: streets, bridges and sidewalks built to municipal standards, water storage, transmission and treatment facilities, and storm sewer collection and treatment facilities.” Provision of municipal water and siting essential public facilities are possible exceptions.

It has been suggested that the County establish “potential UGA expansion areas,” located adjacent to unincorporated portions of UGAs. These potential urban expansion areas would acknowledge that the UGAs may expand in the future and that development in these areas should reflect that possibility. The potential urban expansion areas would be specific locations within the larger joint planning areas as shown on Map B. As envisioned, development in these potential urban expansion areas would be clustered, with the remainder of each parcel placed in interim development reserve category for future development and greenbelts. This development reserve land could be subdivided later, at urban densities determined by the municipality, when the parcel is included within the amended UGA. The concept of potential urban expansion areas will be cooperatively developed with the municipalities during their comprehensive plan updates.

The joint planning areas are provided for joint consultation between the county and the municipalities regarding issues within these areas. For example, Coupeville expects to coordinate land use decisions in order to protect its well field which is located in a joint planning area. In fact, many areas around Coupeville are designated for preservation by way of purchase of development rights by the National Park Service.
Map B Island County Joint Planning Areas
Non-Municipal Urban Growth Areas

Clinton and Freeland

Both Clinton and Freeland have developed as unincorporated communities, generally with a full range of land uses. As such, they are logical choices for further growth and to accommodate some of the forecasted population and employment for the county as a whole.

This relates directly to determining how large each of these two UGAs should be, and what the logical boundaries are for this designation. Related issues include determining an appropriate mix of commercial, residential and other land uses; and what degree of autonomy Clinton and Freeland would have in making local land use decisions.

Probably the key issue in answering these questions is the availability of basic infrastructure, particularly sewer. In addition to sewer, the other major constraints to potential development in Freeland and Clinton is the lack of adequate surface water/storm drainage systems. Even if solutions to sewer are found, development will be constrained without the correction of surface water problems and the planning and construction of storm drainage systems. In Island County, more than most locations, availability of water and sewer (through septic or other systems) drives development, though water is not an issue in the potential development of Freeland or Clinton. Septic systems do not last forever; portions of Clinton are currently experiencing septic system failures. Many portions of Freeland do not “perk” and, without a public sewer, are undevelopable. Both Freeland and Clinton are very limited in the amount of additional growth they can absorb without public sewer and storm drainage improvements. The County recognizes that a sewer system and systems to manage stormwater are needed if these areas are to accommodate the densities associated with non-municipal UGAs.

Lack of infrastructure raises several issues: it forces the cost of residential development higher, with negative impact on affordable housing; limits business opportunities for people who live and work on the islands; constrains physical occupation of the property; and constrains the types of business which can locate there. It is recognized that Island County government has a central role in the provision of infrastructure for Freeland and Clinton. Citizens throughout the County share a common goal: to create more opportunities to live and work on the islands without compromising rural character.

Existing businesses, such as Nichols Brothers that try to be good neighbors and protect the shoreline, are an important resource. They should be encouraged to stay and grow in Freeland. Though Holmes Harbor’s sewer system is an untapped and under utilized, its roadway system and stormwater system needs improvement.

Freeland has a Public Water District with the authority to annex and create Utility Local Improvement Districts (ULIDs). It may also have the ability, through the state, to create a Public Sewer District. At present, there is no plan to create a Sewer District. The “core area” of Freeland is gathered around Main Street and is considered the “village” for about a mile in all directions. Public Water District boundaries should be considered when fixing Community boundaries. Holmes Harbor has existing sewer and water capacity for
residential development. There exists the potential of excess capacity which could be utilized by other residential development.

Clinton has a Public Water District, one of the largest systems in the south part of the County. Its “core area” is on both sides of Highway 525. Clinton has been experiencing major problems as septic systems age and collapse, as well as interrelated stormwater management and slope stability problems. Currently, a community effort is under way to begin the process of implementing a sewer system.

**Fully Contained New Communities**

The concept of Fully Contained New Communities pursuant to RCW 36.70A.350 was extensively discussed in public workshops and hearings and determined to be inappropriate, at this time, for inclusion in the County’s Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.

**Light Manufacturing/Light Industrial Developments**

The County has determined that provisions for Major Industrial Developments in rural areas, as allowed under the GMA under RCW 36.70A.365 should not be utilized at this time. The County’s needs for light manufacturing/light industry can be met by using the flexibility now allowed by RCW 36.70A.070 (5) for recognizing existing areas with logical outer boundaries and providing for their infill, development and redevelopment (See *Areas of More Intensive Rural Development*, following this section.)

The need for additional light industrial areas was discussed extensively during the public process. If provisions are included in the Comprehensive Plan for them, they must be tightly crafted to comply with the GMA.

If the County provides for light manufacturing/light industrial uses in defined existing areas, these might include general light manufacturing, assembling, fabrication, storage, wholesaling, distribution, auto repair/salvage, and related activities. Light manufacturing areas would not include heavy manufacturing, such as smelting, refining, stamping, or heavy equipment.

**Areas of More Intensive Rural Development**

New under GMA, this designation permits the infill, development or redevelopment of existing rural areas which meet, at a minimum, a set of criteria contained in RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d). Given Island County’s development pattern, this designation may prove particularly useful. In essence, it allows recognition and consideration of existing developed rural areas outside of the UGAs.

The County so far has identified three types of areas of more intensive rural development for possible inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan: 1) residential;  2) non-residential; and 3) mixed use. As with municipal and non-municipal Urban Growth Areas, the County must decide how large each area of more intensive rural development will be. The GMA requires the County to adopt measures to minimize and contain existing areas or uses of more intensive rural development. Lands included in existing areas or uses shall not extend beyond the logical outer boundary of the existing area or use, thereby allowing a new pattern
of low-density sprawl. Existing areas are those that are clearly identifiable and contained, and where there is a logical boundary delineated predominately by the built environment—but that may also include undeveloped lands if they are limited as provided in this subsection. The County will need to establish the logical outer boundary of each designated areas of more intensive rural development, and should address the need to preserve the character of existing natural neighborhoods and communities; physical boundaries, such as bodies of water, streets and highways, and land forms and contours; prevent abnormally irregular boundaries; and provide public facilities and services in a manner that does not permit low-density sprawl.

While use of the area of more intensive rural development designation may be particularly appropriate for the County, clear policies must be established for its use.

**Rural Densities and Clustering**

The GMA allows counties to use clustering, density transfer, design guidelines, conservation easements, and other innovative techniques to achieve a variety of rural densities and uses not characterized by urban growth, that are consistent with rural character.

The Growth Management Hearings Boards have ruled that any residential land use pattern of 10 acres or larger is rural. Smaller lots in the rural area will be scrutinized to assure that they do not constitute urban growth; do not unduly threaten large scale natural resources or critical areas; will not thwart the long term flexibility to expand the UGA; and are not otherwise inconsistent with the goals and requirements of the GMA. They have also stated that a pattern of 1 and 2.5 acre lots is an urban land use pattern that constitutes sprawl, both inside and outside a UGA. As a general rule, lots of this size are prohibited as a residential development pattern in rural and urban areas. However, with recent amendments to the GMA, higher densities may be allowed in Island County than previously approved by the Boards, provided that sufficient measures are in place to protect rural character.

Clustered development is one tool that may allow higher rural densities while preserving the county’s rural character. The GMA seems to favor clustered residential development, although it does not appear to favor any accompanying density bonuses. Clustered residential developments can keep land available for agricultural use, but usually they are not designed to support commercial agriculture. Developers or homeowners’ associations generally own the protected land. However, homeowners may object to renting their property to farmers and ranchers because of the noise, dust, and odors associated with commercial farming. Even if the owners are willing to allow agriculture, undeveloped portions of a cluster subdivision may not be large enough for farmers to operate efficiently. Access can be a problem as well. For these reasons, clustering has been more successful in preserving open space or habitat or creating transitional areas between farms and residential areas than in protecting farmland.

The Planned Residential Development (PRD) subdivision process and criteria were established to allow landowners the flexibility and creativity to design subdivisions which vary in form and function from standard divisions of land. According to the Legislative Intent adopted with the Zoning Ordinance, the overall intent of the PRD process was to provide a better pattern of development. The Intent document further states that a better
pattern of development is one which allows for diverse housing options; contains clustered development; provides open space areas which enhance the living environment for the project residents and serve as an effective buffer to surrounding properties; and creates patterns which are compatible with surrounding rural lifestyles, agricultural, and forestry uses. The County should explore ways to improve the existing PRD process to more clearly refine the concept of clustered development in Island County. Some considerations could include: connecting open space tracts and allowing open space uses consistent with the character of the rural area and protection of wildlife habitat; dividing development into physically separated clusters with a maximum number of lots per cluster; physically separating the clusters using buffers of wind-resistant vegetation; and restricting placement of buildings on forested ridges or other prominent physical features.

Transportation

Transportation is a personal activity, a social service, and an industry. Island County recognizes the need to coordinate with industry, cities, towns, ports, neighboring counties, and State and Federal governments. Transportation systems must meet identified and projected transportation needs in a timely and cost effective manner. However, these systems must be compatible with the character of Island County.

The primary roadway circulation network of Island County must be evaluated to determine if it will be adequate to serve the future needs of local citizens. The Transportation Element has already done this for arterial routes and transit routes. Land use planning and transportation planning must be coordinated. For new construction, the County must fulfill Federal and State design requirements to be eligible for funding. Many county surface roads serve as scenic corridors, therefore, ground transportation enhancements must be tempered by the need to protect scenic vistas. Non-motorized multi-purpose trail systems will enhance safety and provide alternatives to on-road systems.

There is a need to expand the ferries’ capacity and associated parking, together with satellite parking and transit connections. Evaluation of alternatives should be done using least cost planning methodology. Ferry service between Camano and Whidbey Island is needed. Such a service will require land support facilities, such as docks and/or marina improvements on both islands. Commuter oriented foot-passenger ferries from the County to urban workplaces in Snohomish and King Counties also are desirable. Park and ride development for Camano Island would help relieve congestion along the State highway corridor.

Whidbey Island’s land connection to the mainland is State Highway 20 over Deception Pass Bridge at the extreme north end of Whidbey Island, then east through Skagit County. This bridge and the road across Fidalgo Island are serious transportation bottlenecks, given the population on North Whidbey and the presence of NAS Whidbey, Deception Pass State Park and the fact that SR 20 is on the Cascade Loop. Camano Island’s land connection to Stanwood and Interstate-5 is State Highway 532 over Mark Clark Bridge near the northeast corner of Camano Island, then east through the City of Stanwood and Snohomish County. Congestion often occurs over through Freedonia in Skagit County and over the Mark Clark Bridge. Solutions to these current transportation system problems are needed.
The net effect of Island County’s special transportation needs is that the islands’ appeal to people who want to live somewhat out of the mainstream of urban or suburban life. That very appeal brings more people to Island County and is the source of a real contradiction. Protecting rural character while maintaining level of service (LOS), especially on the State system, are sometimes conflicting goals. The County has established LOS standards for arterials and transit routes and recommended LOS standards for State highways, State facilities and intersections of regional significance. Growth—and planning for it—is generally accepted. However, the type of growth that would change lifestyles too quickly is unacceptable. The array of transportation facilities and services in Island County must fit projected needs within the limits of its rural character. Safety and efficiency in a wide variety of transportation modes is essential. Urban convenience, in terms of fast-paced levels of transportation service, is not desired in non-urban areas.

**Economic Development**

Since its earliest settlement, Island County has experienced slow but unmistakable development. The 21st century will see this trend continue. Since economic factors significantly affect Island County’s quality of life, a critical issue is to establish an Island County economic development strategy that will encourage appropriate economic development, consistent with the County’s rural character and protective of its environment. The need for long-term economic vitality mandates a vision for Island County communities: one that allows flexibility while encouraging development consistent with their history, assets, and long-term goals. This Plan is intended to guide long-term improvements in the use of land, labor, and capital resources in Island County.

Adequate transportation, water, and sewer has been a limiting factor in the economic development of Island County for many years.

However, with proper planning and policies, Island County has qualities that can provide a strong economic future for its citizens. The county is remote enough from metropolitan areas to retain rural character, yet close enough to provide reasonable access to urban markets, business centers, and amenities. This strategic location, along with attributes of charm and quality of life, provides a setting for a diversified economy.

The scale, type, and intensity of economic development must be compatible with Island County’s basic assets, as well as particular regional differences. As the May, 1996 Island County Economic Development Council Report, *Business Land Use Needs for Island County to the Year 2016* noted, “The rural quality is a direct economic asset. It is a major factor behind our tourism industry and serves to attract non-transportation dependent businesses that want a higher quality of life for themselves and their employees. Additionally, retirees are important to our economy as their incomes fuel much of our retail and service sectors. The goals of preserving rural lands and enhancing economic vitality are not mutually exclusive.” Appropriate development for North, Central and South Whidbey, and Camano Island will vary widely. Close coordination is crucial between these regions and the Cities, the Port, Water, Fire, School, Park and Recreation Districts, Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve, and the Public Transit Benefit Area. One of the issues that
needs to be addressed is the definition of appropriate small-scale and tourism uses that should be allowed to expand or locate in the rural area of Island County.

**Issues Affecting Existing Economic Activity**

The development of Island County’s economy is crucial in determining the nature and pattern of overall development. Currently, the county’s economic base depends on the Whidbey Naval Air Station and on commuter accessibility to mainland employment opportunities. In an era of defense budget downsizing, reliance upon the Whidbey NAS might be considered risky. Lack of a diversified economic structure makes the County over-dependent on a few employers. Continued reliance on off-island employment sources stresses the County’s already limited transportation accessibility to the mainland. The lack of strong, county-oriented economic centers has fostered a unique dispersal pattern of small commercial centers with only marginal economic value and investment appeal.

**Issues Affecting New Economic Development**

If Island County truly is to diversify its economy, new business development is essential.

1. The County should strive to attract and site desirable business and commercial development that is best suited to the Islands’ environment, given transportation, water and sewer limitations. In addition, the County should strive to attract and site business and commercial development that supports urban growth center development, provides living wage jobs, and provides locally needed goods and services. Examples include academic and research organizations, high tech companies, magazine or catalogue companies, light industries and financial service firms, as well as consultants, engineers, writers and artists operating by themselves or within small-to-medium-sized companies.

2. Changes in the workplace, such as advances in computer and telecommunications technology, will affect the County’s economy. Telecommunications advances, making it increasingly feasible to work from home for at least a portion of the workweek, will also impact island life. The County should support changes that would make both islands more self-sufficient and less subject to drastic change by outside economic interests.

3. As a haven for retirees, Island County should establish policies to promote suitable housing, including retirement hotels, congregate care, nursing homes, and Planned Residential Developments consistent with senior citizen needs.

4. “Primary” businesses that inject new money into Island County’s economy, while helping stabilize and enhance economic opportunity, potentially could add new supporting businesses/job opportunities for low and moderate income families. Businesses that reduce commuting and make the Island economy less dependent on transportation should be encouraged. The County should promote activities that fit into the rural lifestyle, provide relatively high wages, and offer advancement and career opportunities.

5. Businesses and commercial developments designed to enhance and complement Island County’s beauty, heritage, culture, and environment should be encouraged. Activities
that help preserve existing scenic highway corridors and vistas, and encourage air and water conservation should be pursued.

6. Island County can diversify its economy while protecting the environment and rural character by directing new business and commercial development into planned areas, where their benefits are maximized and negative impacts, if any, are minimized. Business parks, light industry and commercial areas should be designated where conflicts with adjoining areas can be minimized.

7. Currently, 50% of Island County’s workforce commutes to a job outside the County. Diversifying and expanding job opportunities within the County can help reduce the congestion associated with work commute trips.

Diversified Economy

Any vision for a diversified economy must include partnerships among numerous public and private organizations. For example, new technical business enterprises require a well educated and trained work force. All Island County public schools, as well as Skagit Valley Community College, Western Washington University, and private schools and colleges play a vital role in this process. Mutual support, cooperation and participation between the schools and County cannot be overemphasized. Unified planning between the County, schools, and economic development agencies will assure a well-trained, capable work force able to turn ideas into competitive products.

Besides training and education, a diversified economy requires affordable housing consistent with job locations and wages, particularly when the County tries to expand its job base so that residents are not required to commute off-island for well-paying jobs. Housing itself is only one link in providing viable, sustainable communities that can furnish transportation, public safety, public works and public services to employers and employees alike.

This vision for Island County’s economic future has enormous significance for land use, zoning, regulations, policies, and procedures. Mechanisms for encouraging and assisting desired economic activity urgently need implementation. A vital, resourceful economy is the only sure way to provide services, opportunities, and benefits for ourselves and our future. The Business Recruitment and Retention Plan (dated October 1997) submitted by the Island District Economic Development Council, should serve as a starting point for developing implementation strategies for assisting businesses and encouraging appropriate new businesses.

Master Planned Resorts

The concept of Master Planned Resorts pursuant to RCW 36.70A.360 was extensively discussed in public workshops and hearings and determined to be inappropriate for inclusion, at this time, in the County’s Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.
Airport and Aviation Impacts

Airports and related support facilities are an important part of the transportation network serving Island County. They range from the U.S. Naval Air Station to small private landing strips, and these airports provide public benefits to the community.

Island County aviation facilities represent a significant capital investment. Existing and potential economic benefits derived from these airports will be recognized. Negative impacts will be minimized and/or mitigated to the greatest extent reasonably possible. Future airport expansion and surrounding land development will have compatibility as their goal.

There are several classifications of airports, or aviation facilities, recognized by the Federal Aviation Administration. The ones currently sited in Island County include:

**Private:** General use by public at large prohibited, except in emergency or by specific authorization.

**Limited:** Intended for private use. Public not prohibited.

**Commercial:** Privately owned. Intended for general use by the public. (Wes Lupien Air Park, Whidbey Air Park, Camano Island Air Field)

**Military:** Owned and/or operated by the Federal Government. General use by the public is prohibited unless in an emergency or by specific authorization. (NAS Whidbey/OLF Coupeville)

Other aviation facilities not classified as airports include seaplane landing sites, heliports, and privately owned ultralight landing strips.

Airport facilities are described in Island County Transportation Plan Table V-9.\(^2\)

The three commercial airports in Island County vary in size and intensity of use. They primarily serve the needs of the general, commercial and aeromedical aviation communities.

The two military airports in Island County also vary in size and use. Ault Field, the main airport complex for NAS Whidbey Island, is located north of the City of Oak Harbor. OLF Coupeville is a facility currently dedicated to Field Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP) and is located in central Whidbey Island southeast of the Town of Coupeville.

The use of private or limited civil airports, seaplane landing sites, private heliports, and private ultralight landing strips, where the property owner intends to use a landing area solely for his or her own personal use, could negatively impact residents of surrounding properties. Careful siting of such facilities is necessary to avoid conflicts with other permitted uses in rural areas.

\(^2\) See Transportation Element.
Island County recognizes the benefits and economic opportunities that airports can provide. The county also recognizes its responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents while promoting compatible coexistence of airports with surrounding land uses.
Each airport in Island County has impacts on surrounding land uses that deserve special planning considerations. The three existing commercial airports require somewhat less special planning than military airports.

**Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island**

In 1942, a directive from the Chief Naval Officer was given to find an adequate location for the rearming and refueling of Navy patrol planes which were operating in defense of the Puget Sound area at the height of World War II. A suitable site was located just north of the City of Oak Harbor and construction began on this base in March of 1942. Ault Field was commissioned in September of that year. Ault Field first saw use as a site of recruit and officer training, torpedo overhaul, rocket firing training, and seaplane patrol operations, as well as a munitions and refueling station.

In September of 1943, Coupeville Outlying Field (OLF) became operational as an auxiliary air strip to Ault Field.

The combination of these two air fields is known as Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island and has become the premier Naval Air Station for electronic attack and patrol and reconnaissance squadrons. This is due to a multitude of factors, the most important being NAS Whidbey’s location. The location of Ault Field just north of Oak Harbor, allows training to be carried out over the Pacific Ocean with little or no effect on civil aviation or civil transmissions (TV, Radio, etc.). NAS Whidbey Island manages hundreds of thousands of square miles of training airspace throughout Washington, Oregon and Nevada and in International airspace and waters off the West Coast of the United States.

NAS Whidbey Island also contains a FSQ Electronic Combat Warfare Threat Simulator, which, combined with the marginal amount of civil aviation and electronic frequency interference allows for optimal electronic warfare training in the immediate vicinity the air station.

The proximity of NAS Whidbey Island to the Bangor Submarine Base and the Bremerton Home Port also allows for optimized opportunities in deployment of electronic attack wings to aircraft carriers as well as providing real submarine and surface “targets” for training in Anti-Submarine and Anti-Surface Warfare.

Additionally, NAS Whidbey Island also contains the Naval Ocean Processing Facility (NOPF) Whidbey Island. This facility provides underwater surveillance of the North Pacific Ocean and works in conjunction with the Canadian Naval Forces.

NAS Whidbey has become an important military installation because of the advantages listed above. This has brought with it an increase in personnel which have had a considerable positive economic effect on Island County. In 1940, the population of Island County was 6,098 residents. In 1950, that population had jumped to 11,079 residents, an 80% increase over that 10 year span. As of 2003, NAS Whidbey Island directly employed approximately 10,066 people with a payroll of $399.1 million. The total number of people employed by the base represents 68% of the total
employment in Island County while the payroll amount represents approximately 52% of all countywide labor earnings.

Further direct impacts to the economy include $91.1 million in military retiree pensions, $14.1 million in health care payments to private providers, and $12.2 million in contracts for goods and services. $22 million are spent at commissaries and base exchanges, however, these fees do not benefit the State or Island County as they go to out of state vendors. Therefore the direct impact to the state economy is $494.5 million.

As of 2003, approximately 56.5% of the students enrolled in the Oak Harbor School District were dependents of military personnel. Accordingly, the school districts of Island County received $4.5 million from NAS Whidbey Island for schooling dependents of military personnel.

It is also understood that NAS Whidbey Island contributes indirectly to the economies of both Island County and the State of Washington. The Washington State Office of Financial Management found that NAS Whidbey Island indirectly and directly accounts for 20,141 jobs within the state of Washington. These 20,141 jobs accrue wages of up to $775 million, which is then redirected back into the economy.

The total impact of NAS Whidbey Island on Island County accounts for 17,500 jobs which produce $674 million in wages. This equals 88% of wage disbursements in Island County, making it the most military-dependent county in Washington (Figure 1.4).

**Figure 1.4 Total Labor Earnings due to Military Bases Compared to Wage and Salary Disbursements by County‡**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Island</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitsap</td>
<td>1,756</td>
<td>3,236</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierce</td>
<td>2,867</td>
<td>9,417</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snohomish</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>8,633</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>6,440</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yakima</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2,622</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>6,317</td>
<td>111,478*</td>
<td>5.7%†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Represents Countywide Wage and Salary Disbursements for the entire state
† Military Total Impacts as Percent of Countyside Wage and Salary Disbursements for the entire State
‡ Table produced by the Washington State Office of Financial Management
It is readily apparent that NAS Whidbey is a dominant force in Island County. Because of this, Island County recognizes the impact that closure of NAS Whidbey would have on all aspects of life within the County. Not only would a closure of the base lead to the loss of 17,500 jobs and $674 million in funds, but it would also lead to a loss of 20,000+ friends, neighbors, and relatives, which would be the most harmful impact to the Island County community.

It is also important that Island County’s land use decisions are compatible with the retention and future use of NAS Whidbey Island not only for the reasons listed above, but because the Base has a strong relationship with the community and Island County, and that relationship should be maintained.

**Continuing efforts**

Historically, encroachment is one the major factors in base closures around the country. It is imperative that encroachment on NAS Whidbey Island is not allowed to compromise the future operation of the Base. For the last 25 years Island County has been at the forefront of Washington State Counties in protecting, through land use planning, the vital interests of NAS Whidbey. Over this period of time, and as the effects of encroachment have been better understood, Island County has continually enhanced regulations aimed at preventing encroachment issues.

These efforts have paid off! Island County now offers the United States a unique property in NAS Whidbey Island due to the few encroachment challenges it faces. While air bases across the nation are being closed or scaled back, NAS Whidbey has been recognized as a safe place to fly due, in part, to our proactive land use standards.

In 1998, Island County and NAS Whidbey Island worked in partnership to develop new zoning regulations aimed at greater protection of the Base. As a result, the County rezoned land surrounding NAS Whidbey Island and Coupeville OLF to limit future development so it would not exceed one house per 5 acres. The County also took a leadership role with the City of Oak Harbor by developing an Interlocal Agreement with the City that greatly strengthened noise attenuation standards for construction in Noise Zones 2 and 3. Today these standards are consistently and strictly enforced by both Island County and the City of Oak Harbor resulting in a minimum 25-dBA interior noise reduction.

Further, we require full noise disclosure notifying potential buyers *prior* to a sale of any property located in Noise Zone 2 and 3. If landowners, whose property lies in Noise Zone 2 or 3, want to rent they too must provide full disclosure to the future inhabitants.

Perhaps the most significant factor in protecting NAS Whidbey Island and Coupeville OLF, is the County’s partnership with the Navy. We have a long history of working together with the NAS Whidbey Island Community Planning Liaison Officer, coordinating and providing information for any building and land use permits that may have an impact on the naval operations, and providing SEPA notices to the Navy. We look forward to continuation of the maintenance of this strong relationship. The County is committed to taking the necessary steps to
help ensure future operations of the Base for the continuing protection of the citizens of the United States.

It is in this spirit that we will be adding new Code in 2007 to further protect NAS Whidbey Island and the residents of Island County. As a display of continued cooperation this new code will regulate lands within the Aircraft Accident Potential Zones (APZ) by placing additional limitations on land use and base densities as recommended by the Navy for land development within the APZs. The new regulations will also go a step further than Navy recommendations by expanding the APZs to produce a ‘race track’ pattern. These new limitations, in combination with those regulations already in place for Noise Zones, will provide an enhanced level of safety for NAS Whidbey Island and County residents.

The Aircraft Accident Potential Zones (APZs) are areas extending from the end of the runways which have a higher potential for aircraft accidents. These zones are divided into three separate zones, a Clear Zone, APZ-I, and APZ-II. By limiting development in these areas, the potential human impact of an accident is minimized.

Map C, Airport and Aviation Safety Overlay, identifies noise zones and APZs within the County. Superimposed on the maps are overlays for the airport sound disclosure boundaries, sound attenuation building code boundaries, aircraft noise contours, military airport APZs.

(Ord. C-87-07 [PLG-017-07], March 8, 2008)
Map C  Island County Aviation Impact Areas

Legend

Average Day/Night Noise Levels

Date: June 15, 2007

Source: AICUZ Study Update for Naval Air Station Whidbey Island's Ault Field and Outlying Field

Source: Island County Planning and Community Development - May 2007

(Ord. C-87-07 [PLG-017-07], March 10, 2008)
**Housing and Residential Development**

The County’s housing stock is its largest long-term capital asset. Residential development is usually the predominant force in converting land, and residential property taxes are a primary source of local government revenue. Services to these residences and their inhabitants comprise a major portion of local government expenditures.

Island County’s residential development pattern focuses heavily on the shoreline. Visual and physical access to the water is especially desirable. Issues generated by this development pattern include determining appropriate densities to protect environmental resources, such as steep and unstable slopes, potable ground water, and safe access by emergency vehicles.

Lack of affordable housing is a significant challenge and has reached a critical stage. Numerous low-income households, including many elderly, the military, the disabled, and single parents, cannot afford adequate housing or find that their incomes, after housing costs are paid, are inadequate to buy other necessities. Moreover, many first-time home buyers cannot afford the down payment or qualify for a loan to purchase a modest home. Consequently, the primary housing issue for Island County is affordability.

Island County and the cities of Oak Harbor, Coupeville and Langley have agreed to share anticipated population growth and the housing needed to accommodate that growth. At this time, the three cities say they would accept 30% of the growth, while the County would accept the remainder. To accommodate more affordable housing, the County has a number of options. One of them is to encourage higher density. The County will need to define these higher density housing areas to meet the GMA goal of preventing sprawl.

One way to achieve higher densities would be to require cities and their UGAs to accommodate more of the growth. Difficulties related to this approach include limits on the cities’ capacity for water, sewer or other services and their reluctance to accept more growth. Under GMA, the County has the authority to make the final decision. In practice, the County probably would also have to help fund infrastructure needed for municipal expansion.

Another approach to achieve higher densities would be to develop restricted areas within unincorporated Island County (called in the GMA “limited areas of more intensive rural development”) which can accommodate moderate levels of density. This solution would protect critical areas, be developed at densities which can support public services, provide quality affordable housing choices, and reduce the threat of suburban sprawl outside these defined areas. However, areas of more intensive rural development generally are limited in geographic scope and do not provide the opportunity for increasing density beyond current levels.

A third approach would be to develop non-municipal UGAs in Freeland and Clinton to provide land for low-income and special needs housing, emphasizing multifamily buildings. This approach would require the County to help fund needed infrastructure, principally sewer and storm drains.

A fourth approach would be to offer density bonuses for developers building affordable housing in the rural area, for example as PRDs. Some limitations to this approach are that it
may not be cost-effective to build low income housing in places far from existing centers of population and existing infrastructure, including public transportation.

Finally, the County will need to examine a variety of options for creating affordable housing that do not necessarily depend on increasing density. Some options, like self-help and “owner-builder” housing now play only a minor role but could be expanded. The County could offer more flexibility on types of housing allowed. Other options, for example, for housing subsidies and financing assistance have yet to be seriously examined here.

Housing is one of the most important elements in our lives and in our communities. Buying a house is the largest purchase made by most families. The housing industry is a major partner in the economic life of the community, both as a consumer of goods and services and as a producer of dwelling units, jobs, and income.

**Historic Preservation**

Historic preservation of culturally important sites and buildings has been an integral part of Island County’s planning process since 1972. In October of that year, Island County Commissioners enacted legislation permitting the formation of historic preservation districts. Shortly thereafter, the Central Whidbey Island Historic Preservation District (HPD) was established by citizens and approved by the Board of County Commissioners. The entire District, and many homes, barns, and blockhouses within it, have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Island County Commissioners appoint the Central Whidbey Island HPD Citizens’ Advisory Committee to advise all County agencies and legislative bodies with respect to land division, land use, new construction, renovation of and addition to historic structures, archaeological sites, signage, and demolition of historic structures within the boundaries of the Historic District. In addition, the Board of County Commissioners designated this committee the Local Review Board for the Special Valuation of Historic Properties (mandated under RCW 84.26) for the entire county.

At present, the Central Whidbey Island HPD is the only established historic district in the county. Boundaries of the District are based on historic land claims and correspond with boundaries of the Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve (ELNHR). One exception is the Town of Coupeville, which has a Design Review Board to deal with matters concerning historic structures within its incorporated boundary. The Central Whidbey Island HPD Advisory Committee’s “Statement of Purpose, Rules of Procedure, and Development Guidelines for the District,” has been approved by the Board of Island County Commissioners.

The Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve (ELNHR) was created by an act of Congress in 1978, “… to preserve and protect a rural community which provides an unbroken historic record from nineteenth century exploration and settlement of Puget Sound up to the present time …” (Public Law 95-625, November 10, 1978). In July 1988, the National Park Service, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Town of Coupeville, and Island County signed an interlocal agreement establishing the ELNHR Trust Board as a joint administrative board to oversee the Reserve. This agreement establishes the
Board membership, assigns it powers, and delineates the duties and responsibilities of the contracting parties.

Shortly after forming the Reserve, a local citizens’ committee was formed by the Board of Island County Commissioners and the Town of Coupeville to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the Reserve. This plan was reviewed by the County Planning Commission and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on May 19, 1980, as a component of the Island County Comprehensive Plan. After adopting the Plan, the National Park Service and Washington State Parks began to implement it. They purchased outright several key parcels of land within the Reserve. However, in most cases, they purchased development rights and scenic easements on property which remained in private ownership. The intent of this approach was to keep most of the property in the Reserve on the tax rolls, allowing controlled development of land within the Reserve and encouraging local farmers to continue making productive use of the land. Federal or other funds have not been sufficient to complete the purchase of all scenic easements and development rights identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The County’s role in the management of the Reserve is to enact appropriate land use regulations through zoning to protect the landscape of the Reserve, per the legislation of the Reserve.

**Archeologically Significant Areas**

The County has a long history of human settlement that began with Native American tribal communities and which later included European settlers in the mid-nineteenth century. Both cultures have contributed significantly to the historic and archaeological legacy of Island County. Preservation of historic sites associated with both cultures is essential in maintaining the cultural, social, educational, and scientific value of these resources. But while the European settlers and their history is relatively well documented, the Native American historic communities are much less so. There are documented known and suspected archaeological sites. However, it is quite likely that more such sites will be discovered as development continues to occur throughout the County. All currently known and newly discovered archaeological sites shall be preserved and protected.

**Community Services and Facilities**

As population growth continues, the County will need to increase expenditures for basic public facilities and services.

Public facility planning will focus on providing adequate public facilities and services required under the Growth Management Act. The County’s Capital Facilities Plan will be an important tool linking land use and capital facilities planning with long-term fiscal planning. Participation by special purpose districts (pursuant to RCW 36.70.520) in this planning effort will be important to the county’s future. Intensively developed residential areas with septic tank drainfields require close monitoring to protect water quality. Alternative sewage treatment solutions may be needed for areas where concentrations of septic tank failures

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3 See Historic Preservation Element.
occur, yet population density will not support development of regionally centralized sewage treatment facilities.
Public police, fire protection, and health services must be integrated into planning efforts. Population growth and aging of some school facilities will require building improvements and construction of new schools over the next 20 years. Independent public facility and service providers must conform to the Island County Comprehensive Plan by providing acceptable levels of service and anticipating future development.

Recreational opportunities were evaluated in the Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan, adopted in 1992 and revised in 1996. Adequacy of existing facilities, as well as indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities, will be further evaluated in the Capital Facilities Plan and annual updates of the Capital Improvement Program.

The State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages large areas of forest lands in Island County for the benefit of school and university trust accounts. However, due to recent management decisions, these lands have been designated as “urban transitional.” They will be sold in the near future and the capital reinvested in more productive forest lands outside Island County. This decision may cause significant loss of public-owned lands in Island County. The County will encourage transfer of DNR forest lands to other public agencies.

Under GMA, the Comprehensive Plan must include a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. Essential public facilities include those that typically are difficult to site: airports, state education facilities, state or regional transportation facilities, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling, and inpatient facilities including substance abuse, mental health, and group home facilities.

The GMA provides some direction to what facilities and/or facility types will be identified and included as “essential” in the Comprehensive Plan. It generally defines the attributes and classes of facilities to be included. It also suggests taking the broadest view of what constitutes a public facility and that the Comprehensive Plan should contain local criteria for identifying these facilities. A starting point would be to create a facilities list based on information from the State Office of Financial Management (OFM) six-year capital facilities list and the County’s Interim Capital Facilities Plan (which also identifies non-county facilities and services). The GMA does not directly require that Federal facilities be included when identifying essential public facilities. Federal lands also are not subject to local land use regulations under GMA.

The Comprehensive Plan must include a general process for the siting of essential public facilities. The County may choose to establish one review/siting process that encompasses all facilities identified; or, it may split essential public facilities into two categories for regulatory purposes: one for facilities that represent clear difficulties to siting (e.g. land fills) and one for facilities that do not pose the same level of siting difficulty (e.g. group homes). In the latter case, the County may utilize an existing regulatory review/siting process. In addition, a general policy framework needs to be developed to guide decisions regarding the siting of identified essential public facilities. These policies will form the basis of future development regulations.
Natural Lands

Island County’s natural beauty has attracted residents and visitors for over a century. However, the same features that bring people to the region are diminishing. Particularly prior to adoption of the 1984 Island County Code, development has contributed to environmental impacts resulting in the loss or damage of agriculture and forest lands, wetlands, wildlife corridors, critical wildlife habitats, riparian ecosystems, significant watershed areas, and shoreline systems. The 1984 Code protected most wetlands, deepwater habitats and tributary streams, and protected species. These regulations could be improved by protecting all streams and near-shore shoreline habitats as well.

Data obtained from the County Assessor’s office indicates that parcels comprising nearly 71% of Island County’s land area contain some form of development, with the parcels comprising the remaining 29% (38,630 acres) left in some form of open space. Approximately 75% of the 38,630 acres in open space is in “temporary” status. This includes lands owned by the Department of Natural Resources and forest/agriculture properties in an open-space tax deferment program. This means that, except for critical areas such as wetlands, deepwater habitats, tributary streams and their buffers, shorelines, habitat for protected species, and resource lands of long-term commercial significance, between 50% and 75% of lands in “open space” have the potential to be developed in the future. Roughly 10% of the County’s land area represents publicly owned State and County parks and scenic easements (such as Ebey’s Landing) that is “protected” from future development. Note also that these calculations do not take into account open space areas in planned residential developments and in the incorporated areas.

In 1997, the Trust for Public Lands retained the services of a national public opinion research company to assess the attitudes of Island County voters on the issue of natural land preservation. The survey revealed strong support for increasing local taxes to pay for many types of open space preservation. Voters also gave high priority to protecting watersheds and drinking water sources, natural lands, farmland, and forests threatened by development. Similar sentiments have been expressed in letters sent to the County by residents and in recent workshops on the Natural Plan.

Protection of remaining Natural Lands appears to be an increasingly important issue for Island County residents.

At a minimum, Comprehensive Plan policies and implementation measures should address the GMA requirements and goals. The Comprehensive Plan currently contains policy language on several important elements including view sheds, habitat and critical area restoration, water and air quality, watershed management, and others. While these policies provide a solid framework, they fall short in defining how GMA goals and other open space requirements will be met. For example, the greenbelts and open space areas in Urban Growth Areas are a requirement of GMA. Therefore, existing policies should be further refined and detailed to ensure GMA compliance.

The Comprehensive Plan also should be clear on how the policies will be implemented. For example, development of a non-regulatory Natural Lands Plan (and how to implement it) would be one of the implementation measures. Implementation measures should address
regulatory and non-regulatory methods for achieving GMA goals. Under GMA, the Natural Lands plan should address other County plans and programs associated with the protection/conservation of open space and natural lands, such as the Comprehensive Plan, Shoreline Master Program, Critical Areas regulations, Parks and Recreation Plan, Conservation Futures Program, Non-Motorized Trails Plan, and Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve Comprehensive Plan. In many ways, the Natural Lands Plan will serve as an “implementation umbrella” for other plans with open space components in the County (and possibly the cities). The plan should address the relationship and coordination between programs, existing overlap and inconsistencies, and—most importantly—identify and prioritize sites that citizens have identified as important to protect. Further, the Natural Lands Plan will identify options for acquiring/protecting such areas.

Various methods can be used to protect natural lands. Such methods must be clearly defined and addressed in the Comprehensive Plan and the Natural Lands Plan. The most common methods are: 1) outright purchase of a property, the most expensive but provides the greatest protection; 2) purchase of conservation easements; 3) public purchase of development rights, which allows continued use of activities and can be transferred elsewhere; 4) regulation, including use restrictions, setbacks, and buffers; and 5) tax benefit programs. The Natural Lands Plan should address a range of acquisition methods for consideration by the County and its citizens.

**Resource Lands**

In 1950, approximately 51,455 acres were farmed in Island County, according to census results reported in the 1958 SCS Soil Survey. As of this writing, approximately 79% of these lands are no longer being farmed. Approximately 11,245 acres remain in agricultural tax programs, although not all of that is actively farmed.

According to current tax records, approximately 14,090 acres of private land are managed for timber production. In addition, DNR owns 1,912 acres of forested land in Island County. Between 1993 and mid-1996, approximately 2,700 acres of previously forested land was approved for conversion to non-forestry uses under Class IV Forest Practice Permits.

Although both agriculture and forestry have become a minimal part of the Island County economy in their own right, the overall importance of natural resource lands to the economic and cultural character of Island County is not easily measured. Rolling farmlands and extensive forested tracts are important components of Island County’s rural atmosphere. The rural “feel” that will attract more residents and tourists may depend on the continued existence and maintenance of these lands. In addition to their aesthetic values, these lands also play important roles in air and water quality and wildlife habitat.

While the aesthetic and environmental benefits of mineral resource lands (such as gravel pits) are not on a level with agricultural and forested lands, extraction of mineral resources is important to the County’s economic stability and diversity.

Unfortunately, the influx of additional residents—with increased housing demands and frequent intolerance for the less appealing aspects of resource-based industries—may be
contributing to the disappearance of these lands. Forest lands in particular cannot have the
sort of buffers from rural residential development in Island County which are critical to the
success of the forest industry in areas where the industry is more successful. Preservation
and long-term sustainable management of these lands, as envisioned by the GMA, may not
be accomplished in Island County by guiding development away from such areas, because
existing parcel and block sizes are so small.

Agricultural Land Conservation
Conserving productive agricultural soils and encouraging farming operations as
economically viable activity (and as an accepted way of life) is a major challenge in Island
County. According to the Island County Economic Development Council, less than 300
persons are employed or depend on agricultural and forest lands in the county.

Significant efforts have been made to preserve agricultural lands of key aesthetic and
historical significance, and where viable farming is continuing, through public purchase of
view easements or of the land itself. In general, outside of those areas, farming activities are
scattered and in comparatively small blocks. Much of the area which remains in production
is not underlain by significant amounts of prime (Class II or III) soils. There are no unique
soils in Island County as defined by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.
Farming which occurs on blocks under one ownership of 40 acres or more includes dairy,
beef raising, vegetable and berry production and commercial seed production. There is also
a “micro-farming” industry which is growing up in Island County, where individuals conduct
farming on parcels smaller than 20 acres in size, usually not deriving the majority of their
income from that activity. Although the county wants to encourage such micro-farming
activities, the scattered tracts on which it is occurring are not critical to its growth or
continuance, since new entrants will select from the full range of rural parcels within the
county, not simply from parcels currently in use for micro-farming. In light of the existing
pattern of rural development in Island County and the remaining agricultural activities which
continue in the county, the focus of agricultural protection must be on blocks within one
ownership or management of 20 acres or larger. Of those lands, the issue becomes which
lands are of long-term commercial significance and which are more appropriate for a rural
agriculture designation, which will encourage agriculture to continue, but provide more long-
term flexibility in the use of the land.

Agriculture in the Rural Zone
The Rural zone is the predominant zoning category in Island County, comprising
approximately 60% of the County’s total land area. Most of the County’s farming activity
occurs in the Rural zone. Albeit typically small scale and noncommercial in nature, farming
in the Rural zone has and will continue to play a significant role in the cultural heritage of
the County.

Livestock farming in the Rural zone ranges from a single animal raised as a 4-H project to
the maintenance of livestock operations. Horticulture farming in the Rural zone can be for
self-sufficiency; growing of organic produce sold at local farmers markets; or cultivation of
specialty crops.
Rural zone farm land and activities do not meet the County’s criteria for commercial
designations. However, these lands are crucial to the future viability of designated
commercial agriculture in Island County. Many of these parcels are leased by commercial
farmers to support their farming activities. Others provide a much needed buffer for these
designated lands from more intense rural development. All of these smaller farming activities
add substantially to the economic base of Island County as mainstays of the County’s “rural
character” which in turn is a key magnet for the tourist and retiree dollars and for much
needed new business.

While some Rural zone farming activities change in nature and scale with the evolving
interests of the property owner, many have been maintained by a particular owner or family
for many years. Deep attachments develop to the land and to the County’s agricultural
heritage. These attachments are important elements of the County’s culture. Therefore, it is
just as important for the County to recognize and protect the important contribution of these
Rural zone farming activities to the rural character of Island County as it is to recognize and
conserve lands of long term or local commercial significance.

(Ord. C-150-05 [PLG-021-05], May 15, 2006)

Separating lands of long-term commercial significance from those more appropriate for
rural agriculture designation.

As of 1997 there were 622 parcels in an agricultural tax program in the county, totaling
approximately 13,042 acres. Of those 13,042 acres, only 9,935 acres in the county were in
parcels 20 acres or larger. Excluding from the total acreage in an agricultural tax program
those lands which are either less than 20 acres in contiguous ownership or which are not
underlain by any prime soils leaves a total of 7,454 acres (5.7% of the total acreage in the
county) which were identified as being suitable for designation as either agricultural lands of
long-term commercial significance or as rural agriculture lands.

Of the commercial products produced by Island County farms, dairy and livestock operations
tend to be in significantly larger blocks of land under single ownership or management than
are vegetable, berry and seed production areas. In examining the minimum block size under a single management which is feasible for dairy or livestock, however, it appears that as small as 40 acres may be economically feasible. Similarly, vegetable, berry or seed production on blocks of 40 acres or more appears to be economically viable. (Micro-farming of vegetables or flowers may occur on significantly smaller tracts, but preserving those tracts as a land base for the industry does not appear to have any significant bearing on the future viability of such operations.) Given the existing parcelization of the rural areas of the county, there is a long-term need to preserve blocks of 40 acres or more which are in active commercial production and which have soil quality to give them long-term commercial significance for agricultural production.

Reviewing the blocks of land being actively farmed under single management in Island County disclosed that many of those farms are not underlain by 50% or more prime soils. Some commercial farms with relatively little prime soil have been in operation in Island County for many years. It is assumed, however, that where the farm does not have prime soils, the current status of the farm as a commercial operation may be more a result of the skill or commitment of the current operator than the long-term value of the land as a land base for commercial agriculture. As a result, the only farms that should be put in Commercial Agriculture designation automatically are those which meet three criteria: 1. The farm is a block of at least 40 acres in size, owned by a single farmer. 2. Fifty percent or more of the block is underlain by prime soils. 3. The block is in active commercial agricultural use. Farms which do not qualify for designation as Commercial Agriculture because of soil quality may volunteer to be put in that classification. All other parcels of 20 acres or more, within the agricultural tax program should be treated as agricultural lands of local importance and designated Rural Agriculture.

Small farms are gaining increased importance in the County. Specialty crops may be cultivated on lands of a size and with underlying soils not normally associated with larger scale farming. It is important that the County recognize the changing trends of farming in the County and provide for the appropriate land use regulations to allow them to prosper.

Incompatible development adjacent to agricultural lands increases pressures to convert these properties. Pressure comes from demands to suppress the “nuisance” factors created by farms, such as prohibiting livestock raising or limiting the storage and use of fertilizers. Right-to-farm measures must be adopted to enhance the farm economy. Under GMA, the County must ensure that uses on lands adjacent to resource lands do not interfere with continuing well-managed agricultural activities on resource lands. This may be accomplished by establishing a rural zoning density surrounding the resource lands; and, as required per RCW 36.70A.060, adopting regulations requiring that all users of new development within 300 feet of the property be notified of the proximity and impacts of the ongoing agricultural activities. Rising taxation on adjacent land further accelerates conversion pressures. Farm land can be preserved as agricultural open space by implementing an array of programs, such as agricultural land zoning and placing the property in current use-tax programs.
**Forest Lands Conservation**

Forests in Island County are an important natural resource to landowners and local citizens. Forest lands contribute to the rural character, protect watershed functions, and provide wildlife habitat. Management of forest lands for timber production constitutes a valued element in the County’s renewable natural and economic resource base, although it forms a very minor part of the local economy. Development pressure and widespread antipathy to commercial forest practices threatens the viability of forestry as a self-sustaining local industry.

The remaining timber land in Island County is in small and scattered blocks. The largest contiguous blocks of timber are found in south Whidbey Island, and the largest block is only 1,230 acres. That is significantly smaller than the minimum block sizes established by several Western Washington counties for forest lands of long-term commercial significance, and is much smaller than the blocks of commercial significance which exist in the counties of Western Washington where the forest industry is active. Although the most prevalent site index (the measure of productivity for forest lands) in Island County is DF 111 (the average dominant or co-dominant Douglas fir at age 50 is 111 feet tall), that is not a high site index in the Puget Sound basin. Island County has no lands designated as Land Grade 1 or Land Grade 2. Only 70.9% of the county’s lands are even Land Grade 3. There are few industrial foresters left in Island County. Trillium acquired 3,000 acres in Island County as part of a 40,000 acre purchase from Georgia Pacific. It did not acquire the lands in Island County for long-term commercial production, and expects to sell all of the land eventually for development purposes. (Plum Creek and Crown Pacific have seed orchards on Whidbey Island, which they located there because unfavorable growing conditions increase stress on the seed trees, and maximize seed production. Those lands are in an agricultural tax classification.) The Department of Natural Resources owns 1,912 acres of trust land in Island County. The remaining forest landowners in Island County are non-industrial private forest owners (NIPF). Although a few of those owners actively manage their lands to increase growth and for continuous production, much of the land is subject to minimal management. There are no timber converting facilities on Island County. All timber which is harvested in the county is trucked off the islands for processing. According to the Island County Economic Development Council, as of 1997 there were only 20 forestry jobs, and 12 logging contractors in Island County. There were only two local forestry consultants, six logging contractors and no local logging suppliers. Without a local forest industry infrastructure, the costs of operations for harvesting, hauling, marketing, replanting and silvicultural practices are increased.

As of 1995, there were 415 parcels in Island County in a timber tax program. While not all of these lands are being actively managed for industrial timber production, it is likely that all forest lands which do meet the definition are in a timber tax program.

One of the greatest obstacles to timber lands management is pressure from adjacent land uses. There are very few, if any, forest lands that are not adjacent to or within sight of existing plats, urban areas, or major transportation routes, some of which are scenic highways. Changing attitudes towards resource use have brought intense political pressure on elected
officials to limit the aesthetic and environmental consequences of timber management practices.

In light of all of these factors, and after a review of the specific criteria for designation of forest lands of long-term commercial significance established by the Growth Management Act, the county has concluded that the remaining forested areas in Island County do not qualify as forest lands of long-term commercial significance. The county wants to encourage existing forest owners to continue in commercial forestry for as long as possible. To do so it has designated all lands currently in designated forest (DF) or classified forest (CF) tax status in a “Rural Forest” classification.

Mineral Lands

The GMA calls for long-term conservation of mineral resource lands to ensure current and future supplies of sand, gravel, and non-renewable minerals. These lands must be protected from urban encroachment while ensuring environmental protection through appropriate siting, operation, and reclamation standards. Mineral resource lands include those lands devoted primarily to mineral extraction or that have a known potential for long-term commercial extraction of minerals. Map E shows both existing sites and areas with known potential mineral deposits based on USGS information. Minerals are defined as sand, gravel, and valuable metallic substances.

Surface mining is considered a zoning overlay, applicable within Agricultural, Forestry and Rural Lands. This precludes unnecessary rezoning of land for mining and related mine activities and maintains the Comprehensive Plan’s long-term land use vision beyond surface mining. However, as with agricultural and forest lands, GMA requires the County to establish designation and protective criteria for these lands.

Existing Mineral Lands

While designation of these sites is fairly straightforward, the issue of protecting them is more difficult. Existing sites have, however, already been permitted. Thus the conditions under which they operate have been established and are vested. Surrounding uses which grow up around existing sites can be assumed to have had fair warning of the existence of the site. Therefore, it is not clear that additional restrictions on surrounding lands are necessary. The county will require that all plats, short plats, development permits, and building permits issued for development activities on, or within three hundred feet of existing mineral lands contain a notice that the subject property is within or near designated mineral resource lands on which a variety of commercial activities may occur that are not compatible with residential development for certain periods of limited duration.

Potential Mineral Lands

Although the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has identified broad areas of potential gravel deposits in Island County (shown on Map E), it is unreasonable to designate those entire areas. They are in large part already developed with small lot sizes and incompatible land uses for any new mineral extraction. The USGS designation also...
provides no assurance that the land in fact has gravel under it, how deep such gravel deposits may be, or whether any gravel, if it exists, is present in commercial quantities. Thus restricting the use of land which may be in large enough undeveloped parcels to provide the ability to permit a new mineral extraction site, based on the USGS study, is unreasonable, because it is little more than speculative to suggest that the land has “potential” for mineral development. The state of Washington has committed to undertake a more thorough study of potential mineral sites over the next five years. The county will revisit the issue of designation of potential mineral sites at such time as it has information upon which to make a reasonable judgment about designation of potential sites. For now, a permitting system and land use standards for surface mining that allows new proposals to be considered, on a case by case basis, is the best interim course of action available to the County.
Map E  Island County Mineral Resources
Critical Areas

Critical areas are lands that possess certain development limitations, or that provide important public resources. However, a property owner cannot be deprived of all reasonable use and enjoyment of lands on which critical areas and their associated buffers, if any, are located.

Critical areas are:

A. Wetlands
B. Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water
C. Fish and Wildlife habitat conservation areas
D. Frequently flooded areas
E. Geologically hazardous areas

Particularly prior to adoption of the 1984 Island County Code, many critical areas in Island County have been disturbed by past development, logging, or other human activity. Other critical areas are essentially in pristine condition, having recovered from logging or other activity which has occurred on or near them in the last century or so. Many of the County’s most valuable critical areas lie in undeveloped rural areas and in resource lands. Efforts to protect critical lands will likely be more effective in rural areas than in urban areas. When goals intended to protect critical areas compete or conflict with goals for curtailing sprawl, a balance will be reached based on priorities outlined in updated development regulations. For example, some alteration to highly degraded wetlands within UGAs may be acceptable to discourage sprawl. Critical areas within areas of high development pressure, such as UGAs, will have different forms and levels of protection than critical areas within rural areas and resource lands.

Limited information is available on location and boundaries of many types of critical areas. The Critical Areas maps (Maps F through J), provide a generalized location based on authoritative studies, e.g., maps generated by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Priority Habitats and Species Program; occurrence maps generated by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Natural Heritage Program; United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory maps; DNR Water Type maps; maps of frequently flooded areas prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and maps of identified wetlands prepared for the County in 1990. In addition, the County currently is updating its maps of the shoreline areas to include commercial and recreational shell-fish areas; kelp and eelgrass beds; and herring and smelt spawning areas. These maps are intended for informational (but not necessarily regulatory) purposes. Detailed on-site inspections may be required to determine if an area meets the designation and classification criteria. These studies may take precedence over generalized mapping.
The County is ultimately responsible for updating and maintaining the maps on a regular basis, as additional information is developed through studies and subsequent determinations. Considerable progress can be made toward protecting some types of critical areas simply by making the information in these maps and other materials readily accessible to current and potential landowners, development interests, and the populace. Altering critical areas in the past has resulted more often from ignorance of the location, function, and value of a given critical area rather than deliberate intent to disturb it. However, other types of critical areas may be severely impacted by wide dissemination of their exact location. Island County will make the location of wetlands, streams and steep slopes publicly available but will not disclose the location of sensitive species when disclosure might harm those species or their habitat.

Effective enforcement is an important component of any critical areas protection program. The enforcement action and severity of any penalty must be proportionate to the nature and circumstances of the violation, and the damage or risk to private and public resources. When wetlands or fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas are damaged in violation of the law, restoration to at least pre-existing functional condition will be required.
Map F  Island County Wetlands
Map G  Island County Flood Plains
Map H Island County Steep/Unstable Slopes - RESERVED
Map I Island County Aquifer Recharge Areas
Map J Island County Fish and Wildlife Habitat Areas - RESERVED
Wetlands

Island County contains a wide variety of wetlands, from salmonberry and alder swamps to lush bogs, thriving estuarine marshes, and broad wet meadows. Often these wetlands are fragile ecosystems that may serve important and beneficial functions. Wetlands can assist in reducing flooding, erosion, siltation, and ground and surface water pollution; help maintain ground water recharge and surface water flows; and provide wildlife, plant and fisheries habitats. Wetlands harbor plant and animal species with recreational, economic, and cultural importance. Many wetlands are essential components of the highly-valued visual landscape of Island County.

Wetlands historically have been treated as wasted land, to be reclaimed through draining and filling. Wetlands destruction, or impairment of wetland functions, may result in increased public and private costs or property losses. Only in recent decades has the economic, environmental, and cultural impacts of wetlands destruction been recognized and efforts made to reduce the loss of wetland functions and values.

Designation of wetlands and regulation of wetlands are separate issues. The economic, environmental, and cultural values that communities place on wetlands should be used to determine wetlands policy and regulation. Wetlands classification or ratings systems are used to define what regulatory standards apply and to establish priorities for non-regulatory mechanisms, such as acquisition and restoration.

Wetland functions typically refer to physical, chemical, and biological processes. Some functions, such as water quality and purification, flood attenuation, sediment trapping, and wildlife habitat, can be quantified accurately depending on level of study. Wetland values (aesthetic, cultural, educational, or recreational) generally refer to the importance or worth that society places on wetlands. As values by nature are subjective, they are difficult to measure.

Some wetlands have greater economic, environmental, or cultural value than others. In some instances, wetland alterations may be preferable to available alternatives. For example, a valuable mature forest may also have high habitat value. Altering or developing it may have greater environmental costs than altering a highly degraded, adjacent wetland with minimal function and value.

Since 1984, Island County has had wetland regulations in place. During public review, these regulations were determined to have met the GMA’s substantive and procedural requirements. However, to improve the effectiveness of these regulations, the County should classify wetlands within the shoreline jurisdiction based on the characteristics of the wetlands rather than their location in the shoreline areas. In addition, the County should require the use of best management practices for existing agricultural uses and should not exempt new agricultural uses.

The County may also wish to allow certain low impact uses within the buffers and allow installation of infrastructure where there is no practical alternative location.
Aquifer Recharge Areas

Island County’s groundwater system is highly complex. Its aquifers are made up of multiple layers of unconsolidated sands and gravels capable of supplying water for human use. Mixed between these aquifers are layers of silt, clay and cemented till known as hardpan that pass water more slowly (aquitards). From place to place in Island County, aquifers and aquitards vary in thickness and depth below the surface making water resource availability assessments extremely difficult.

Due to the chaotic deposition of the county’s water-bearing formations, region-wide studies have not been able to accurately quantify available groundwater supplies. As more wells are drilled, information on local conditions improves; but county-wide, there is little predictability as to depth, quantity, and quality of groundwater. Gross water balance estimates suggest that in some areas ample groundwater exists, while in others there is imminent threat of exhausting “fresh” groundwater supplies. High chloride levels and low water elevations in groundwater often indicate seawater intrusion, plaguing many water systems along shoreline areas and even in some inland areas. Virtually impermeable layers of clay and hardpan (essentially worthless for groundwater extraction) can serve as protective barriers to vertical movement of surface contaminants. Groundwater contamination from surface activities is not widespread in Island County; however, some areas of elevated nitrates have been identified.

Approximately 72% of Island County residents depend on groundwater as a drinking water source. Exceptions include the City of Oak Harbor, the Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, and an outlying community near Deception Pass, which relies on Skagit River water piped to the City via the Anacortes treatment plant.

Rainfall infiltration into aquifers is the only source of renewing the county’s groundwater supplies. There is no evidence of any naturally occurring underground hydraulic connection to mainland sources of groundwater. Continued infiltration of fresh water is necessary to exclude intruding seawater from moving inland. Development is generally associated with an increase in impervious surfaces and may affect the recharge potential by clearing, grading, and removing vegetation. These impacts ultimately reduce the area available for rainwater infiltration and may cause rainfall to run off faster. Thus, less water reaches the aquifers for storage, and greater intrusion of seawater may result. Clustering and preservation of large open spaces can promote infiltration.

In February 1997, the Board of Commissioners contracted with the USGS to cooperate in a Water Recharge Study in Island County. The objectives of the study were to estimate the total amount and aerial distribution of recharge entering the groundwater system on Whidbey and Camano Islands and identify potential areas for using runoff to artificially recharge the groundwater system. The study complimented earlier USGS studies in Island County completed in the mid 1980s.

Through recent efforts of the county’s Water Resource Advisory Committee, data derived in the USGS study has been used to delineate critical aquifer recharge areas based upon high, medium and low susceptibility (Map X). This delineation provides useful and valuable
information for water resource planning efforts aimed at reducing risks of contamination due to human activity in susceptible recharge areas.

(Ord. C-83-05 [PLG-011-05], July 25, 2005)

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

Island County supports a variety of plant and animal species and contains several species listed by the federal or state government as endangered, threatened or sensitive. Many local species represent important economic, cultural, historical, and recreational resources. Their presence and viability (or lack thereof) can provide important information about the health of ecosystem components upon which they, and humans, depend. Plant and animal species found regularly or seasonally in Island County are integral to the natural setting that attracts the respect and reverence of County residents. Proactive efforts to maintain viable populations of listed species and providing a process to nominate habitats and species of local concern for protection, can help avoid economic and societal costs of restoration and crisis management.

The GMA explains that fish and wildlife habitat conservation involves managing land to maintain species in suitable habitats within their natural geographic distributions, so that isolated sub-populations are not created. This does not mean maintaining all individuals of all species at all times. Cooperative and coordinated land use planning for habitat conservation is critically important among County and adjacent jurisdictions.

Current County regulations generally fulfill the overall intent of GMA Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas: 1) they designate protected species and “critical areas,” i.e., those areas where designated species reside, including wetlands, deepwater habitats, and tributary streams to wetlands; 2) they provide a process for protection; and 3) they provide buffers for regulated wetlands and tributary streams. However, expanding these regulations to protect all streams and near-shore marine habitats such as shellfish areas, kelp and eelgrass beds and herring and smelt spawning areas would more fully implement the GMA goals of protecting critical areas and protecting rural character.

Current regulations also would benefit from clarifying what habitat components should be protected. Currently, the simple presence of a protected species (as identified on the County list) appears to be the only criterion for protection. Because of this, vast areas of the County could be considered critical fish and wildlife conservation areas, since so many species are wide-ranging (e.g. bald eagle). Specific areas, such as nest sites or critical breeding areas, should be identified and protected.

Current regulations base buffer widths for streams on the stream location relative to the wetland(s). Stream reaches downstream of wetlands receive less protection (50-foot buffers) than stream reaches upstream of or between wetlands (100-foot buffers). While this system addresses water quality protection entering wetlands, it does not address other aquatic resources downstream of the wetlands, which may include anadromous fisheries resources. This stream buffer system should address current conditions, functions, and values of streams, and development needs.
An evaluation of stream systems on a subbasin-to-basin level identifying existing conditions and functions could be used to prioritize levels of protection that are relevant to the goals and objectives of the County. To meet the GMA’s intent, the County should also address how to protect non-tributary streams. Many jurisdictions use the DNR stream typing system to develop a local classification system and to determine appropriate buffers.

**Frequently Flooded Areas**

While lacking the major river systems that occur in mainland western Washington (where dramatic flooding has captured national attention) Island County is not immune to flood threats. Flooding generally occurs in the winter during intense storms, combined with high tides. Wind-generated waves frequently run up the beach and overtop many shore protection structures, damaging structures along the shoreline and flooding inland areas. Wave-tossed driftwood can threaten safety and property. Flooding less violent and severe, but perhaps more frequent, occurs around lakes and other low-lying areas during and following heavy precipitation. Development, creation of impervious surfaces, channeling of surface water flows, and loss of wetlands and extensive forest vegetative cover have increased the rate of runoff, decreasing the capacity of upland areas to retain moisture and exacerbating flood problems.

Individual residents, community associations, and diking districts have undertaken local flood protection efforts, including drainage improvements, tide gates, holding ponds, and shore protection structures such as bulkheads and rip-rap. Some of these facilities are maintained by the County.

The County has adopted a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (Chapter 14.02A ICC) which provides construction standards for frequently flooded areas, and stormwater regulations with required detention (Chapter 11.01 ICC).

**Geologically Hazardous Areas**

Although Island County is characterized by a gentler landscape than much of the mountainous and river-torn Puget Sound mainland, the islands have been and continue to be buffeted by geological and climatological forces. Vertical bluffs, ancient landslides, slopes with groundwater seepage or springs can be found in Island County. Careless development in such areas can lead to loss of life and property, both on-site and to other properties. The County regulates grading and construction on all slopes greater than 15%.

**Shorelines**

Island County’s Shoreline Master Program (SMP) is a policy plan and regulatory program designed to protect public resources, and guide future development within the coastal corridor and around large lakes and streams. This program is an element of the Comprehensive Plan. The relationship between these two planning programs is evident in the intent of each plan. General planning goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan are

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4 See Shoreline Management Element.
applicable to overall development of Island County. The Shoreline Program applies to
development within 200 feet of large lakes (20+ acres), coastal areas, and associated
wetlands.

The Island County SMP is based on guidelines of the citizen-initiated 1971 Shoreline
Management Act (SMA). Responding to pressure from citizens concerned about shoreline
utilization, protection, and restoration (and preserving the shoreline from ever-increasing
development pressures) the State Legislature made an official finding declaring the
shorelines of Washington State to be among its most valuable and fragile natural resources.
This finding led to adoption of the SMA, giving Island County the necessary tools to develop
and implement a Shoreline Master Program. In turn, the SMP established general policies
for all activities that make use of shorelands and waters. Varying intensities of uses allowed
on segments of the shorelines are mapped out based on existing development patterns,
biophysical capabilities, limitations of shoreline areas, and the goals and aspirations of Island
County citizens.

The SMP accomplishes this by designating one of six “environments” on all shorelines and
water areas. The shoreline “environments” are classified as: Aquatic, Conservancy, Natural,
Rural, Shoreline Residential, and Urban. The intensity of development allowed on a
particular shoreline depends strongly on its “environment” classification.

The SMP contains eight Master Program “Elements,” providing the foundation for the plan’s
long-range goals: Economic Development, Public Access, Circulation, Recreation, Shoreline
Use, Conservation, Historical/Cultural, and Implementation. These elements are considered
positive aspects of the plan, enabling the local community to improve the situation rather
than react to individual applications for various kinds of shoreline development.

The SMP is also a standard-setting ordinance. Use regulations are included to control “Use
Activities” within each environment and for those in Shorelines of Statewide Significance.
The use regulations are intended to carry out the Policies of the Environments and the
Policies for Use Activities. They also consider the varied impact of activities on different
natural systems.

By developing and implementing the Island County SMP, county citizens recognize that the
Whidbey and Camano Islands shorelines, in their natural state, are a scarce resource which
should be managed and preserved for future generations. To preserve these shorelines and
protect the habitats on which they depend, upland proposals must be compatible with
shoreline plans and with the critical areas regulations protecting the near-shore habitats and
streams (found in the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas Overlay) and wetlands
(found in the Wetlands Overlay). The Shoreline Master Program should also remain
consistent with goals and policies of the Island County Comprehensive Plan. Shoreline areas
exhibiting steep slopes, lakes, ponds, wetlands and streamways require sensitive planning to
avoid degrading watershed characteristics. Additional planning is required to manage
watershed drainage basins, which inevitably affect the coastal zone. The innumerable
benefits deriving from shorelines can be preserved only if solutions are reached between man
and the natural environment.
To understand the current situation on Island County’s 210 miles of shoreline, it is important to look at both developed and undeveloped areas. The parcels comprising nearly 80% of the County’s shoreline are developed, primarily with platted single-family communities.

Current shoreline density ranges from 3-5 units per acre (as at Tyee Beach) to 1 unit per 5 and 20 acres. The average density in platted areas is approximately 2 units per acre (1/2 acre lots) and the average density in undeveloped shoreline areas is approximately 2.5 to 5 acre lots. The predominant zoning classification is Residential. Under SMA/GMA integration, future zoning classifications must be consistent with shoreline designations. This means that the zoning designation and/or permitted uses and land use standards must be consistent with the shoreline designation of any given property.

A comparative analysis between shoreline designations and development patterns is the first step toward GMA/SMA integration. Critical areas will be protected through the Wetlands Overlay, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas Overlay and Geologically Hazardous Areas (Steep/Unstable Slopes) Overlay, Ground Water Management Program and its implementing regulations, the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, and the land Development Standards (Chapter 11.01 ICC) as well as by land use designations and use standards.
II. EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

In 1995 and 1996, Island County performed a land use inventory based on the Island County Assessor’s records. The purpose of this inventory was to provide the County with a detailed description of existing land uses and where they are located. The data will assist in evaluating trends and patterns of land use to establish a direction for Island County’s future. Due to differing characteristics within the county, it was first divided into four regions, including North Whidbey, Central Whidbey, South Whidbey, and Camano Island. The data was broken out by zoning classification and corresponding characteristics of each parcel within that zone. These characteristics include acreage, improvements made, development limitations, and tax classifications for each parcel. The final results can be used as an element in Island County’s optimal land use map.

Figure 2.1 Existing Land Use Designations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Abbr.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Zone</td>
<td>RS</td>
<td>1 Dwelling Unit per 12,500 Square Feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Residential Zone</td>
<td>RR</td>
<td>1 Dwelling Unit per 5 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture Zone</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td>1 Dwelling Unit per 20 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Management Zone</td>
<td>FM</td>
<td>1 Dwelling Unit per 20 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Residential Zones</td>
<td>NR, NRF, NRC</td>
<td>Commercial and Industrial Uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split Zoned Parcels</td>
<td>SP, SP3</td>
<td>Two or more zoning classes on one parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Residential Communities</td>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>Planned Residential Developments and Subdivisions with 5 or More Lots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Lands</td>
<td>GV</td>
<td>Federal and State Holdings that are not Zoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal UGAs - Inc.</td>
<td>Inc. UGAs</td>
<td>Municipal Urban Growth Areas - incorporated portion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal UGAs - Uninc.</td>
<td>Uninc. UGAs</td>
<td>Municipal Urban Growth Areas - unincorporated portion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads and Lakes</td>
<td>Rds &amp; Lks</td>
<td>Roads, Lakes and Tidelands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1983 LAND USE INVENTORY

The last comprehensive land use inventory performed in Island County was in 1983. The methodology used then was quite a bit different than that of the current inventory. Still, it can be a useful guide illustrating how the land composition of Island County has changed over the past 13 years. The 1983 inventory did not use zones to categorize land use characteristics; rather, it showed the primary use of the land, regardless of its zone. For example, the only qualifying factors for considering a parcel as “residential” were if it was less than five acres and had a dwelling unit on it, or was located in a long plat. By that definition, there were only 19,070
acres of residential lands in Island County. As a result, no direct comparison can be made between those lands zoned residential in 1983 and those that exist today.

One useful figure that can be compared directly to the current land use inventory is the amount of acreage located in long plats and the percentage that has been improved. In 1983, there were 12,566 acres of long platted land (approximately 43% of which had been developed) compared to the current total of 14,479 acres (43% undeveloped). Data also can be extracted to identify the number of non-residential uses (commercial/industrial) both in 1983 and 1996. Among issues that were not addressed in 1983 are split zoned parcels, lands in tax programs, plats and parcels that had water/septic problems, and base density calculations.

**1996 LAND USE INVENTORY**

Island County has a total area of 130,779 acres (204 square miles). Included are the incorporated Urban Growth Areas of Oak Harbor, Langley and Coupeville, totaling 3,173 acres, and 10,573 acres of government lands. Government lands are federal and state holdings that are not zoned, including state parks and Whidbey Naval Air Station. The remaining 111,733 acres fall within an array of zoning categories. These zones are intended to allow specific uses in pre-determined areas. Land consumption within residential zones (RS and RR) can be analyzed in even greater detail. A sub-category, Private Residential Communities (PRCs), has been identified representing all planned residential developments and subdivisions with five or more lots.

The majority of land in Island County (38%) is zoned Rural Residential (Figure 3.2). Within this zone there are 8,360 parcels (48,727 acres). Fifty-one percent of these parcels (28,870 acres) are considered to be unimproved (Figure 3.3). “Unimproved” properties are parcels that do not have a residence or business on them. While the majority of land is within the RR zone, the majority of parcels lie within PRCs. Most of the PRCs are zoned RS. There are 21,685 parcels located in PRCs, of which 9,221 (43%) remain undeveloped. The RS zone allows the highest density available at 3.5 dwelling units per acre. There are 6,171 parcels in the RS zone outside PRCs; of
these, 2,714 are unimproved. As a whole, residentially zoned lands (RS and RR zones) make up 62% of Island County’s land composition, or 81,348 acres. Nearly 45% of all residential parcels are unimproved.

Lands zoned Forest Management (FM) and Agriculture (AG) comprise a significant portion of land in Island County. These properties serve as the county’s resource land base. Lands designated FM and AG include 10,990 acres and 4,601 acres respectively. Combined, FM and AG lands make up 12% of all county lands. Approximately 77% of these parcels remain unimproved.

Split zoned parcels have two or more zoning classifications on one piece of property. Island County has many split-zoned parcels, covering 13,648 acres (approximately 10% of the county’s total acreage.). Thirty-eight percent of these parcels have more than half of their acreage in the AG or FM zone. At a minimum, an additional 668 acres of AG lands and 1,476 acres of FM lands are disguised as split zoned parcels. Approximately 50% of split zoned parcels are unimproved.

The final zoning class encompasses Commercial and Industrial uses (those classified as NR, NRF and NRC). These parcels account for a small, yet significant portion of the land composition. NR, NRF and NRC properties account for 1,146 acres or approximately 1% of the county. There are 348 parcels designated non-residential. Of these, 45% have not been developed.

The remaining lands in Island County include government lands (8%); roads, lakes and tidelands (4%); and incorporated Urban Growth Areas (2%).

Within each of the four primary zoning categories (RS, RR, AG and FM) there is an associated density and minimum parcel size (Figure 2.4). A significant number of parcels in Island County do not meet the minimum parcel size for their zone. This is due, in part, to down-zoning that has
occurred in the past. Further analysis was given to the number of non-conforming parcels that have not been improved. Eighteen percent (2,754) of all parcels in Island County are non-conforming in size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZONE</th>
<th>MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE</th>
<th>TOTAL UNIMPROVED PARCELS</th>
<th>PERCENT OF PARCELS THAT ARE NON-CONFORMING</th>
<th>TOTAL ACRES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential (RS)</td>
<td>12,500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>6,171</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential (RR)</td>
<td>5 acres</td>
<td>8,360</td>
<td>2,010</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture (AG)</td>
<td>20 acres</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest (FM)</td>
<td>20 acres</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>15,391</td>
<td>2,754</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number and size of parcels in specific tax programs is another point addressed in the land use inventory. Forest management tax programs, agricultural tax programs and open space tax programs have been established to provide incentives for land owners to refrain from subdividing land or converting their property to a different use. Through a reduction in property taxes landowners can reap financial benefit while preserving land and reducing overall consumption. It is significant that not all of the FM and AG lands are in these tax programs; while at the same time, not all lands in the tax programs are zoned FM or AG.

Three tax programs are designed to benefit forest/timber lands. These include classified forest, designated forest and open timber tax programs. Of the 490 parcels zoned FM, only 330 are taxed for such use. Four-hundred-fifteen additional parcels are not zoned FM but are taxed for that use (Figure 2.5). It should be acknowledged that 55 of these parcels are split zoned, including some land area zoned FM. Of the total parcels that are taxed for forest/timber use, 50% conform to the minimum lot size in the FM zone of 20 acres. In total, 15,750 (12%) acres are in a forest/timber tax program.

Open agriculture tax programs are designed to encourage the preservation of agriculture lands. In Island County, 573 parcels are in the open agriculture tax program, of which 180 are zoned AG and 393 have other zoning. (Figure 2.6). Fifty-nine percent of these parcels are less than 20 acres in size, most of which are not zoned AG. One-hundred-seventy-four of the parcels which are in the tax program but not zoned AG, are split zoned parcels in which a portion of the property is zoned AG. The total 573 parcels in the tax program account for 11,245 acres (8.6%).
Another incentive to encourage land preservation is the open space tax program. Twenty-nine parcels (422 acres) are in the open space tax program. Lands in the open space tax program account for 0.4% of the Island County total (Figure 2.7).

**PLANNING AREA CHARACTERISTICS**

The conclusions outlined above are derived from figures that represent the entire county. Each planning area within Island County has characteristics that make it different from the others. By looking at trends within each planning area, planning policies can better be applied to suit the county’s diverse nature.

The graphs and charts below show how existing development compares with total buildout on unimproved parcels at base density, and the degree of resulting population growth. Improved parcels have not been included in calculating buildable lots, even though there is potential to further subdivide many of these lots. Thus, the figure representing additional potential units could be much greater. Currently, 16% of the county’s total dwelling units are considered vacant, seasonal, or rental. The figures below have not been adjusted for vacancy rates or seasonal occupancy rates, and therefore indicate a 100% occupancy rate of all dwelling units as permanent residences. Population capacity figures should not be confused with population projection figures—but rather as a “what-if” scenario. Several variables affect what will happen over time, including zoning and average household size. These capacities are intended only as estimates of what could happen under specific conditions.

North Whidbey, characterized by its association with Oak Harbor and Whidbey Naval Air Station, is the most developed region. Thirty-three percent of the parcels in the North Whidbey region remain unimproved (Figure 2.8) compared with the overall Island average of 45%. At base density, North Whidbey has the lowest potential for additional parcelization and development. There are 4,324 developed parcels in the North Whidbey region but at base density there is potential for an additional 8,024 (Figure 2.9). If the North Whidbey population multiplier (3.1 people per dwelling unit) is then applied, this region has a potential population...
growth of 24,874 additional people. Of the nearly 36,000 acres in the North Whidbey region, 9,162 acres are government lands. This encompasses the majority of government lands in the county and includes Whidbey Naval Air Station and Deception Pass State Park.

![Figure 2.8 Existing Land Use Summary - North Whidbey](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Unimproved</th>
<th>Unimproved</th>
<th>Septic</th>
<th>% Parcels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Parcels</td>
<td>Denials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - RS</td>
<td>3,039</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - RR</td>
<td>10,978</td>
<td>2,154</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - AG</td>
<td>1,225</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - FM</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - NR</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - NRF</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - NRC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - sp3</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>split 2</td>
<td>4,494</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC’s</td>
<td>1,727</td>
<td>2,551</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov’t Lands</td>
<td>9,162</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inc. UGA’s</td>
<td>1,952</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22,879</td>
<td>6,254</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does not include all government owned lands, only those lands that have not been placed in a zoning classification by the county.

Central Whidbey nearly mirrors the county-wide totals. Fifty-one percent of all parcels remain unimproved (Figure 2.10). At base density an additional 12,107 dwelling units could be
accommodated (Figure 2.11) translating into a population growth of 29,057 people (population factor of 2.4 people per dwelling unit). Lands in open agriculture and forest/timber tax programs are prevalent in the Central Whidbey region, totaling 7,785 acres. In association with the common water problems that occur in Central Whidbey, this region has the most septic denials (709) on record of the four planning regions.

**Figure 2.10 Existing Land Use Summary - Central Whidbey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Unimproved Acres</th>
<th>Unimproved Parcels</th>
<th>Unimproved Septic Parcels</th>
<th>Septic Denials</th>
<th>% Parcels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 - RS</td>
<td>4,709</td>
<td>2,449</td>
<td>1,326</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - RR</td>
<td>10,322</td>
<td>6,524</td>
<td>1,384</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - AG</td>
<td>1,901</td>
<td>1,252</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - FM</td>
<td>2,540</td>
<td>2,424</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - NR</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - NRF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - NRC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - sp3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC's</td>
<td>3,084</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4,799</td>
<td>2,427</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25,263</td>
<td>14,401</td>
<td>7,919</td>
<td>4,051</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt Lands</td>
<td>1,073</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inc. UGA's</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does not include all government owned lands, only those lands that have not been placed in a zoning classification by the county.

The South Whidbey region is the largest region and could experience tremendous growth under current zoning standards. At full parcelization, there is a potential of 15,627 additional dwelling
units (Figure 2.12) resulting in a potential population increase of 39,068 people (population factor of 2.5 people per dwelling unit). Private Residential Communities comprise 7,388 parcels (more than one-third of the county total) of which 3,300 remain unimproved (Figure 2.13). Consistent with county-wide figures, 46% of parcels in all zones are unimproved. Lands in forest/timber tax programs abound in South Whidbey. More than half of all parcels zoned FM are located here and account for 6,521 acres. When combined with those parcels that are in the forest/timber tax programs but not zoned FM, the total reaches 8,602 acres.

### Figure 2.12 Existing Land Use Summary - South Whidbey

| Land Use | Unimproved Acres | Unimproved Parcels | Unimproved Septic | % Parcels
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 - RS</td>
<td>5,671</td>
<td>3,168</td>
<td>2,021</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - RR</td>
<td>18,359</td>
<td>10,096</td>
<td>2,790</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - AG</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - FM</td>
<td>6,521</td>
<td>6,291</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - NR</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - NRF</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - NRC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - sp3</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC's</td>
<td>3,610</td>
<td>2,150</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40,156</td>
<td>22,130</td>
<td>13,016</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov't Lands</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inc. UGA's</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40,656</td>
<td>22,130</td>
<td>13,016</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does not include all government owned lands, only those lands that have not been placed in a zoning classification by the county.

### Figure 2.13 Pre-GMA Potential Dwelling Units - South Whidbey

Camano Island is the most divergent region in Island County. Nearly 25% of Camano Island is in an open agriculture or forest/timber tax program. Sixty-five percent of the parcels zoned RR
on Camano Island have not been improved, with a region total of 48% (Figure 2.14). PRC’s contain 6,947 parcels (almost one-third of the county total) of which 42% are not improved. At base density, Camano Island can accommodate an additional 12,899 parcels (Figure 2.15) or a population of 29,668 people (population factor of 2.3 people per dwelling unit).

**Table 1.11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Acres Unimproved</th>
<th>Acres Unimproved</th>
<th>Parcels Unimproved</th>
<th>Septic Denials</th>
<th>% Parcels Unimproved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 - RS</td>
<td>4,722</td>
<td>2,275</td>
<td>1,882</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - RR</td>
<td>9,069</td>
<td>5,946</td>
<td>2,032</td>
<td>1,327</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - AG</td>
<td>1,121</td>
<td>1,240</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - FM</td>
<td>1,246</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - NR</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - NRF</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - NRC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - sp3</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC's</td>
<td>4,612</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>6,947</td>
<td>2,892</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

*Does not include all government owned lands, only those lands that have not been placed in a zoning classification by the county.

**Figure 2.15 Pre-GMA Potential Dwelling Units - Camano Island**

Based on current zoning and the base density allowed within each zone, a population capacity for the unimproved property in Island County can be calculated. The capacity for split zoned
parcels was calculated using the base density of the zone with the lowest density. The buildout, stated in terms of potential dwelling units, is calculated for individual parcels—not the total acreage. A population factor has been determined for each region in the county, which is multiplied by the potential dwelling units in that region. The totals are assembled in a county-wide table (Figure 2.16). Total dwelling units amount to 48,657, translating to an additional population of 122,667 people outside the incorporated municipalities. These are gross estimates that do not take into account a number of variables. For example, density bonuses could increase these estimates while water/septic limitations could reduce estimated buildout.

### Table 2.16: Population Capacity at Base Density at Existing Pre-GMA Zoning

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<td>Residential (RS)</td>
<td>3,457</td>
<td>7,794</td>
<td>31,612</td>
<td>80,287</td>
<td>35,069</td>
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<td>Rural Residential (RR)</td>
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<td>6,435</td>
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<td>Agriculture (AG)</td>
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<td>48,657</td>
<td>122,667</td>
<td>69,445</td>
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### Figure 2.17: Pre-GMA Potential for Additional Population - Unincorporated Area

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Upon examining the data further, a number of variables can affect development and alter the total buildout. Limitations on development include septic denials and water moratoriums. A total of 1,887 unimproved parcels have septic denials on record in Island County. A septic
denial is based on site conditions and regulations in place when the soils are evaluated on a site registration. As sewage system technology improves, additional wastewater treatment options may become available. Currently, off-site septic drainfields are becoming more common. Wastewater treatment plants are an alternative for some areas that are unsuitable for subsurface sewage disposal.

Twenty-four water systems are currently under moratoriums, thereby preventing additional development until the particular water system problems are solved. Those water systems unlikely to resolve their problems within five-to-10 years were analyzed while collecting base data for Private Residential Communities. Although development on these properties is unlikely to occur within the next five-to-10 years, the lots are included as potential infill areas during the 20-year planning period for the Comprehensive Plan. As solutions and new alternatives become economically viable, property owners may not be bound by such limitations. It should also be noted that many existing water systems could not meet the needs of a fully developed service area.

Island County, under the Growth Management Act, is required to establish policies and zoning that promote development at higher densities within urban areas and lower densities in rural areas. The base density for the existing RS zone is 3.5 dwelling units per acre, which is an urban density. 6,171 parcels (16%) in Island County are zoned at this density. The potential exists for an additional 31,612 parcels that could support a population of 80,287 people within the RS zone. Likewise, there are 2,754 unimproved parcels of land that are non-conforming in size. Four hundred-twenty-seven of these parcels are zoned RS and have a higher density than 3.5 dwelling units per acre. Parcels zoned RR (and therefore less than 5 acres in size) amount to 2,010. Developments proposing on-site subsurface sewage disposal must meet the minimum lot size or land area requirements per WAC 246-272. These requirements are based upon soil type and water supply.

The RS zone was established in 1966, and originally allowed a maximum density of 6 dwelling units per acre (1 dwelling unit per 7,200 sq. ft.). In 1977, this was reduced to 3.5 dwelling units per acre (1 dwelling unit per 12,500 sq. ft.). Although density has been changed before, the RS zone continues to occupy the same general geographic area as in 1966. To date, the RS zone covers a large part of the county’s shorelines and numerous inland pockets. A significant portion of Island County’s land composition, the RS zone (16% of the total number of parcels) supports about 12% of the population. If continued, those figures could rise to approximately 44% of all parcels and 46% of the population.

A large number of parcels are in forest management and open agriculture tax programs, but are not zoned for such purposes. Parcels in forest/timber tax programs not zoned FM number 415, accounting for 7,738 acres. Likewise, there are 393 parcels (7,510 acres) in the open agriculture tax program that are not zoned AG.
III. FUTURE LAND USE

INTRODUCTION
Island County is at a crucial period in the history of its growth and development. Set in the context of the urbanizing Puget Sound metropolitan region of the Pacific Northwest, the County is subject to the forces and dynamics of rapid development. It is important to assess in detail what has been happening in Island County: to improve our knowledge and understanding of the forces driving growth and development and to consider the specific impacts to our environment, open space and rural character.

Land use theories, policies and practices, like those in other arts and sciences, need to be constantly evaluated and worked on in order that they evolve to meet the changing needs and demands of our society. Without this on-going effort, and the detailed awareness of the activities and forces at work in shaping the future, Island County could face a future of environmental degradation, sprawl, congestion, loss of living amenity and fiscal crisis.

Island County proposes a definitive, effective growth management strategy that will fully implement all of the goals and policies set forth in the Washington Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A) as well as respond to the unique developmental forces that have shaped the county’s settlement pattern in the past, and that will continue to be the primary force for development over the forseeable future. The County recognizes that the future well-being of its citizens and the wise conservation of the County’s resources depends upon the decisions made today.

LAND USE PLAN CONCEPT
Literal interpretation of the Washington Growth Management Act presents a major issue for Island County. The GMA posits one, traditional model as the result of the dynamic forces and processes involved in the phenomenon of urban growth. This model, called the “concentric ring theory” of urban growth, assumes that the expansion of urban populations and land uses takes place in rings around existing dense urban centers. It further assumes that densities necessarily decrease as the distance from the urban center increases.

The concentric ring theory had a basis in the centralizing forces of the Industrial Revolution, forces that drove urban growth until the advent of the automobile. Today, however, many renowned urban and regional planners, planning theoreticians and historians have demonstrated that there are a variety of possible forms of urban expansion which can serve as a basis for effective growth management. Indeed, many experts have pointed out that the dynamic forces driving current urban expansion are powerfully in opposition to the concept of a city that simply continues to expand in concentric rings. Unlike Washington, several other states involved in growth management have acknowledged a variety of forms of urban and rural growth.

It has even been suggested that large central cities are no longer responsive to modern technological, social and economic forces. Our problems of urban congestion and pollution, our ineffectiveness in integrating the more disadvantaged segments of our populations, the increasing separation between the wealthy and the poor, the resultant inability to renew vast
sectors of our older urban centers that have declined into slums, and an obsolete industrial plant
call into question the future of the large city. Other models of managed growth may be more
appropriate to specific settings and circumstances.

In particular, a concentric ring urban model does not appear to be appropriate for Island County.
The traditional development of Island County displays aspects of linear growth, especially in the
form of small nodes of commercial development serving the rural areas of the County, along the
major state arterial routes on both Whidbey and Camano Island. On both islands of the County,
there is also a significant amount of dispersed development in the form of isolated long plats and
planned residential developments.

**Dispersed Growth**

Today’s technologies, most notably the automobile, television, communications, computers
and the Internet are powerful forces that make dispersed forms of growth and settlement
possible. Dispersion does not automatically produce sprawl and the resultant enormous
infrastructure costs that sprawl generates. Density by and of itself also does not create
sprawl. Sprawl results when density is permitted in an even and unbroken pattern across the
landscape in a manner that ignores the underlying principles of land ecology and
stewardship. This leads to environmental degradation and the destruction of the very natural
resources that entice the movement of people into an area; be they forests, farmlands, views,
waterfronts or other open space elements which humans appear to need as much as they need
neighbors and villages.

Dispersed growth offers many potential benefits. Managed dispersion can even out and even
diminish the costs of the provision of public utilities, facilities and services. A dispersed
urban growth strategy can maintain the rural character of County infrastructure such as roads.
It can provide more choices in the location of development, potentially allowing for more
natural features and resources to be preserved in more places within the County. A dispersed
urban growth strategy can also make the most efficient use of an already fragmented land use
and ownership pattern.

A dispersed urban growth strategy may also provide a better means for preserving the natural
features and rural character of the County. Island County is made up of two islands formed
during the retreat of the glaciers at the end of the last ice age. As a result the geology, soil
types, water resources, habitats, landforms and other natural features of the islands are also
dispersed and intermixed. Planning for future growth must take these unique features of the
islands into consideration.

**Integrating the Historical Development Pattern**

In approaching the task of planning in accordance with the Washington Growth Management
Act, Island County faces the challenge of integrating an historical development pattern of
dispersed communities within the GMA-mandated model of centralized urban growth areas
surrounded by rural areas and resource lands.

From the early 1900s, when the County had a population of only 1,870 to 1940 when the
County population was 6,098 and the City of Oak Harbor’s population was but 590, Island
Island County Comprehensive Plan  •  Policy Plan/Land Use Element

Island County existed as a completely rural setting, its small resource based economy quite in tune with its rural character. World War II brought the establishment of the Whidbey Naval Air Station, which opened Whidbey Island up to a different kind of development. In response, the City of Oak Harbor, which previously had maintained a relatively small growth rate, only growing from 337 in 1920 to 590 in 1940, suddenly began to expand. Today, Oak Harbor’s population is over 20,000. The growth rate for the County’s other two municipalities, Coupeville and Langley, pretty much stayed the same. Coupeville’s population has grown from 310 in 1910 to 1,610 in 1997. Langley has grown from 274 in 1920 to 1,000 in 1995.

The population of the unincorporated area of Island County also began to increase in the decade between 1940 and 1950 and has consistently outpaced the growth of the County’s cities ever since.

Prior to 1966, land subdivision in Island County was not regulated in terms of lot size and density. During that period, 186 long plats were established on 18,329 acres creating 30,966 lots. Lots ranged is size from 4,000 square feet to over 3 acres, with an average lot size of 6/10th of an acre.

Since 1966, growth of the unincorporated portion of Island County has been directed in accordance with regulations established in the Island County Code. Long plats and planned residential developments approved between 1966 and 1984 number 150, with 7,342 lots on 5,889 acres of land. Sizes ranged from 6,000 square feet to over 2.5 acres, with an average lot size of 8/10th of an acre.

Since 1984, the planned residential development process has been used a number of times in place of the long plat subdivision process. About 25 planned residential developments containing about 500 lots have been established on 934 acres of land at an average lot size of 1.9 acres. (Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)

These regulations (the 1966 Interim Zoning Code and the 1984 Zoning Code) ended a system of land subdivision which had resulted in the platting and parcelization of many key areas of the County in a manner that greatly outstripped the demand for the lots created. Almost all of the waterfront property in the County was zoned at higher densities in 1966. More recently, the planned residential development provisions, enacted in 1984, did begin to integrate needed neighborhood-oriented amenities, and the protection of forested lands, agricultural lands and sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains and steep and unstable slopes was significantly improved.

Island County must now plan for growth in the context of a largely fragmented and dispersed land use and ownership pattern. This does not fit well within the framework established under the GMA. However, this does not necessarily mean that the County cannot meet the statutory goals established within the act. The 1997 GMA amendments contained in the rural element for defining existing areas of more intensive rural development provide the opportunity to acknowledge the land development patterns of the past in Island County, while not proliferating them.

Much of the anticipated population growth over the next 20 years will be originating from an urban or suburban setting and coming to Island County to seek a rural lifestyle. However, this population is not rural in the sense that rural populations are generally involved in the
primary resource sectors of the economy (i.e. industries of fishing, agriculture, forestry and mineral extraction). Island County’s rural population is largely oriented toward secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy which have traditionally located in and about urban centers. Although Island County does not have within its borders a mature urban economy in the classical sense, population growth has nevertheless increased in recent years due to the county’s accessibility to urban employment centers on the mainland, particularly in the Everett area of the Puget Sound metropolitan region.

To date, this “commuter accessibility” has worked, but the limitations on transportation access to and from the Islands are becoming increasingly restrictive. There are no firm plans in hand for the replacement and/or widening of the Deception Pass Bridge, the Mark Clark Bridge, or the state highways connecting North Whidbey and Camano Island to the mainland. Plans have been proposed for the improvement of ferry service between Clinton and Mukilteo by adding a third ferry, but no further changes are contemplated in the number or size of the boats serving Whidbey.

**Intent of Plan**

The comprehensive plan concept groups our future growth and development within those presently developed urban and dispersed rural areas to conserve Island County’s natural resources, critical areas, open space, and rural characteristics. Our objective is to create efficient and attractive urban and rural communities while adhering to the goals and guidelines of the State Growth Management Act.

**POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

The Growth Management Act states that the Office of Financial Management (OFM) shall provide 20-year population forecasts for counties, and requires counties and cities to create plans based on these forecasts. OFM provides a low, medium and high series of projections. OFM forecasts do not address the distribution of population within counties or the calculation of seasonal residents. These are the County’s responsibility in cooperation with the cities.


In the 1998 Comprehensive Plan review cycle, the County adopted the high series OFM projections. Based on an analysis of building permit activity in the County from 1990 to 1996, the County felt that the high series was the most appropriate projection at the time. In 2004 the County reviewed the 2000 U.S. Census and recent trends in its population growth in accordance with RCW 36.70A.130. It was found that the County population was growing at a lower rate than had been projected in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan, but the amount of building permits remained the same. After these trends were discussed in the public hearings process, the County concluded that it was appropriate to adjust the twenty year projection down to a figure between the medium and the high series OFM projections. A lower population projection was clearly necessary to ensure efficient planning, yet the Planning Commission was hesitant to choose too low of a projection because of the robust state of the housing construction industry. Historical building permit activity that is trended out to 2025
combined with the countywide average household size yields a population very close to the
medium/high projection of 110,050 residents in 2025. This projection results in an increase
of 38,492 from 2000.

After the total population estimate for 2025 was arrived at, the County was broken into
planning regions: North Whidbey, Central Whidbey, South Whidbey and Camano Island.
This regional break-down is discussed further in the Population Distribution section below.
The County then used historical permit data and census tract information to determine the
population in each region and the respective growth rates. Two methods were then employed
in this process. One has been termed the Proportional method, the other the Growth method.
Both produce a growth projection every five years, starting with the known population in
each planning area in 2000, through the end of the planning horizon in 2025.

The proportional method uses the proportion of the population that each region has
historically hosted. The Growth method tracks the recent growth rate in each region using
building permit data. The two methods produce a range of potential growth for each region
(Figure 3.7). The results of the Proportional and Growth calculations are provided for all
regional planning areas that indicate growth projections in five year increments.

(Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)
Seasonal Population
The County will not adjust the OFM medium/high population projection for a seasonal population at this time. In 1980, the County estimated that 4,289 of its 20,872 housing units, or 20.4%, were for seasonal use. By 1990, the seasonal housing estimate was 3,053 of the 25,580 units, or 11.8%. However, in the year 2000, it is estimated that of the 32,378 housing units, 3,107 units or 9.6% are seasonal. From 1990 to 2000 there was a reduction of only 2.2%. The decrease in the percentage of seasonal housing units by 10.8% (20.4% minus 9.6%) from 1980 to 2000 illustrates two probable trends. The first is that seasonal homes are being converted to permanent residences as people near retirement. The second is that housing prices are becoming relatively more expensive in Island County than in other areas in the region where second homes or retirement homes may be purchased. Though the proportion of houses that are used seasonally is declining, the absolute number of seasonal homes has leveled off since 1996. This may be a temporary trend and will need to be studied again during subsequent Comprehensive Plan review cycles to determine if a true trend is emerging. The County surmises that if current trends continue, by the year 2025, the percentage of the County’s housing units that are dedicated to seasonal residents will probably be a negligible amount (1 or 2%) that the County should not include in its population forecast at this time. Should the leveling-off of the number of seasonal residents continue, it may take a little longer before those residents reach the level of negligibility. (Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)

Population Trends
Three components affect population size and distribution: Fertility (Births), Mortality (Deaths), and Migration. Age and sex-specific birth, death, and migration rates can be used to predict the future population, by age, for the county. These age-specific data sets are important because different age groups have different infrastructure and service needs. For example, a population with a large percentage of retired adults would require more medical and long term care facilities than a population consisting primarily of young adults.

Natural Change. The number of births and deaths is used to determine whether the population is naturally increasing or decreasing. Very little population growth in Island County can be attributed to natural change. However, there was a very slight, but steady, natural population increase between 1960 and 1995. While the number of births is expected to increase at a steady rate in the future, the number of deaths is expected to increase at a faster rate, resulting in a slight natural decrease in population over the next 20-25 years. This is due to the relatively high number of middle-aged and retirement aged people currently living in Island County who will be aging in the next 20-25 years. In addition, the significant in-migration of retirement age adults seen in the last decade is expected to continue, resulting in higher death rates. (Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)
Migration. Migration refers to the number of people who move into and out of a specific area. Of all components of population change, migration is the most variable and difficult to predict because people move from one place to another for many different reasons. Economic opportunity, quality of life, and the price/availability of housing are major factors affecting migration patterns. More than two-thirds of Island County’s population growth is a result of in-migration. In the past, this was due to the military presence and the County’s proximity to major employers in Everett and Seattle. Increasingly, more people are moving to Island County to take advantage of its rural lifestyle, retirement, and recreational opportunities. Migration rates have varied, with spurts of higher migration roughly proportionate to increases experienced by the state as a whole in times of rapid economic growth. While a consistently high rate of migration covers all age groups, it is expected that adults over age 45 will account for a disproportionate share. This reflects the county’s appeal to higher income people and retirees.

Figure 3.3 further shows how the 65 and over population will be growing in a manner which will have it account for 22% of the total population in 2020, compared to 15% in 1995. This dramatic rise in the over 65 population (approximately 300% increase by 2020) requires special planning efforts for transportation, public services and housing, among others. A

(Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)
discussion of the housing needs of the older population is presented in the Housing Element of this plan.

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(Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)
Figure 3.4 Population Pyramids, 1995-2020

(Figure 3.4 repealed by Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)
Population Distribution

Each of the four County planning areas is expected to accommodate a particular share of the County’s 38,492 person growth through the year 2025. The methodology for allocating population to the planning areas is based on an analysis of historical trends, available lands and anticipated areas of future growth. The historical trends for 1970 through 2000 are shown below along with the percentages for 2005 through 2025 in figure 3.5a and 3.5b. Figure 3.5a shows this distribution based on the Proportionate Share method; figure 3.5b shows the distribution based on the Growth Rate method. Special consideration is also given in defining population distributions for the unique characteristics of each planning area, and how people generally live to an area of the County that meets their desired living situation.

**Figure 3.5a Planning Area Population Distribution as Percent of Total County Population, Proportionate Share method 1970-2025**

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<td>57%</td>
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**Figure 3.5b Planning Area Population Distribution as Percent of Total County Population, Growth method 1970-2025**

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<tr>
<td>North Whidbey</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14%</td>
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(Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)
Figure 3.6a Planning Area Population Distribution of OFM High Series, Proportional method

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Figure 3.6b Planning Area Population Distribution of OFM High Series, Growth method

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The following figure displays the growth rates for each of the planning areas for the five decades encompassing 1970 to 2025.

Figure 3.9a Planning Area Population Distribution Growth Rates

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<td>6.1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>37.0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4.2%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>63.6%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
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Figure 3.9b Planning Area Population Distribution Growth Rates

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>36.8%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

(Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)
The following figures present the population distributions for each of the planning areas split into the amount which is projected to occur in the three urban growth areas and the amount in the remaining rural areas. The adopted Comprehensive Plans for Oak Harbor, Coupeville and Langley project their populations to the year 2025 which is the same planning horizon as that established in this Plan. The 2025 benchmarks for population are contained in the adopted CWPPs. (Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)
Table 3.11a Planning Area Population Distribution Between Urban Growth Areas and Unincorporated Areas, Proportion method

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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>15,600</td>
<td>25,500</td>
<td>34,200</td>
<td>34,737</td>
<td>37,085</td>
<td>40,551</td>
<td>42,674</td>
<td>46,664</td>
<td>49,523</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30,419</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6,400</td>
<td>13,200</td>
<td>17,400</td>
<td>14,942</td>
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<td>46,664</td>
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<td>10,183</td>
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<td>1,400</td>
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<td>1,893</td>
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<td>20,409</td>
<td>22,317</td>
<td>23,112</td>
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<td>800</td>
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<td>25%</td>
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Table 3.11b Planning Area Population Distribution Between Urban Growth Areas and Unincorporated Areas, Growth method

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<td>34,737</td>
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<td>40,642</td>
<td>44,093</td>
<td>47,958</td>
<td>51,792</td>
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<td>30,419</td>
<td>10,624</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>17,400</td>
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<td>10,605</td>
<td>11,456</td>
<td>11,984</td>
<td>12,106</td>
<td>2,693</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,400</td>
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<td>1,808</td>
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<td>20,289</td>
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(Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)
The following figure shows the population increase for each of the four planning areas broken down by urban growth area population and unincorporated population.

Figure 3.12a Planning Area Population Distribution - Percent of Planning Area Population Proportion method

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<tr>
<td>Oak Harbor UGA</td>
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<td>57%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coupeville UGA</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7%</td>
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<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>69%</td>
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Figure 3.12b Planning Area Population Distribution - Percent of Planning Area Population Growth method

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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>49%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>17%</td>
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<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>90%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>86%</td>
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<td>32%</td>
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<td>69%</td>
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<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>69%</td>
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(Ord. C-46-11 [PLG-012-11], April 11, 2011)
The four planning areas have unique characteristics that are expressed in the manner that they are projected to grow over the next twenty years.

**North Whidbey**

North Whidbey’s population share represents a decreasing percentage of the total Island County population: from 58% in 1970, to 51% in the year 2000—the direct result of a stabilized military population. The North Whidbey share of the total population is projected to fall to between 45 to 47% by the year 2025, depending on whether the Proportional or Growth method is used. Likewise, the population share in the Oak Harbor Urban Growth Area (UGA) has steadily decreased in relation to the rural portion. This trend, which has leveled in recent decades, is expected to increase slightly to somewhere
between 58 and 63% of the population located in the Oak Harbor UGA. North Whidbey is projected to grow by 14,786 to 17,058 additional people by 2025, or 38 to 44% of the County’s projected growth.

Central Whidbey

The proportionate share of population in the Central Whidbey region has held relatively steady over the years, at 13 to 14%, and is expected to decrease only slightly through the year 2025. Although a significant number of unimproved lands and Planned Residential Development exist, continued water problems in this region are expected to stabilize growth rates. By the year 2025, the Central Whidbey share of the County’s population is projected to be 11 to 12%. Consistent with the rest of the county, Central Whidbey has experienced more growth in the rural area than in the Coupeville UGA. In 1970, Coupeville held 17% of the planning area’s population, and in 2000 this figure had increased only slightly to 18%. By 2025 the Coupeville UGA is expected to make up 17% of the planning area population. Coupeville currently has no urban growth area outside of its current Town limits, so all new growth will be accommodated through infill development within the existing municipal boundaries. Central Whidbey is projected to show a population increase of between 2,639 and 3,356 people through 2025, or 7 to 9% of the county growth projection to 2020.

South Whidbey

In recent decades South Whidbey has held a steady 19% share of total county population. This share is predicted to increase between 21 and 23% in 2025 due to continued growth of employment opportunities in the Everett and Seattle areas within commuting distance. Since 1970, rural population growth has outpaced the growth of the Langley UGA. Langley’s share of population in the South Whidbey planning area was 11% in 1970, it has fallen to a 1996 share of 7%. By 2025, the Langley UGA share is expected in increase slightly to 9%. A majority of new growth will be accommodated within the existing city limits. Projections for South Whidbey show growth between 9,106 to 11,305 people, or 24 to 29% of total county growth to 2025.

Camano Island

With respect to the rest of the county, the Camano region has experienced the greatest increase in population share. Since 1970, Camano’s share has increased from 10% to 16% in 1996. This trend is expected to continue to rise as employment opportunities in Snohomish and Skagit county increase, making Camano Island attractive to commuters. Camano Island is projected to show an increase between 8,972 to 9,764 people, or 23 to 25% of the total county projection to 2025.

Rural and Urban Population Growth

It is estimated that an additional 38,492 people will be added to the County’s population by the year 2025. This represents an increase of 53% over the next twenty years, producing a total population of 110,050. The rural portion of the County will accommodate 26,182 to 29,187 new residents, or 68% of this growth, while the urban growth areas will add 12,307
persons, or 32%. As one of the implementation strategies of this plan, the County has committed to studying the Freeland and Clinton areas for consideration as non-municipal urban growth areas. If these areas become non-municipal growth areas and the urban growth areas expand for Oak Harbor and Langley as shown on the future land use maps at the end of this chapter with cooperation of the municipalities, the rural/urban split of population growth would change dramatically; the estimated result would be a 50% growth in rural areas and 50% in urban areas from 1996 through the year 2020. The three existing Urban Growth Areas do not have the capacity to achieve the 50/50 urban/rural split. The City of Langley would like discussion of the 50/50 split deferred until NMUGA designations are presented. It is anticipated that a Freeland NMUGA designation will be before the Planning Commission for consideration in 2007. The City of Oak Harbor has said they currently lack the public facilities and services to accommodate the additional population associated with the 50/50 allocation. Coupeville is currently not considering expansion of its Urban Growth Area for residential purposes due primarily to water supply problems.

**EMPLOYMENT FORECASTS**

The following tables present employment forecasts prepared by the Island County Economic Development Council for the four planning areas of the County. The employment statistics presented are for the average annual jobs by the following employment sectors: farm; construction; manufacturing; transportation, communications and public facilities; wholesale trade; retail trade; finance, insurance and real estate; service; civilian government employment; military; and other. It is anticipated that the retail, service and manufacturing sectors will experience higher rates of growth than the other sectors. The EDC recently revised these employment forecasts based on the use of the high OFM population projections and an extension of the planning period through the year 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>11,450</td>
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<td>7%</td>
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<td>Central Whidbey</td>
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<td>2,419</td>
<td>2,910</td>
<td>3,551</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coupeville UGA</td>
<td>1,537</td>
<td>1,656</td>
<td>2,072</td>
<td>2,378</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unincorporated Area</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>1,173</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>2,967</td>
<td>4,191</td>
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<td>33,345</td>
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<td>16,378</td>
<td>18,277</td>
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<td>36%</td>
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In total, Island County is anticipated to increase its total employment from 21,589 in 1996 to 33,345 by the year 2020, representing an increase of 11,756 jobs (a 54% increase). Sixty-four percent of the projected new jobs are anticipated to be located in County’s three Urban Growth Areas, and the remaining 36% in the unincorporated areas of the County. North Whidbey will account for 57% (or 6,707 jobs) of the County’s projected employment growth through the year 2020. Of this, 5,884 is anticipated to occur within the Oak Harbor UGA. Central Whidbey is projected to gain 1,264 jobs, with 841 occurring within the Town of Coupeville. South Whidbey is projected to increase by 2,926 jobs representing 25% of the County’s 24-year growth, with Langley anticipated to increase by 804 jobs. The Camano Island planning area is expected to see the lowest percentage of the County’s total growth with only 7% (or 859 jobs).
## Figure 3.15 Employment Forecast - North Whidbey

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<th>Employment for Selected Sectors</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>24-year Growth</th>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>385</td>
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<td>1,950</td>
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<td><strong>Sub-Total</strong></td>
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<td>6,460</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military</td>
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<td>8,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>North Whidbey (UGA and Unincorporated Area)</strong></td>
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<td>90</td>
<td>85</td>
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Adopted September 28, 1998

Page 1—93
### Figure 3.16 Employment Forecast - Central Whidbey

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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2020</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>838</td>
<td>1,173</td>
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<td>424</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>910</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Employment (civilian only)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>State and Local</td>
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<td>1,185</td>
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<td>1,445</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
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Figure 3.17 Employment Forecast - South Whidbey

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Employment for Selected Sectors</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>24-year Growth</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(in actual number of workers, average annual)</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2000</td>
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### Langley UGA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
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<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation, Comm. &amp; Public Utilities</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>208</td>
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<td>360</td>
<td>550</td>
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<td>Finance, Insurance &amp; Real Estate</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
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<td>Government Employment (civilian only)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>486</strong></td>
<td><strong>584</strong></td>
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### Unincorporated Area

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<tr>
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<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
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<td>115</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>142</td>
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<td>75</td>
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<td>165</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>775</td>
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<td>478</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>State and Local</td>
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<td>800</td>
<td>1,015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22</td>
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### South Whidbey (UGA and Unincorporated Area)

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<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>174</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>1,465</td>
<td>1,895</td>
<td>945</td>
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<td>1,605</td>
<td>959</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Civilian</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>State and Local</td>
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<td>845</td>
<td>1,070</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td><strong>Planning Area Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>2,967</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5,634</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,926</strong></td>
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</table>
### Island County Comprehensive Plan • Policy Plan/Land Use Element

Figure 3.18 Employment Forecast - Camano Island

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment for Selected Sectors (in actual number of workers, average annual)</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>24-year Growth</th>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Camano Island</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Construction</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>55</td>
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<td>Transportation, Comm. &amp; Public Utilities</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>150</td>
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<td>Service</td>
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<td>270</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Federal Civilian</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>State and Local</td>
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<td>78</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td><strong>649</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,061</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,310</strong></td>
<td><strong>859</strong></td>
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### Figure 3.19 Employment Forecast - Island County

#### Employment for Selected Sectors

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>24-year Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Growth Areas</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>340</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>435</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation, Comm. &amp; Public Utilities</td>
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<td>180</td>
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<td>2,560</td>
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<td>State and Local</td>
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<tr>
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<td>291</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Retail Trade</td>
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<td>1,311</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>State and Local</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Military</td>
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<td>8,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Total</strong></td>
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<td>14,663</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Island County (UGAs and Unincorporated Area)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
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<td>204</td>
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<td>Construction</td>
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<td>471</td>
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<td>Military</td>
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<td>8,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Island County Total</strong></td>
<td>21,589</td>
<td>23,363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the employment growth in Island County is anticipated to occur in the service (3,693 jobs), retail trade (3,081 jobs), state and local government employees (2,211 civilian jobs) and manufacturing (1,162 jobs) employment sectors. The assumption is that the military
employment shall remain constant at 8,000 through the year 2020. Only two employment sectors are
anticipated to see a decrease in the actual numbers of workers over the 24-year planning period. The anticipated overall employment for farming is projected to decrease by 39 jobs and federal civilian jobs are expected to fall by 27.

The unincorporated portion of the County needs to plan for the anticipated 4,227 new jobs. Service (1,630 jobs) and retail trade (919 jobs) are the areas of the most growth, while construction (223 jobs), manufacturing (325 jobs), transportation, communications and public utilities (325 jobs), and state and local government employment (529 jobs) shall require special attention when allocating appropriate amounts of land during the formation of land use designation criteria and siting areas for new commercial, industrial and office development on the future land use map.

**FUTURE LAND USE PLAN: LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND OVERLAYS**

The future land use plan concept is based on an analysis that recognizes the dispersed nature of both the historical development and the natural features of Island County. As discussed earlier previous development trends and land use regulations fostered a dispersed and fragmented land use pattern that mixed both densities and locations. This has produced small pockets of development through out the County. However, since past development has not occurred in an even or uniform manner there is still an abundant amount of natural features, resource lands and other open spaces. The result has been that much of the County’s rural character and lifestyle remains intact. The land use designations presented in this chapter will form the basis for a new zoning map. The overlays provide additional guidelines for development and use of land in addition to those required in the underlying land use designation.

**URBAN ELEMENT DESIGNATIONS**

Currently, the only urban element designation in Island County is for the municipal Urban Growth Areas of Oak Harbor, Langley and Coupeville. Existing Master Planned Resorts may be designated as urban pursuant to the standards and criteria set forth in this section

**Municipal Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)**

**Definition:**

Urban Growth Areas are designated pursuant to RCW 36.70A.110. UGAs are designated areas where urban growth will be encouraged and supported with urban levels of service. Urban growth makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures and impervious surfaces to the degree that it is incompatible with agriculture, forestry and the extraction of mineral resources.

**Designation Criteria:**

A. The area has adequate buildable land to meet projected 20-year urban land use and employment needs, while providing ample choice of locations for a variety of housing types and supporting uses.

B. Public facilities and services are in place or can be provided.
C. Natural features and land characteristics are capable of supporting urban development without significant environmental degradation.

D. The area does not have high current or future economic value for agriculture, forestry, or mineral production and should be able to develop without having a detrimental impact on nearby resource lands.

E. Opportunities exist for a local balance of housing, jobs and shopping.

F. The areas within the UGA boundaries for Oak Harbor, Coupeville and Langley as delineated during the formation of their comprehensive plans.

**Non-Municipal Urban Growth Areas (NMUGAs)**

**Definition:**

Non-Municipal Urban Growth Areas are designated pursuant to RCW 36.70A.110. NMUGAs are designated areas where urban growth will be encouraged and supported with urban levels of service, but are not incorporated.

**Designation Criteria:**

A. The County has committed to further studying the Freeland and Clinton areas for potential designation as non-municipal urban growth areas.

**Existing Master Planned Resorts**

**Definition:**

Existing Master Planned Resort: A resort that was in existence on July 1, 1990 and that met the definition of an Existing Master Planned Resort at that time. The resort is developed, in whole or in part, as a significantly self contained and integrated development that includes short-term visitor accommodations associated with a range of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities within the property boundaries in a setting of significant natural amenities. An existing resort may include other permanent residential uses, conference facilities, and commercial activities supporting the resort, but only if these uses are integrated into and consistent with the on-site recreational nature of the resort.

**Designation Criteria:**

A. Proposals for Existing Master Planned Resorts must conform to RCW 36.70A.362.

B. The proposed resort was in existence on or before July 1, 1990 and met the definition of an Existing Master Planned Resort at that time.

C. No new urban or suburban land uses are allowed in the surrounding vicinity of any Existing Master Planned Resort, except in areas otherwise designated for urban growth under RCW 36.70A.362.
D. For an Existing Master Planned Resort that is located on land that would otherwise be designated as forest land or agricultural land under RCW 36.70A.170, the County shall include a finding that the land is better suited, and has more long-term importance, for the existing resort than for the commercial harvesting of timber or agricultural production.

E. The resort master plan must be consistent with the development regulations for critical areas.

F. On-site and off-site infrastructure impacts are fully considered and mitigated.

G. The existing resort is significantly self contained and integrates development that includes short-term visitor accommodations associated with a range of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities within the property boundaries in a setting of significant natural amenities.

H. An existing resort may include other permanent residential uses, conference facilities, and commercial activities supporting the resort, but only if these uses are integrated into and consistent with the on-site recreational nature of the resort.

(Red. C-97-06 [PLG-010-06], August 21, 2006)

RURAL ELEMENT DESIGNATIONS

The rural element of Island County contains ten land use designations. They are: Rural Center; Rural Village; Light Manufacturing; Rural Service; Airport; Rural Residential; Rural; Rural Forest; Rural Agriculture; and a Special Review District. The three “areas of more intensive rural development” (residential, mixed-use and non-residential) that are discussed below are not technically land use designations, but rather were used to form logical outer boundaries to implement the 1997 changes to GMA to identify such areas.

Residential Areas of More Intensive Rural Development

Definition:

Areas of more intensive rural development are designated pursuant to the guidelines established in RCW 36.70A.070 for establishing logical outer boundaries for existing areas of more intensive rural development. Lands within residential areas of more intensive rural development shall be designated as Rural Residential (RR).

Designation Criteria:

A. The general criteria for designation is Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) and long plats that were created prior to July 1, 1990 with an average lot size less than 2.5 acres and that exceed ten lots with water system hook-ups; provided that those plats created prior to 1966 must be at least 40% developed and adjacent to other higher
density development, and those plats created after July 1, 1990 must be adjacent to other plats conforming to the designation criteria and form a logical outer boundary.

B. Additional consideration shall be given to parcels that are adjacent to or between areas defined by designation criterion A., considering the need to preserve the character of existing natural neighborhoods and communities; physical boundaries such as roads, land forms and contours, and water bodies; the need to prevent abnormally irregular boundaries; and to use approved water and sewer service systems so that low density sprawl is avoided.

C. The logical outer boundaries for residential areas of more intensive rural development as established in this plan are non-expandable.

**Mixed-Use Areas of More Intensive Rural Development**

**Definition:**

Mixed-use areas or more intensive rural development are designated pursuant to the guidelines established in RCW 36.70A.070 for establishing logical outer boundaries for existing areas of more intensive rural development. All lands designated as mixed-use area of more intensive rural development shall be classified as either Rural Center (RC), Rural Village (RV), Camano Gateway Village (CGV), or Rural Service (RS).

**Designation Criteria:**

A. The starting point for designation is the Business and Land Use Review Committee’s recommended boundaries that accompany the Island County Economic Development Council report entitled Business Land Use Needs for Island County to the year 2016, May 17, 1996. In addition, uses in existence prior to July 1, 1990 and the provision, where appropriate, of sufficient land to provide a transitional buffer between mixed-uses and neighboring rural and single-family residential uses.

B. Additional consideration shall be given to parcels that are adjacent to or between areas defined by designation criteria A., considering the need to preserve the character of existing natural neighborhoods and communities; physical boundaries such as roads, land forms and contours, and water bodies; the need to prevent abnormally irregular boundaries; and to use approved water and sewer service systems so that low density sprawl is avoided.

C. The logical outer boundaries for mixed-use area of more intensive rural development as established in this plan are non-expandable. (Ord. C-102-09 [PLG-015-09], September 22, 2009)

**Non-Residential Areas of More Intensive Rural Development**

**Definition:**

Non-residential areas of more intensive rural development are designated pursuant to the guidelines established in RCW 36.70A.070 for establishing logical outer boundaries for existing areas of more intensive rural development. All lands within a non-residential...
area of more intensive rural development shall be classified as either Light Manufacturing (LM) or Airport (AP).

**Designation Criteria:**

A. The starting point for designation is the Business and Land Use Review Committee’s recommended boundaries that accompany the Island County Economic Development Council report entitled *Business Land Use Needs for Island County to the year 2016*, May 17, 1996. In addition, uses in existence prior to July 1, 1990 and the provision, where appropriate, of sufficient land to provide a transitional buffer between non-residential uses and neighboring rural and residential uses.

B. Additional consideration shall be given to parcels that area adjacent to or between areas defined by designation criteria A., considering the need to preserve the character of existing natural neighborhoods and communities; physical boundaries such as roads, land forms and contours, and water bodies; the need to prevent abnormally irregular boundaries; and to use approved water and sewer service systems so that low density sprawl is avoided.

C. The logical outer boundaries for non-residential areas of more intensive rural development as established in this plan are non-expandable.

**Rural Center Lands (RC)**

**Definition:**

Rural Center lands are larger existing non-residential and mixed-use areas located within mixed-use areas or more intensive rural development and are intended for commercial, light manufacturing and multi-family development.

**Designation Criteria:**

A. Characterized by existing development that is predominantly mixed-use, multi-family and non-residential and meets the definition of Rural Center as stated above.

B. Located within a mixed-use area or more intensive rural development as established by forming a logical outer boundary.

C. Area must be served by an approved public water system.

D. In combination with other portions of an area of more intensive rural development, is at least 40 acres in size.

**Rural Village Lands (RV)**

**Definition:**

Rural Village lands are smaller existing non-residential and mixed-use areas located within mixed-use areas of more intensive rural development and are primarily intended
for the retail sale of convenience goods as well as personal and business services needed to support the localized geographic area.

**Designation Criteria:**

A. The designation shall primarily be located on the periphery of residential neighborhoods.

B. Area must be served by an approved public or private water system.

C. In combination with other portions of an area of more intensive rural development, is larger than 5 acres in size.

D. These areas are generally located along highways, major arterials and collector roads.

E. Characterized by existing development that is predominantly non-residential and mixed-use.

F. Located within a mixed-use area of more intensive rural development as established by forming a logical outer boundary.

**Camano Gateway Village (CGV)**

**Definition:**

Camano Gateway Village lands are smaller existing non-residential and mixed-use areas located within mixed-use areas of more intensive rural development and are primarily intended to provide commercial services that are limited in scale, intensity and size and that serve the local community and help support the broader local commerce of Camano Island. These areas are located along the SR 532 Highway corridor which provides good exposure for business because this is the only automotive route that serves Camano Island. This area provides limited vehicular access, and is congested during peak traffic hours.

**Designation Criteria:**

A. Area must be served by an approved public or private water system.

B. Areas where business activity would not conflict with and may support conservation of Commercial Agriculture, Rural Forest or Rural Agriculture lands.

C. Areas unsuited for, and well buffered from, residential and rural communities having adequate space for greenbelt screening, supportive parking and transport facilities.

D. Characterized by existing development that is predominantly non-residential.

E. Located within a non-residential area of more intensive rural development as established by forming a logical outer boundary.

F. Clusters of existing commercial development that are located adjacent to the SR 532 Highway corridor.

(Ord. C-102-09 [PLG-015-09], September 22, 2009)
*Light Manufacturing Lands (LM)*

**Definition:**

Light Manufacturing lands are located within non-residential areas of more intensive rural development and are intended primarily for light industry and manufacturing, assembling, fabrication, storage, wholesaling, distribution, auto repair/salvage and related activities which are clustered in a complex that provides adequate buffering and screening from surrounding land uses.

**Designation Criteria:**

A. Area must be served by an approved public or private water system.

B. Areas where light industrial or business activity would not conflict with and may support conservation of Commercial Agriculture, Rural Forest or Rural Agriculture lands.

C. Areas unsuited for, and well buffered from, residential and rural communities having adequate space for greenbelt screening, supportive parking and transport facilities.

D. Characterized by existing development that is predominantly non-residential.

E. Located within a non-residential area of more intensive rural development as established by forming a logical outer boundary.
**Rural Service Lands (RS)**

**Definition:**

The Rural Service lands designation is intended for existing small, isolated, businesses and mixed-uses located outside larger commercial areas, oriented to serving local needs, that typically are not permitted in that generalized area. Rural Service areas can either be a single business or service, or a small cluster.

**Designation Criteria:**

A. Recognize the existing development pattern as the foundation for the designation of Rural Service Areas

B. The designation is appropriate for those non-residential or mixed-use activities such as small, country stores and other similar retail uses.

C. All Rural Service lands must have an existing development on a lot or combination of lots less than 2.5 acres

D. Defined as a mixed-use area of more intensive rural development as established by the formation of a logical outer boundary.

E. Based on the analysis presented within the study entitled Potential Rural Service Lands Study, Island County Planning.

**Airport Lands (AP)**

**Definition:**

Areas around existing commercial airports and adjacent existing non-residential uses that are suitable for increased levels of light industrial and manufacturing development to meet the needs of County’s residents.

**Designation Criteria:**

A. Recognize historical development patterns as the foundation for the designation of Airport Areas.

B. Located within a non-residential area of more intensive rural development as established by forming a logical outer boundary.

C. Areas surrounding Wes Lupien Air Park, Whidbey Air Park and Camano Island Air Field.

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5 Commercial airports in Island County are privately owned and intended for general use by the public.

6 Light manufacturing development includes manufacturing, assembly, fabrication, warehouses, and storage and distribution.
Rural Residential Lands (RR)

Definition:
Lands located within defined boundaries of residential areas of more intensive rural development that are intended for infill development and limited subdivision at the prevailing residential density in the defined area.

Designation Criteria:
All lands within the logical outer boundaries of designated residential areas of more intensive rural development that are primarily made up of existing residential development or small portions of infill or vacant parcels which are not designated as Rural Forest (RF), Rural Agriculture (RA), or for a non-residential use.

Rural Lands (R)

Definition:
Rural areas of the County not otherwise designated or within UGAs, areas of more intensive rural development, Rural Agriculture, Rural Forest or Commercial Agriculture.

Designation Criteria:
A. Areas where the land capability is unsuited for higher density residential development; or
B. Areas outside of areas of more intensive rural development; or
C. Areas that enhance rural character and living environment; or
D. A buffer between Commercial Agriculture, Rural Agriculture and Rural Forest uses and urban uses.

Rural Forest Lands (RF)

Definition:
Lands where forestry activities have been an important and valued use in the past, and will continue to be in the future, but do not meet the criteria for inclusion as lands of long-term commercial significance.

Designation Criteria:
A. The Rural Forest land use designation shall include lands which meet either of the following criteria:

1. The tract or parcel is in the classified or designated forest tax classification at least 20 acres in size; or smaller contiguous parcels in a single ownership that, in combination, are at least 20 acres in size; or
2. The tract or parcel is at least 20 acres in size, owned by the County, State or Federal Government and managed for commercial forestry.


**Rural Agriculture Lands (RA)**

**Definition:**
Lands where agricultural activities have been an important and valued use in the past, and will continue to be in the future, but do not meet the criteria for inclusion as lands of long-term commercial significance.

**Designation Criteria:**
A. All lands which are 20 acres or larger in contiguous ownership and are in the agriculture tax status are designated rural agriculture if they are not given a Commercial Agriculture designation.

B. Designation is based, in part, on the analysis presented in the report entitled Island County Commercial Agriculture Land Study, Island County Department of Planning and Community Development, February, 1998.

**Special Review District (SD)**

**Definition:**
Areas defined during the comprehensive planning process that require special consideration for future development which a master plan allows.

**Designation Criteria:**
A. Shall be applied to large properties at least 150 acres in size, in single ownership and/or managed by a non-profit organization.

B. The Greenbank Farm is designated.

C. The Au Sable Institute

D. The Casey Conference Center is designated.

(Ord. C-166-01 [PLG-027-01], January 7, 2002), (Ord. C92-02 [PLG-015-02], December 16, 2002)

**RESOURCE LANDS**
The resource lands of Island County are defined by the Commercial Agriculture land use designation and the Mineral Lands Overlay. No forestry resource lands have been identified in this Comprehensive Plan based on the analysis presented in the report entitled Island County Commercial Forest Land Study, Crescent Springs Management, January, 1998.
Commercial Agriculture Lands (CA)

Definition:
Areas that meet the definition of RCW 36.70A.030(2): “land primarily devoted to the commercial production of horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, dairy, apiary, vegetable, or animal products or of berries, grain, hay, straw, turf, seed, Christmas trees not subject to the excise tax imposed by RCW 84.33.100 through 84.33.140, or livestock, and that has long term commercial significance for agricultural production”.

Designation Criteria:
A. Lands which meet the following criteria have been designated as agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance.
   1. The farm unit is at least 40 acres in size; and
   2. At least 50% of the farm unit is comprised of Prime soils; and
   3. The farm unit is primarily devoted to active commercial production through cultivation or management; or
   4. The farm unit qualifies for designation, except for meeting the minimum coverage of Prime soils, and the owner of the farm unit requests designation.

B. Designation is based, in part, on the analysis presented in the report entitled Island County Commercial Agriculture Land Study, Island County Department of Planning and Community Development, February, 1998.

Mineral Lands Overlay

Definition:
Those lands primarily devoted to the extraction of minerals or that have a known potential for long-term commercial extraction of minerals. Minerals are defined as sand, gravel, and valuable metallic substances.

Designation Criteria:
A. The Mineral Lands Overlay shall contain the existing mineral operations which have final use and site plan approval, conditional use permits, or certificates of zoning compliance.

B. Map E shows existing areas of surficial sand and gravel deposits.

C. There are no known deposits of valuable metallic minerals in Island County.
GENERAL OVERLAYS AND CRITICAL AREAS

In addition to the Mineral Lands Overlay for resource lands, Island County has other overlays and critical areas designations to serve various purposes. They are the: Potential UGA Expansion
Areas Overlay; Wetlands Overlay; Aquifer Recharge Areas; Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas Overlay; Frequently Flooded Areas; Geologically Hazardous Areas (Steep/Unstable Slopes) Overlay; Shorelines Overlay; and Airport and Aviation Safety Overlay.

**Potential UGA Expansion Areas Overlay**

**Definition:**

Potential UGA Expansion Areas are those lands in the rural area of the County adjacent to municipal UGAs where future expansion of the UGA is likely to occur. This is necessary because the Oak Harbor and Langley Comprehensive Plans currently extend through 2013 and 2010, respectively. Standards for development in the potential UGA expansion areas shall allow future urban growth to occur more efficiently than if potential UGA expansion areas were not defined.

**Designation Criteria:**

A. Adjacent to the existing municipal UGAs of Oak Harbor and Langley. Coupeville has indicated that there UGA will not expand during the next planning period except for unforeseen circumstances (which may include expansion for the Coupeville School District).

B. Based on the anticipated growth in expanded UGAs through the year 2020 for Oak Harbor and Langley.

C. Underlying future land use designation of Rural (R).

D. Areas determined appropriate for future urban-level development.

**Wetlands Overlay**

**Definition:**

Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.030(20), wetlands means areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. Wetlands do not include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from nonwetland sites, including, but not limited to, irrigation and drainage ditches, grass-lined swales, canals, detention facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, farm ponds, and landscape amenities, or those wetlands created after July 1, 1990, that were unintentionally created as a result of the construction of a road, street, or highway. Wetlands may include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from nonwetland areas to mitigate the conversion of wetlands.

**Designation Criteria:**

A. All wetlands and deepwater habitats are designated.
B. The best available science and commonly accepted methodologies, using objective measurable standards and empirical data, will be used to determine if a given area meets the above definition. Wetland determinations will be made using the criteria in the Wetlands Delineation Manual adopted by the Department of Ecology pursuant to RCW 90.58.380.

C. Existing studies prepared by State and Federal agencies, such as the National Wetlands Inventory, soil surveys, maps, and other information, will be used to help identify potential wetland areas.

D. Site-specific data will be kept and maintained to help identify and protect wetlands.

Aquifer Recharge Areas

Definition:

Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas are those areas that do not possess geologic and hydrogeologic characteristics that limit surface contaminants from entering groundwater systems. Critical aquifer recharge areas also include areas where an aquifer that is a source of drinking water is vulnerable to contamination that would affect the potability of the water.

Designation Criteria:

Low, medium and high susceptibility.

(Ord. C-83-05 [PLG-011-05], July 25, 2005)

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas Overlay

Definition:

Land management for maintaining species in suitable habitats within their natural geographic distribution so that isolated subpopulations are not created.

Designation Criteria:

A. Areas with which species listed as endangered, threatened, and sensitive by federal or state government have a primary association.

B. Streams.

C. Commercial and recreational shellfish beds.

D. Kelp and eelgrass beds.

E. Herring and smelt spawning areas.

F. State natural area preserves and natural resource conservation areas.

G. In addition, habitats and species of local importance may be nominated and designated.
Frequently Flooded Areas

Definition:
Lands in the floodplain subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year; these areas include, but are not limited to, streams, lakes, coastal areas, and wetlands.

Designation Criteria:
100-year floodplains as listed and mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Flood Insurance Program.

Geologically Hazardous Areas (Steep/Unstable Slopes) Overlay

Definition:
Areas not suited to siting of commercial, residential, or industrial development consistent with public health or safety concerns due to their susceptibility to sliding or other slope failures, erosion, or other geological events.

Designation Criteria:
A. Areas indicated within the Washington Department of Ecology’s Coastal Zone Atlas of Island County, dated April, 1979 as having recent or historical slide activity and/or indicative of unstable slope conditions.
B. Areas with slopes 40% or greater and with a vertical elevation change of at least ten feet, except areas of consolidated rock.

Shorelines Overlay

Definition:
The Shorelines Overlay protects lands which are required to be protected by the State’s Shoreline Management Act.

Designation Criteria:
A. The Shorelines Overlay shall encompass all lands which are either adjacent to or within 200 feet of any of the following and their associated wetlands:
   1. All marine waters; or
   2. Lakes and reservoirs 20 acres or larger.
Airport and Aviation Safety Overlay

Definition:

The Airport and Aviation Safety Overlay represents the high noise zone areas of Island County where special land use controls are necessary to assure public health, welfare and safety.

Designation Criteria:

Map C, identifies lands as being contained by Accident Potential Zones or AICUZ Noise Contours. (Ord. C-87-07 [PLG-017-07]. March 10, 2008)
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP

The maps on the following pages describe the future land use plan for Island County. The land use plan is based on the major issues as identified in Chapter I, the existing land use analysis in Chapter II, and the goals and policies that will be used to guide and accommodate future growth as presented in Chapter IV. Detailed atlases (at 1 inch = 200 feet) which more clearly delineate the Urban Growth Areas and areas of more intensive rural development and future land use classification may be viewed at the Island County Department of Planning and Community Development in Coupeville. Detailed maps of the defined areas of more intensive rural development depicting the Rural Residential, Rural Center, Rural Village, Rural Service, Light Manufacturing and Airport land use designations may be found in Appendix A of the Island County Zoning Code, chapter 17.03 ICC.

The following is a summary of the acreages portrayed in Figure 3.20 for each of the future land use designations. The municipal Urban Growth Areas of Oak Harbor, Coupeville and Langley comprise 5,825 acres, with the potential municipal future land use designations as given by Oak Harbor and Langley shown on the land use map for the unincorporated portion of their UGAs. The UGAs for Oak Harbor and Langley are surrounded by Joint Planning Areas, within which future land use decisions are managed to not preclude UGA expansion. These areas comprise 5,725 acres for Oak Harbor and 733 acres for Langley. The Coupeville UGA also has a surrounding Joint Planning Area, but land use is not managed for UGA expansion because Coupeville has elected to not permit any expansion of its UGA. The Rural land use designation is by far the largest in the rural area at 78,490 acres. The Rural Agriculture and Rural Forest make up 6,080 and 13,990 acres respectively, while the Commercial Agriculture designation encompasses 4,680 acres. The County has also designated 1,580 acres of land as mineral lands of long term commercial significance. The Rural Residential land use designation comprises 9,270 acres. The remaining lands are comprised of 1,210 acres for non-residential and mixed-uses, 150 acres in the Special Review District of Greenbank Farm, 4,980 acres of parks or public ownership and 7,880 acres of federal lands.

Figure 3.21 classifies rural area acreage by minimum lot size. Slightly over 44,000 acres of the County are already divided into lots that are smaller than the 5-acre minimum lot size. Hence, these lands have no potential for further subdivision. They account for 40% of the rural area of the County. Almost 25,000 acres (22% of the rural area) have a minimum lot size of 10 to 20 acres. Therefore, approximately 34,000 acres (30% of the rural area) could theoretically be subdivided into 5-acre lots.

(Ord. C-135-99 [PLG 042-99], April 10, 2000)
Figure 3.20  Future Land Use Distribution by Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Future Land Uses</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RAID</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Center (RC)</td>
<td>560</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Village (RV)</td>
<td>225</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Manufacturing (LM)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Service (RS)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport (AP)</td>
<td>280</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Residential (RR)</td>
<td>9,270</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural (R)</strong></td>
<td>78,490</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural Forest (RF)</strong></td>
<td>13,990</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural Agriculture (RA)</strong></td>
<td>6,080</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Review District (SD)</strong></td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Lands</strong></td>
<td>7,880</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks or Public Ownership</strong></td>
<td>4,845</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource Lands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral Lands(^2)</td>
<td>1,580</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Agriculture (CA)</td>
<td>4,680</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal Rural, Resource and Public</strong></td>
<td>128,175</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Lands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)</td>
<td>5,825</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Acres -- County-wide</strong></td>
<td>134,000</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. 6,458 acres of the lands classified Rural are located within Joint Planning Areas (“JPAs”) and Managed to allow for UGA expansion.

2. All Mineral Lands have an underlying zone of Rural.

(Ord. C-135-99 [PLG 042-99], April 10, 2010)
Figure 3.21 Rural Area Lot Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Lot Size</th>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 Acre</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>4,680</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Acre</td>
<td>RA, RF</td>
<td>20,070</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Acre</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>33,970</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14,500 SF to 2.5 Acres</td>
<td>RR</td>
<td>9,270</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots Smaller than Minimum Lot Size</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>44,520</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Rural Area</td>
<td></td>
<td>112,510</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:

1. Rural Area total excludes designated Mineral Lands, UGA’s, NR RAIDs and lands in public ownership. 6,458 acres in the Rural Area are located within Joint Planning Areas (“JPAs”) and managed to allow for UGA expansion.

2. Includes lands classified Rural that are in lot sizes of 9 acres and larger.

(Ord. C-135-99 [PLG-042-99], April 10, 2000)
Map L Future Land Use Plan Map - Central Whidbey
Map M Future Land Use Plan Map - South Whidbey
Map N Future Land Use Plan Map - Camano Island
IV. GOALS AND POLICIES

Application of the Comprehensive Plan concept to the long-range needs of Island County is accomplished by the formation of specific planning goals, policies and implementation strategies. Goals represent the ideals of the community. Policies provide guidance in daily decision-making defining the route being taken to achieve the goals. Implementation strategies represent the method in which action may be taken to further the goals and policies of the plan. Measures to implement the goals and policies in this chapter are presented in Chapter V.

Population Growth and Distribution

Goal:
Achieve a staged, orderly and distributed development pattern to foster a high quality living environment for all persons while conserving our rural lifestyle, conserving natural resources, conserving historic properties and achieving the goals of growth management.

Policies:
A. Accommodate the projected full-time resident population for the County of 118,800 by the year 2020 in a manner which protects the established character of neighborhoods, preserves rural and environmental quality, and allows for the efficient, orderly economic growth of the community.
B. Guide urban growth into areas where planned public facilities and services will adequately support that growth.
C. Encourage infilling of subdivided lands and the logical expansion of urban areas.

Urban Element Land Use Designation Policies

Municipal Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)

Goal:
Provide areas where urban land use activities may be concentrated in a manner which enables the efficient provision of public facilities and services.

Policies:
A. Island County will encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities or services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
B. It is the policy of the County and the municipalities that development within the unincorporated portion of municipal UGAs will be coordinated between the County, City, and Town governments and utility service providers through the following development guidelines:
1. The first preference for urban development is within municipal boundaries. The second preference is for urban development to occur after annexation to a City or Town. The third preference is in the unincorporated portion of the municipal UGA;

2. Non-urban development in the UGA should only be allowed if it will be compatible with future urban development;

3. Through interlocal agreements, governing entities shall require development in the unincorporated area of the municipal UGA to comply with the following:
   a) If the area is contiguous to the municipal boundary to:
      (1) Annex to the municipality, or
      (2) If authorized by the municipality,
         (a) Execute an annexation/development agreement prior to development approval, and
         (b) Develop at urban density or uses, and
         (c) Submit a site development plan showing ultimate development of the lot or parcel(s) consistent with the applicable potential municipal zoning and development standards.
   b) If the area is not contiguous to the municipality:
      (1) Execute an annexation/development agreement prior to development approval,
      (2) Develop at the densities and uses established in the interlocal agreement adopted by the municipality and the County, and
      (3) Submit a site development plan showing ultimate development of the lot or parcel(s) consistent with the applicable potential municipal zoning and development standards.

4. Non-contiguous annexation, shall be avoided within the UGA;

5. Urban development patterns will minimize the fiscal and environmental impacts of growth.

6. When possible, the edges of major features, such as drainageways and sensitive lands, should be used to help provide a clear and natural boundary between urban and rural areas.

7. Interlocal agreements shall be used as a method to guide development in the unincorporated portions of Municipal Urban Growth Areas.
8. Open space corridors for the Urban Growth Areas are required under the GMA and are shown in the Natural Lands Element of this plan.

9. The County shall identify in its Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map lands within unincorporated portions of Municipal UGAs with the applicable Municipal Land Use designation.

10. The County shall identify in its Zoning Atlas lands within unincorporated portions of Municipal UGAs with the applicable municipal zoning classification.

C. Overall growth and development within the municipal boundaries of Oak Harbor, Coupeville and Langley must be in conformance with their adopted comprehensive plans, within the framework provided by the jointly adopted County Wide Planning Policies.

**Existing Master Planned Resorts**

**Goal:**

Provide a method to recognize and support the planned development of Existing Master Planned Resorts that are significantly self-contained and have integrated development that includes short-term visitor accommodations associated with a range of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities within the property boundaries in a setting of significant natural amenities.

**Policies:**

A. The Island County Comprehensive Plan and development regulations shall define and create a process for the designation of Existing Master Planned Resorts. The approval of an Existing Master Planned Resort shall be processed as a Type IV decision pursuant to Chapter 16.19 ICC.

B. Existing Master Planned Resorts shall be recognized by the County, provided that the facility meets County development standards and an approved master plan for the facility is approved by the Board of Island County Commissioners.

C. Designation of an Existing Master Planned Resort must preclude new urban or suburban development in the surrounding vicinity of the existing resort, except in areas otherwise designated for urban growth under RCW 36.70A.110 and 36.70A.362, as per RCW 36.70A.362, the state code governing Existing Master Planned Resorts.

D. The designation process for Existing Master Planned Resorts must comply with all conditions stipulated in RCW 36.70A.362.

(Ord. C-97-06 [PLG-010-06], August 21, 2006)
RURAL ELEMENT LAND USE DESIGNATION POLICIES

Areas of More Intensive Rural Development

The policies for the Rural Center, Rural Village, Light Manufacturing, Airport, Rural Service and Rural Residential land use designations are patterned for lands that are within defined areas of more intensive rural development characterized by predominantly the built environment.

Rural Center Designation (RC)

Goal:
Provide for the commercial, light manufacturing and higher density residential needs of the rural population wherein development exist in an attractive setting that is pedestrian oriented and served by public transit.

Policies:
A. Rural Centers are designated mixed-use areas of more intensive rural development with a non-expandable logical outer boundary.
B. All uses within the Rural Center designation must comply with rural design guidelines to assure compatibility with adjacent uses.
C. The Rural Center designation shall provide for appropriately categorized permitted and conditional uses that include accessory uses, churches, schools, banking and financial institutions, communication towers, day care centers, eating and drinking establishments, entertainment uses, essential public facilities, fire stations, government services, group homes, health care services, light manufacturing, mixed-uses, multi-family, office uses, overnight lodging, research and development uses, retail sales and services, storage, major utilities, minor utilities, veterinary clinics, warehouses, and water tanks.
D. The preferred type of development shall include clustering of uses, whose compact
design fosters a communal atmosphere or orientation.

E. It is intended that Rural Center highway shopping and service centers be developed as a
unit, and in a compact manner, in order to prevent highway sprawl.

F. Rural Center development should have appropriate landscaping, screening, signing and
shielded lighting to provide for rural compatibility.

G. Structures located within the Rural Center designation should share water and any
applicable waste water services with adjacent structures in the same designation.

H. Mixed uses, residential and commercial, especially with living accommodations above
or over business activities are encouraged.

I. Site design within the Rural Center designation will facilitate pedestrian access through
the use of common areas, public transit, extensive landscaping, clustering, small parks
and a compact design.

J. Rural Center parcels must consolidate access to the highway with adjacent Rural Center
parcels in order to minimize disruption of highway traffic.

**Rural Village Designation (RV)**

**Goal:**
*Provide for the retail sale of convenience goods as well as personal and business
services needed to support persons residing in the rural area.*

**Policies:**

A. Rural Villages are designated mixed-use areas of more intensive rural development with
a non-expandable logical outer boundary.

B. All uses within the Rural Village designation must comply with rural design guidelines
to assure compatibility with adjacent uses.

C. The Rural Village designation shall provide for appropriately categorized permitted and
conditional uses that include accessory uses, banking and financial institutions, day care
centers, eating and drinking establishments, essential public facilities, fire stations,
government services, health care services, mixed-uses, office uses, retail sales and
services, single family residential, minor utilities, veterinary clinics, and water tanks.

D. The preferred type of development shall include clustering of uses, whose compact
design fosters a communal atmosphere or orientation.

E. Mixed uses, residential and commercial, especially with living accommodations above
or over business activities are encouraged.
F. The designation is intended to facilitate pedestrian access by encouraging common areas, public transit, extensive landscaping, clustering, small parks, and a compact design in order to foster a communal atmosphere or orientation.

G. Uses should be developed in a manner which protects environmental quality, rural character, special scenic features and important community amenities and values.

H. Landscaping along street frontages will provide an harmonious transition to surrounding properties, respecting any special scenic features in the area.

I. Rural Village properties should share common water and any applicable water waste disposal systems.

J. Utilize local knowledge, experience and preferences of the rural community residents and business owners to establish the character of the Rural Village Areas.

K. A proactive planning approach shall be used for access management onto State Highway. Possible consolidation of access points should be explored.

Camano Gateway Village Designation (CGV)

Goal:
Provide for village or town-like commercial services that are limited in scale, intensity and density that are intended to serve the local community and help support the local commerce and rural Northwest island vision of Camano Island residents. Emphasis should be placed on uses, programs and policies that help alleviate traffic congestion by avoiding the concentration of activities that occur primarily during peak traffic hours. Proprietors are encouraged to participate in an economic development strategy that promotes Camano Island events, attractions, and businesses.

Policies:
A. The Camano Gateway Village consists of areas designated as mixed-use areas of more intensive rural development with a non-expandable, established logical outer boundary.

B. The intensity, scale and appropriateness of uses are based on the needs of the community, preservation of rural village character, availability of infrastructure that does not adversely impact off-site properties, and protection of resources.

C. The designation is intended to facilitate pedestrian access by encouraging common areas, public transit, extensive landscaping, clustering, small parks, and a compact design in order to foster a communal village atmosphere or orientation.

D. Utilize local knowledge, experience and preferences of a diverse representation of rural community residents and business owners to establish the character of the Camano Gateway Village Areas.

E. Uses should be developed in a manner which protects environmental quality, rural character, special scenic features, and important community amenities and values.
F. Establish sustainable building practices, use of low impact development, reduction in water consumption, sensitive design, minimizing bulk and mass, participation in local economic development strategies, and reduction in traffic. Incentives should be provided to developers so that the benefits outweigh the costs.

G. A proactive planning approach should be used for access management into State Highway 532. Possible consolidation of access points shall be explored consistent with Island County Code and Washington State Department of Transportation regulations.

H. Development should include clustering of uses, whose compact design fosters a communal Northwest island village atmosphere or orientation.

I. All uses within the Camano Gateway Village designation shall comply with rural design guidelines to assure compatibility with adjacent uses.

J. Landscaping along road frontages will provide a harmonious transition to surrounding properties, respecting and complementing any special scenic features in the area.

K. Signage should be visible to pedestrians and automobiles yet attractive, low in profile, architecturally integrated, functional, and unobtrusive.

L. Lighting should emphasize and enhance architecture, landscaping, and safety. Lighting shall not spill onto adjacent properties, roads or beyond the buildings and signs that the lighting is intending to highlight.

M. Removed for possible conflict with other sections of Code.

N. Mixed Uses involving a combination of Residential and Non-Residential components are encouraged, especially with long-term village residence above business activities or that are detached but functionally and physically connected to each other.

O. Fire stations are an important and essential community asset that requires a dramatically different set of needs than typical commercial uses. Special standards are necessary that allow fire stations to provide necessary services to the community, training opportunities for first responders, and community meeting space. At the same time, fire stations should be designed to fit into the community, be attractive in appearance, and sensitive to the environment.

P. The Camano Gateway Village designation shall provide for appropriately categorized permitted and conditional uses that include accessory uses, banking financial institutions, day care centers, eating and drinking establishments, fire stations, government services, health care services, Small Scale Overnight Lodging, mixed-uses, office uses, small scale retail sales and services, lumberyards, minor utilities, veterinary clinics, and water tanks.

Q. Overnight lodging shall be designed to fit into and enhance the rural island landscape through effective design, orientation, siting, signage, lighting and landscaping. Overnight Lodging should be designed in a manner that does not utilize and distribute water resources beyond the capacity of the resources available in the RAID.

(Ord. C-102-09 [PLG-015-09], September 22, 2009)
Light Manufacturing Designation (LM)

Goal:
Provide for light industry and manufacturing, assembling, fabrication, storage, wholesaling, distribution, auto repair/salvage and related activities that do not entail frequent visits of customers or clients where glare, noise, pollution, odor, open storage and similar undesirable affects are controlled, contained or screened so as not to detract from surrounding uses.

Policies:
A. Light Manufacturing lands are designated non-residential areas of more intensive rural development with a non-expandable logical outer boundary.
B. The Light Manufacturing designation shall provide for appropriately categorized permitted and conditional uses that include accessory uses, communication towers, essential public facilities, fire stations, government services, light manufacturing, research and development uses, storage, major utilities, minor utilities, warehouses, and water tanks.
C. Light Manufacturing developments shall be designed and built in a manner which will have minimal environmental and community impact, including low levels of air, light, noise, odor and water pollution. Environmental and community impacts shall be mitigated by the developer.
D. Utilize local knowledge, experience and preferences of the rural community residents and business owners to establish the character of Light Manufacturing Areas.
E. Cluster structures within Light Manufacturing Areas and provide adequate expansion space for a variety of compatible economic activities.
F. Common arterial accesses and developed internal circulation systems will be required.

G. Provide adequate buffers of landscaping, compatible land use and open space to protect surrounding land areas from the adverse effects of development.

H. Protect existing Light Manufacturing areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

I. A proactive planning approach shall be used for access management onto rights-of-way. Possible consolidation of access points should be explored.

**Rural Service Designation (RS)**

**Goal:**

Provide for the identification of existing commercial activities associated with the provision of daily convenience goods and services for rural area populations.

**Policies:**

A. Rural Service lands are designated mixed-use areas of more intensive rural development with a non-expandable logical outer boundary.

B. All uses within the Rural Service designation must comply with rural design guidelines to assure compatibility with adjacent uses.

C. The Rural Service designation shall provide for appropriately categorized permitted and conditional uses that include accessory uses, day care centers, fire stations, mixed-uses, retail sales and services, and water tanks.

D. Provide for the conditional expansion of existing businesses in a manner which protects environmental quality, rural character, special scenic features and important community amenities and values.

E. Change in use would not be allowed at a greater intensity than the existing use.

F. Utilize local knowledge, experience and preferences of the rural community residents and business owners to establish the character of Rural Service Areas.

G. On a case by case basis, landscaping and other improvements shall be required for the change of use or expansion of existing use so that rural character is not adversely impacted.

H. Lands may not be rezoned to the Rural Service land use designation.

I. Mixed use buildings (living accommodations above or over business activities, are encouraged)
**Airport Designation (AP)**

**Goal:**
Expand job opportunities for Island County residents by providing areas for light industrial\(^7\) and manufacturing uses surrounding commercial airport facilities\(^8\) and their existing uses.

**Policies:**
A. Airport lands are designated non-residential areas of more intensive rural development with a non-expandable logical outer boundary.

B. The Airport designation shall provide for appropriately categorized permitted and conditional uses that include accessory uses, airport facilities, airport support facilities, eating and drinking establishments, essential public facilities, fire stations, junkyard/salvage yards, light manufacturing, research and development uses, single family residential, storage uses, major utilities, minor utilities, warehouses, and water tanks.

C. Uses shall be compatible with existing uses in Wes Lupien Air Park, Whidbey Air Park or Camano Island Air Field.

D. Development shall be designed and built in a manner which will have minimal environmental and community impact. Environmental and community impacts shall be mitigated by the developer.

E. Utilize local knowledge, experience and preferences of the rural community residents and business owners to establish the character of Airport Areas.

F. Cluster structures within Airport areas and provide adequate expansion space for compatible economic activities.

G. Common arterial accesses and developed internal circulation systems will be required.

H. Site development standards shall be developed according to the needs of each site.

I. Provide adequate buffers of landscaping, compatible land use and open space to protect surrounding land areas from the adverse effects of industrial development. Give particular attention to protecting critical lands, residential, rural and resource areas.

J. Protect existing Airport areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

K. A proactive planning approach shall be used for access management onto rights-of-way. Possible consolidation of access points should be explored.

\(^7\) Light manufacturing development includes manufacturing, assembly, fabrication, warehouses, and storage and distribution.

\(^8\) Commercial airports are privately owned and intended for general use by the public.
Rural Residential Lands (RR)

Goal:
Provide for the infill, development, or redevelopment of existing residential areas which have been identified as residential areas of more intensive rural development pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d).

Policies:
A. Infill development is permitted on existing platted lots.
B. Base density is either 3, 2, 1 or 0.4 dwelling units per acre as determined in item C.
C. Subdivision of Rural Residential (RR) parcels shall be allowed at the average existing parcel size of all existing parcels 5 acres or smaller within each area of more intensive rural development, provided that for those areas with an average parcel size less than 14,500 square feet, the minimum parcel size shall be 14,500 square feet or the minimum required by County health requirements, whichever is greater. The allowable minimum parcel size for each area of more intensive development shall be either 14,500 square feet, 0.5 acres, 1 acre, or 2.5 acres, however, potential subdivision may be limited by applicable shorelines regulations, critical areas regulations, County health requirements, public facility limitations, and other land use or zoning limitations. The minimum parcel size for each area of more intensive rural development shall not change over time and shall be indicated in the development regulations.
D. Rural Residential areas with established sewer districts at the time of adoption of this plan will be capable of subdivision and development at 3 dwelling units per acre only if remedial action is taken to address any storm drainage problems associated with existing development. Further, these areas may subdivide and develop at up to 6 dwelling units per acre if a long-term storm drainage plan is developed with an implementation schedule approved by the County.
E. Lot size averaging shall be allowed for subdivision provided the base density threshold is met.
F. The Rural Residential designation shall provide for appropriately categorized permitted and conditional uses that include single family detached dwellings, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, accessory uses, agricultural products (growing, harvesting, managing and selling), bed and breakfast inns, bed and breakfast rooms, boat launches, day care nurseries, fire stations, guest cottages, home occupations, livestock husbandry, minor utilities, mobile homes, and water tanks.
G. All non-residential uses within the Rural Residential designation must comply with rural design guidelines to assure compatibility with adjacent uses.
H. Raising of large livestock shall be provided for conditioned on the approval of an Animal Management Plan.
I. A proactive planning approach shall be used for access management onto State Highway. Possible consolidation of access points should be explored.

**Rural Lands (R)**

**Goal:**
Maintain low residential densities to preserve rural character and to provide buffers between urban activities and agricultural and forestry uses.

**Policies:**

A. Minimum parcel size is five acres. The base density is one dwelling unit per five acres.

B. Lot size averaging shall be allowed for subdivision of parcels ten acres or greater in size, provided minimum and average parcel size and density thresholds are met as set forth in the development regulations.

C. Preference shall be given to PRD cluster development consisting of either attached or detached housing in the event subdivision of land occurs. A density bonus should be granted proportional to the size of the PRD and the Open Space Ratio and there are no adverse impacts to critical areas or natural resource conservation areas. PRDs located in the unincorporated portion of a municipal Urban Growth Area shall be given a maximum 200% density bonus if lots are limited to 12,500 square feet, or the minimum required to meet health requirements. PRDs located outside the unincorporated portion of a municipal Urban Growth Area shall not be approved unless it can be determined affirmatively that the need for future urban services is precluded and that the PRD will provide a better opportunity to protect rural character than a traditional subdivision or short subdivision.

D. Encourage diverse economic opportunities and uses compatible with and supportive of a rural way of life as outlined under the goals and policies in this chapter for *Home Occupations and Home Industries in the Rural Area*.

E. The Rural designation shall provide for appropriately categorized permitted and conditional uses that include single family detached dwellings, accessory uses, agricultural or forest products processing agricultural products (growing, harvesting, managing and selling), bed and breakfast inns, bed and breakfast rooms, boat launches, campgrounds and recreation vehicle parks, churches, communication towers, country inns, day care centers, day care nurseries, small day care center, equestrian centers, essential public facilities, farm/forest produce stands, fire stations, forest products (growing, harvesting, managing and selling), group homes, guest cottages, gun clubs and shooting ranges, home industries, home occupations, kennels, livestock husbandry, major utilities, minor utilities, mobile homes, mobile/manufactured home parks, planned residential developments, schools, seasonal sale of farm produce, small scale recreation uses, small scale tourist uses, storage facilities, surface mining, and water tanks.
F. Residential development near designated Commercial Agriculture lands must be
designed to minimize potential conflict and prevent unnecessary conversion of farm
land.

G. Minor or small scale agriculture activities are consistent with rural areas, support
rural character, and should be protected and encouraged.

H. All non-residential uses within the Rural designation must comply with rural design
guidelines to assure compatibility with adjacent uses.

I. All structures and uses within a PRD, except access roads, must be screened from the
view of adjacent properties and public roadways.

(Ord. C-134-99 [PLG-041-99], November 22, 1999)

Rural Forest Lands (RF)

Goal:
Create an area where rural forestry activities are encouraged to occur with
residential uses while preserving rural character and maintaining open space as the
dominant characteristic.

Policies:
A. Minimum parcel size is 10 acres. Base density is one dwelling unit per 10 acres.

B. Preference shall be given to PRD cluster development consisting of either attached or
detached housing on parcels at least 20 acres in size in the event subdivision of land
occurs. A density bonus should be granted proportional to the size of the PRD and the
Open Space Ratio, and there are no adverse impacts to critical areas or natural
resource lands. PRDs located outside the unincorporated portion of a municipal
Urban Growth Area shall not be approved unless it can be determined affirmatively
that the need for future urban services is precluded and that the PRD will provide a
better opportunity to protect rural character than a traditional subdivision or short
subdivision.

C. Right-to-farm and forest measures shall protect the right to pursue farm and forestry
activities.
D. The Rural Forest designation shall provide for appropriately categorized permitted and conditional uses that are compatible with the surrounding area and include accessory uses, bed and breakfast rooms, boat launches, campgrounds and recreation vehicle parks, communication towers, equestrian centers, essential public facilities, farm/forest produce stands, forest products (growing, harvesting, managing, processing and sale), guest cottages, gun clubs and shooting ranges, home industries, home occupations, kennels, minor utilities, planned residential developments, single family dwellings, surface mining, and water tanks.
E. Measures shall be used to support silviculture industries.

F. Encourage the conservation of lands suitable for forestry use and support forestry as an activity valued in the County.

G. Cluster development or encourage low intensity uses to minimize site clearing and maintain future forestry use options

H. Encourage forestry landowners to retain their lands in timber production and to utilize tax incentive programs.

I. Support innovative public and private programs that provide foresters incentives to stay on the land.

J. Encourage selective clearing and logging, as opposed to clearcutting, if forest harvesting is done in the Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve.

K. Reclassification from RF to R shall be granted if requested by the owner when the owner cannot make reasonable economic use of the parcel for commercial forestry, considering all relevant factors. Provided, that the determination of whether the owner can make reasonable economic use of the parcel for commercial forestry shall not involve consideration of the personal circumstances of any particular owner.

L. All structures and uses within a PRD, except access roads, must be screened from the view of adjacent properties and public roadways.

(Rod. C-133-99 [PLG-040-99], November 22, 1999), (Ord. C92-02 [PLG-015-02], December 16, 2002)

Rural Agriculture Lands (RA)

Goal:
Create an area where rural agricultural activities are encouraged to occur with residential uses while preserving rural character and maintaining open space as the dominant characteristic.

Policies:
A. Minimum parcel size is 20 acres. Base density is one dwelling unit per 20 acres.

B. Preference shall be given to PRD cluster development consisting of either attached or detached housing on parcels at least 20 acres in size in the event subdivision of land occurs provided that at least 50% is allocated for permanent open space, of which no more than 15% can be allocated to community area as defined in chapter 16.17 ICC, and there are no adverse impacts to critical areas or natural resource conservation areas.

C. Upon adoption of this plan, Rural Agriculture landowners will be allocated Earned Development Units based on the time of commitment of their conservation easement.
in a Farm/Forest Management Plan. A schedule for the allocation of Earned Development Units shall be shown in the development regulations with a clear relationship between number of earned units and time of commitment of conservation easement.

D. Earned development units may be used pursuant to an adopted Farm/Forest Development and Management Plan through boundary line adjustment, land division or PRD with a maximum lot size of 2.5 acres. No PRD density bonus shall be given to PRDs created as part of a Farm/Forest Plan. The plan will cover such items as the general location of earned development units, identify action to strengthen the farm or forest unit, shall encompass the entire farm or forest unit, shall commit at least 75% of the farm or forest unit to a conservation easement for no less than 10 years, and must protect the most productive portions of the farm or forest unit and enhance commercial productivity. All uses allowed in the Rural land use designation shall be allowed in the remaining 25%. Earned development units may be used only on land that does not contain prime soils or is otherwise not suitable for farming. Earned development units may be located on the Farm unit or other Rural, Rural Agriculture, Rural Forest or Commercial Agriculture lands owned by the farm or forest operator provided that at least 75% of the Farm unit is kept in a conservation easement.

E. Right-to-farm and forest measures shall protect the right to pursue farm and forestry activities.

F. The Rural Agriculture designation shall provide for appropriately categorized permitted and conditional uses that are compatible with the surrounding area and include accessory uses, agricultural products (growing, harvesting, managing, processing and sale), bed and breakfast rooms, communication towers, equestrian centers, essential public facilities, farm/forest produce stands, farm worker dwellings, forest products (growing, harvesting, managing, processing and sale), guest cottages, gun clubs and shooting ranges, home industries, home occupations, kennels, minor utilities, planned residential developments, seasonal sale of farm produce, single family dwellings, surface mining, and water tanks.

G. Measures shall be used to support roadside stands or farmers’ markets which may help farmers who wish to directly market products to nearby residential areas.

H. Encourage the conservation of lands suitable for agricultural use and support farming as an activity valued in the County.

I. Cooperative agricultural production and marketing will be encouraged.

J. Encourage agricultural landowners to retain their lands in agricultural production and to utilize tax incentive programs.

K. Support innovative public and private programs that provide farmers incentives to stay on the land.
**Special Review District (SD)**

**Goal:**

Provide for unique areas in the County where special review shall be required through the master plan process to protect lands and structures that have historical, archaeological or environmental significance.

**Policies:**

A. A master plan shall be required for all developments.

B. Protect lands and structures that have historical, archeological or environmental significance while allowing a unique combination of uses that enhance, conserve or highlight these features of significance.

C. Encourage diverse economic opportunity which is complimentary to protecting the historical, archaeological or environmentally significant features and which allows the Special Review District to remain economically viable.

D. Preserve viewscapes and natural landscapes.

E. Encourage clustering of structures.

F. Must ensure protection of Rural Character.

G. Au Sable Institute

1. Design, color, architecture and materials should be integrated within the entire site and should recognize the historical style.

2. Protect existing and rehabilitated prairie lands through habitat and ecological restoration efforts.

H. The Greenbank Farm shall comply with the provisions and intent of the approved Master Plan.

I. Casey Conference Center.

1. Provide for a continuation of the adaptive re-use of the historic Fort Casey structures and parade ground as a conference center in a manner that preserves and highlights features of historical significance.

2. Provide for expanded conference center activities while conserving lands that have environmental significance, including Crockett Lake and its associated wetlands, the beachfront and bluff areas, and substantial forested areas.

RESOURCE LAND POLICIES

Commercial Agriculture (CA)

Goal:
Reserve lands which because of their size, soil type, and active management are part of an essential land base to continued commercial agriculture, and assure their continued viability to serve as a resource for food, fiber, feed and forage.

Policies:

A. Minimum parcel size shall be 40 acres. Base density is one dwelling unit per 40 acres.

B. Preference shall be given to PRD cluster development consisting of either attached or detached housing on parcels at least 40 acres in size in the event subdivision of land occurs, provided that at least 50% is allocated for permanent open space, of which no more than 15% can be allocated to community area as defined in chapter 16.17 ICC, and there are no adverse impacts to critical areas or natural resource conservation areas.

C. Upon adoption of this plan, Agricultural Resource landowners will be allocated Earned Development Units based on the time of commitment of their conservation easement in a Farm/Forest Management Plan. A schedule for the allocation of Earned Development Units shall be shown in the development regulations with a clear relationship between number of earned units and time of commitment of conservation easement.

D. Earned development units may be used pursuant to an adopted Farm/Forest Development and Management Plan through land division or PRD with a maximum lot size of 2.5 acres. No PRD density bonus shall be given to PRDs created as part of Farm/Forest Plan. The plan will cover such items as the general location of earned development units, identify action to strengthen the farm or forest unit, shall
encompass the entire farm or forest unit, shall commit at least 75% of the farm or forest unit to a conservation easement for no less than 20 years, and must protect the most productive portions of the farm or forest unit and enhance commercial productivity. All uses allowed in the Rural land use designation shall be allowed in the remaining 25%. Earned development units may be used only on land that does not contain prime soils or is otherwise not suitable for farming. Earned development units may be located on the Farm unit or other Rural, Rural Agriculture, Rural Forest or Commercial Agriculture lands owned by the farm or forest operator provided that at least 75% of the Farm unit is kept in a conservation easement.

E. The Commercial Agriculture designation shall provide for appropriately categorized permitted and conditional uses that include accessory uses, agricultural products (growing, harvesting, managing, processing and sale), bed and breakfast rooms, communication towers, equestrian centers, essential public facilities, farm/forest produce stands, farm worker dwellings, forest products (growing, harvesting, managing, processing and sale), guest cottages, gun clubs and shooting ranges, home industries, home occupations, kennels, minor utilities, planned residential developments, seasonal sale of farm produce, single family dwellings, surface mining, and water tanks.

F. Achieve agricultural preservation through:

1. Right-to-farm and forest measures which protect the right to pursue farm and forestry activities.

2. Support the continuation of preferential tax programs.

G. Encourage an effective stewardship of the environment to conserve and protect Commercial Agriculture lands.

1. Prevent or correct agricultural practices that produce non-point source pollution of surface and groundwater.

2. Take measures to minimize adverse impacts of agricultural activities.

H. Protect agricultural operations from incompatible uses by using measures including, but not limited to:

1. Ensuring that uses on adjacent lands do not interfere with continuing agricultural good management practices on resource lands;

2. Setbacks and buffer strips should be on land within the development unless an alternative is mutually agreed on by adjacent landowners; and

3. Public education concerning resource activities and the common benefits derived from them.

I. Protect and promote related development such as farmers markets and roadside stands, cooperative marketing, and value-added products, etc.
J. Strengthen public disclosure of current adjacent agricultural activities by means of a “right to farm” notice on the deed, area maps, etc.

K. Support the continued existence of agricultural lands by means of tax incentives or other appropriate financial aid or incentives.

L. Coordinate agricultural land preservation policies with other jurisdictions, special districts and their respective programs.

M. Coordinate agricultural land preservation policies with other County-wide Planning Policies through:

1. Correlating agricultural land preservation policies with Urban Growth Area policies and with public facility and service provision policies to prevent the extension of urban services to areas intended for continued agricultural use;

2. Ensuring that public facility and service extension, even if not directly serving the agricultural lands, do not stimulate the conversion of agricultural land or make its preservation and protection more difficult.

N. In order to assure the rights of agricultural land owners and to provide them reasonable flexibility to modify classification of their land, owners of agricultural land may request change of agricultural lands classification under certain circumstances.

O. Cooperative agricultural production and marketing will be encouraged.

**Mineral Lands Overlay**

**Goal:**

Conservation of long-term of mineral lands to ensure current and future supplies of sand, gravel, and non-renewable minerals, and the protection of mineral lands from urban encroachment while ensuring environmental protection through appropriate siting, operation, reclamation standards and groundwater protection measures.

**Policies:**

A. Maintain and enhance natural resource based industries.

1. Assure conservation of mineral resource lands.

   a) Assure that the use of lands adjacent to mineral resource lands do not interfere with the continued use, in accordance with best management practices, of lands designated for the extraction of minerals.

   b) Assure that the excavated land will have an ultimate economic use which will complement and preserve the value of adjoining land.

   c) Maintain the contribution of mining and processing operations to the Island County employment base.
2. Island County will provide for title or plat notification for property owners within 300 feet of an existing approved mining operation.

3. Regulate surface mining operations to minimize land use conflicts through the conditional use process.

4. Apply standards which consider noise levels, light pollution, dust, visual screening, transportation impacts, hours of operation, water quality and groundwater protection and consumption, to new and expanding mine operations.

5. Encourage the purchase of development rights, by the mine developer, of the area within 300 feet of the proposed mine, thus limiting use within that area to forestry, agricultural or designated open space, for the life of the mining operation.

B. Allow extractive industries to locate where prime natural resource deposits exist, provided these sites are separated by buffers from existing residential areas and restored for appropriate reuse after removing the resource material.

C. Discourage new residential uses from locating near active extractive sites, unless the residential developer provides adequate buffering.

D. Operation of new and expanding sites will be regulated by land development standards to ensure proper siting and to minimize environmental impacts during operation.

E. There is no minimum parcel size for existing operations. Future commercial sites generally should be 10 acres or greater to provide for adequate screening. Future small scale operations such as borrow pits may be less than 10 acres.

F. On sites with disturbed areas of three acres or less, site reclamation will be carried out as soon as practical, as phased operations are completed, to prevent erosion and water quality degradation, and to return the site to a natural state. Reclaimed sites can be used for any of the uses permitted in the underlying land use designation.

G. Surface mining is not considered to be a permanent use of the land. The land should be utilized consistent with the long-term plans of the community, and mining allowed based upon performance standards.

H. Overlay policies and development regulations shall be implemented in addition to those associated with the underlying land use designation. When there is a conflict in policy statements or development regulations, the more restrictive shall apply.

I. Island County shall notify adjacent landowners of the existence of a surface mine and to the extent known, undeveloped mineral resources, acknowledging that surface mining is market-dependent, and operations may be intermittent and more or less intense at times.
GENERAL LAND USE POLICIES

Joint Planning Areas

Goal:
Joint Planning Areas are intended to provide for coordinated planning and development of areas of special interest to the municipalities including principal municipal entrance roads and adjacent areas, well fields, and open space corridors shared by the County and the Municipalities. Joint Planning Areas also are intended to preserve the potential to expand UGAs if expansion is needed in the future.

Policies:
A. Joint Planning Areas shall be designated jointly by the County and the Municipalities and shall include but not be limited to:
   1. Potential UGA Expansion Areas to accommodate urban growth not otherwise accounted for in current municipal comprehensive plans;
   2. Scenic Corridors;
   3. Open Space Corridors; and
B. Joint Planning Areas shall be illustrated in the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map and show in the Zoning Atlas.
C. Municipal and County Land Use and Capital Facility Plans shall be coordinated within Joint Planning Areas.
D. Cities, Towns and the County shall jointly develop implementation strategies for the Open Space Corridors identified within Joint Planning Areas in the Natural Lands Element of the County Comprehensive Plan.
E. Land development decisions shall be managed in Joint Planning Areas to not preclude the future expansion of UGAs.

(Ord. C135-99 [PLG-042-99], April 10, 2000)
Wetlands Overlay

**Goal:**

*To protect wetlands from a net loss in functions.*

**Policies:**

A. Protect, preserve, and enhance wetlands with the intent to achieve no net loss of wetland functions.
   1. Implement non-regulatory wetlands protection measures such as acquisition and incentive programs and the public benefit ratings system.
   2. Provide continuity of natural systems by establishing protected corridors of native vegetation between wetlands systems using buffer averaging, density incentives, land acquisition, site design and other techniques.

B. Consider economic, environmental, and cultural costs when evaluating proposals for wetland alterations, and recognize instances where development or alteration within or adjacent to wetlands may be acceptable.

C. When reasonable and practical, development will be located away from regulated wetlands by use of buffers and PRDs.

D. Maps, site-specific studies, and information collected by other agencies available for public review will be made readily accessible to aid in the protection of these areas.

E. Adverse Alteration of wetlands will be permitted only after careful consideration of the function of the area, the sensitivity of the area to disturbance, and the intensity and potential risks associated with a proposed land use.

F. When a violation of regulations is identified, the enforcement action and severity of any penalty will be proportional to the nature and circumstances of the violation and the damage or risk to wetland.

(Ord. C-02-08 [PLG-011-07], March 17, 2008)

Critical Areas

**Goal:**

*Maintain healthy, functioning ecosystems to benefit the residents of the County through the protection of critical areas.*

**Policies:**

A. Development regulations to protect critical areas should be adopted after considering scientific information judged by the County to be the best available at the time of enactment.
B. To the fullest extent possible, the protection of critical areas should be accomplished through the voluntary cooperation of land owners and should minimize the burdens imposed on land owners.

C. To the fullest extent possible, any regulation adopted to protect critical areas should be based on and adapted to the local circumstances unique to Island County.

D. When reasonable and practical, except when critical area regulations deny reasonable use of property, impacts from new uses or activities to critical areas or critical area buffers should be avoided.

E. When alteration of a critical area or critical area buffer by a new use or activity will adversely affect the critical area and cannot be reasonable and practically avoided, then the alteration should be reduced.

F. When alteration of a critical area or critical area buffer by a new use or activity will adversely affect the critical area and cannot be reasonably and practically avoided or reduced, then the alteration should be restored.

G. When alteration of a critical area or critical area buffer by a new use or activity will adversely affect the critical area and cannot be reasonably and practically avoided or reduced or restored, then the alteration should be compensated for through mitigation.

H. Generally, on-site mitigation for the adverse alteration of a critical area or critical area buffer should be preferred. Off-site mitigation should be preferred when on-site mitigation is not feasible, not practical or provides greater protection to critical areas. When neither on-site nor off-site mitigation is feasible, practical or provides greater protection to critical areas, then compensation for the adverse alteration of a critical area or critical area buffer may occur through the payment of a fee in lieu of mitigation.

I. Regulations to protect critical areas:
   1. Should not make any existing parcel or lot unusable;
   2. Should not prevent the provision of needed public transportation and utility projects;
   3. Should be sufficiently flexible to be adjusted on a case-by-case basis to meet site-specific conditions; and
   4. Should utilize review processes that are proportional to the scope or scale of the proposal and or alteration under review.
   5. When considering reasonable use of property, modifications of other regulations that may avoid or reduce the alteration is preferred before modifying critical areas standards.

J. Any changes to policies and regulations to protect critical areas should be applied in a fair and equitable manner based on a predictable process to allow property owners to transition from old to new rules and standards.

K. Development proposals that affect wetlands should incorporate measure and practices that reduce the quantity and improve the quality of storm water runoff by controlling pollutants at their sources and retaining natural vegetation, soils and drainage patterns.

(Ord. C-02-08 [PLG-011-07], March 17, 2008.)
Aquifer Recharge Areas

Goals and policies for aquifer recharge areas may be found in the Water Resources Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas Overlay

Goal:
To protect fish and wildlife habitat areas.

Policies:
A. Develop specific criteria and processes to nominate, designate and classify habitats and species of local importance.

B. Periodically review and update designations as new information on species viability and habitat needs becomes available.

C. Conserve habitats necessary for continued reproductive success of designated species.
   1. Protect elements necessary to the survival of designated species, including habitat areas such as nests, breeding areas, nurseries from disturbance during critical life cycle periods.
   2. Encourage enhancement of degraded habitat areas.
   3. Based on the recommendations of Biological Site Assessment or Habitat Management Plan, provide physical buffers or timing restrictions around specific habitat areas used by designated species commensurate to the seasonal use of the area (where that is the case), the sensitivity of the species and habitat, the relative importance of the species and habitat, and the intensity of proposed and actual uses.
   4. Landscaping, screening, or vegetated buffers required through development review should retain, salvage, or re-establish native vegetation.
   5. Discourage use of non-native or invasive plant species.
   6. Encourage the provision of corridors and networks of native vegetation between protected habitat areas to minimize isolating and fragmenting designated wildlife.
habitat. Incorporate natural resource lands supporting uses such as forestry and agriculture into wildlife corridors and networks.

7. Consult with state and federal agencies when making wildlife management and protection decisions.

8. Develop and implement programs to restore, rehabilitate, and acquire important habitat areas.

D. Protect all streams.

E. Protect near-shore habitats, including commercial and recreational shellfish areas; kelp and eelgrass beds; herring and smelt spawning areas.

1. The design of new and replacement on-site sewage systems shall meet the minimum requirements outlined in ICC 8.07C.

2. Require buffers for new development adjacent to streams and marine habitats.

3. Require preparation of farm plans for new agriculture uses in the Commercial Agriculture land use district.

4. Require implementation of best management practices for new and existing agricultural activities.

F. Maps, site-specific studies, and information collected by other agencies available for public review will be made readily accessible to potential and existing landowners, interested citizens, and development interests to aid in the protection of these areas.

G. Regulation of these areas will take into consideration the function of the area, the potential environmental costs of alterations, the sensitivity of the area to disturbance, and the intensity and potential risks associated with a proposed land use.

H. When a violation of the policies and regulations of this area is identified, the enforcement action and severity of any penalty will be proportional to the nature and circumstances of the violation and the damage or risk to private and public resources.

I. Overlay policies and development regulations shall be implemented in addition to those associated with the underlying land use designation. When there is a conflict in policy statements or development regulations, the more restrictive shall apply.

Frequently Flooded Areas

Goal:
To protect the public health, safety and welfare, and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in frequently flooded areas.
Policies:

A. Reduce the potential for physical injury and damage to public and private property from flooding by minimizing impacts of upstream land uses.

1. Protect natural water storage areas and drainage systems, including wetlands, streams and lakes, to reduce downstream flooding.

2. Ensure new development above identified thresholds minimizes additional runoff by limiting impervious surfaces, unnecessary grading and compaction of soils, and preserving areas of undisturbed vegetation.

3. Ensure new development above identified thresholds is accompanied by appropriate stormwater facilities, such as detention ponds, infiltration facilities, and other measures to maintain rates of runoff at pre-development levels.

4. Impose standards for construction in frequently flooded areas to minimize the potential for physical injury and property damage.

B. Maps, site-specific studies, and information collected by other agencies available for public review will be made readily accessible to potential and existing landowners, interested citizens, and development interests to aid in the protection of these areas.

C. When a violation of the policies and regulations of this area is identified, the enforcement action and severity of any penalty will be proportional to the nature and circumstances of the violation and the damage or risk to private and public resources.

D. Development regulations shall be implemented in addition to those associated with the underlying land use designation.

E. Regulations for frequently flooded areas are contained in the ICC 17.02.

Geologically Hazardous Areas (Steep/Unstable Slopes) Overlay

Goal:
To protect the public health, safety and welfare from threats resulting from incompatible development being sited on or near steep and/or unstable slopes.

Policies:

A. Minimize damage to life, health, property, and natural resources caused by geological processes.

1. Require thorough geotechnical investigation of localized conditions during the review of proposed development within areas of steep/unstable slopes. The amount of information required will be proportionate to the severity of the geologic hazard and the susceptibility of the proposed development.

2. Encourage, and where appropriate, require use of special engineering, site design, and modified construction practices.
3. Prohibit activities and land uses which cause or exacerbate existing hazardous geological conditions.

B. Maps, site-specific studies, and information collected by other agencies available for public review will be made readily accessible to potential and existing landowners, interested citizens, and development interests to aid in the protection of these areas.

C. Regulation of these areas will take into consideration the sensitivity of the area to disturbance, and the intensity and potential risks associated with a proposed land use.

D. When a violation of the policies and regulations of this area is identified, the enforcement action and severity of any penalty will be proportional to the nature and circumstances of the violation and the damage or risk to private and public resources.

E. Overlay policies and development regulations shall be implemented in addition to those associated with the underlying land use designation. When there is a conflict in policy statements or development regulations, the more restrictive shall apply.

F. Steep and unstable slope regulations are contained in ICC 17.02.

**Shorelines Overlay**

Goals and policies for the Shorelines Overlay may be found in the Shoreline Management Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Airport and Aviation Safety Overlay**

**Goal:**

Ensure that future development in the Airport and Aviation Safety Overlay protects public health, safety and welfare.

**Policies Applicable to NAS Whidbey Island and All Civilian Airports:**

A. Ensure that the permitting process for any new or expanding airport is subjected to a thorough review. Potential benefits will be carefully considered as will potential adverse impacts.

B. Ensure that public or private development around existing airports allows the continued use of that facility as an airport. Land within aircraft approach and departure zones will be protected from inappropriate development.

C. Ensure that new land uses which would attract or accommodate large concentrations of people will not be permitted to locate within approach or departure zones and/or Accident Potential Zones of existing airports.

D. Help to minimize the number of people exposed to very high aircraft noise levels in areas near airports through compatible land uses. In the highest airport noise level areas open/undeveloped space will be encouraged and land use densities shall remain...
low. The objective is to achieve the greatest degree of compatibility and the least public annoyance which can be attained.

E. Preserve the right of airport owners and operators to continue present operations and allow for future air transportation and airport facility needs. It is also important to consider the present and future use of private property and the rights of private property owners.

F. New dwellings in moderate and high aircraft noise areas will be built to a noise level reducing standard that is higher than that which is obtained by building to current minimum building code standards. Structural noise attenuation standards in the higher noise areas (NAS/OLF) will be greater than that required in moderate aircraft noise areas.

G. Island County will notify the airport operator, state and federal aviation agencies, at the time of initial application, of any proposed actions or projects, which would lead to development near an airport that is not compatible with the airport’s operations. The airport operator shall notify Island County, and potentially affected citizens, of any proposed operational changes which would have a significant impact on existing land uses.

H. Land use proposals, structures, or objects that would interfere with the safe operation of aircraft will be examined for compatibility as defined in CFR Title 14, FAR Part 77 and FAA Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS) Chapter 12, and WA 31. The object is to permit land uses which allow safe aircraft operations as defined in the documents referenced above. Obstructions that would require alterations in flight paths will not be permitted.

I. A public site plan review is required in the event airport operations exceed an operational growth rate of 30% in 3 years which necessitates expansion of existing airport boundaries.\textsuperscript{9}

J. Island County will require a Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the establishment of any proposed new airport.

K. Require advance notification of future owners or renters of properties within noise impact areas of potentially significant noise impacts.

L. Overlay policies and development regulations shall be implemented in addition to those associated with the underlying land use designation. When there is a conflict in policy statements or development regulations, the more restrictive shall apply.

\textsuperscript{9} Take-offs and landings as referenced in Island County Transportation Plan Table V-9.
Policies Applicable to NAS Whidbey Island Only:

M. Island County will discourage residential development in Aircraft Accident Potential Zones (APZ). To protect the ongoing and future operational use of NAS Whidbey Island, Island County will ensure that future development in APZs around Ault Field.
and Outlying Field Coupeville is at the lowest possible density consistent with the underlying land use designation.

N. If the Department of Defense should declare surplus any portion of NAS Whidbey Island, the County will work closely with federal and state officials, the City of Oak Harbor, and other appropriate entities to ensure that the base capital facilities are put to the best economic use, consistent with city and county comprehensive plans.

O. Island County will continue to work with NAS Whidbey Island to ensure land use will remain compatible with the changing needs and uses of NAS Whidbey Island.

(Ord. C-87-07 [PLG-017-07], March 10, 2008)

Archaeologically Significant Areas

Goal:
To identify Island County’s archaeological resources, and to protect and preserve the cultural, historical, social, educational, and scientific value of these resources in a manner that respects their cultural significance.

Policies:

A. The County will prepare and maintain a current inventory of all known and suspected historic and archaeological sites in cooperation with the State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and officials from the affected Indian tribe. This inventory will be kept in a secure location and used by County staff only for the purpose of verifying the presence of an archaeological site on a subject property. The County shall update its inventory of archaeological sites by incorporating information contained in the archaeologic reports required by Section D below. Additionally, should any new archaeological site be discovered during development or otherwise, the County shall also incorporate information obtained from the newly discovered site in its inventory and shall forward or cause to be forwarded this information to the state Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and the affected Tribe.

B. The County will prepare and implement procedures identifying and protecting archaeological sites within its jurisdiction. The County shall provide the affected Tribe, the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, the Trust Board of the Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve and the Island County Historical Society with a copy of these procedures and any amendments hereto.

C. The County will ensure that affected tribal organization(s) and the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation are involved in the review of projects having potential impacts on archaeological sites by, at a minimum, providing the affected Tribe, organization and agency with a copy of the permit application for all such projects and notifying the owner or project proponent of his/her responsibility to consult with the affected Native American Tribe.
D. Where a proposed development is located on or near an archaeological site, the County will require the property owner or project proponent to engage a qualified professional archaeologist to investigate and report to the County upon the location, condition, extent of the site and any recommendations in regard to treatment. Such report shall include consultation with the affected Indian tribe on proposed measures to avoid, protect, or
mitigate the impacts of the proposed project on the archaeological site. The report shall include a section describing the consultative process with the affected Tribe, setting forth the affected Tribe’s comments on any findings and recommendations proposed by the archaeologist on behalf of the property owner or project proponent, any changes made to those findings and/or recommendations as a result of the consultation, and any contrary findings and/or recommendations of the affected Indian Tribe on avoidance or mitigation of the proposed project’s impacts. The report shall be performed in accordance with the best available technology and techniques commonly accepted as standards in the profession of archaeology. A copy of the archaeologist’s report shall be provided to the affected Tribe and the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

E. No permit for an application requiring an archaeologist’s report will be issued prior to the receipt by Island County of a required archaeological report and any comments submitted to the County by the Tribes. Based on the information contained in the written report of the qualified professional archaeologist, including the recommendations of the affected Indian Tribe on avoidance or mitigation of the proposed project’s impacts obtained during the consultation process, the County will condition and balance project approval in a manner to avoid or minimize impacts to the site consistent with federal and state law. Avoidance and conservation of the site is the preferred treatment.

F. The County shall require property owners or project proponents to immediately halt work if, during the course of development, and particularly during actual construction, human remains or archaeological resources are encountered. The property owner or project proponent shall be required to contact the affected Native American Tribe, the County and the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. This contact shall initiate a consultation process for determining subsequent actions.

G. The County will work with affected Tribes and others to protect Native American artifacts and sites of significance, and other archaeological and cultural resources as mandated by RCW 27.53.

**Historic Preservation**

**Goal:**

To identify Island County’s historic resources, and to protect and preserve these resources in a manner that respects their importance.

**Policies:**

A. Encourage management and preservation of Island County’s historic resources.


C. Continue to support and strengthen the functions of the Central Whidbey Island Historical Preservation District Advisory Committee.
D. Development in the Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve or other scenic and/or historic areas will be designed to protect identified historic sites, structures, and panoramic vistas. Vegetative screening, setbacks, exterior design measures, view corridor protection and other suitable forms of mitigation will be used to lessen the impact of development within such areas.

E. Provide technical assistance to citizens in other parts of the County in forming local historic preservation districts.

F. Encourage the preservation and restoration of historic structures by continuing to provide special tax valuation for historic structures as directed by RCW 84.26.

**Residential Development**

**Goal:**

Encourage clustered residential development where appropriate. All residential development should preserve the community feel of an area and further the protection of rural character in Island County

**Policies:**

A. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.

B. Standards for subdivisions and planned residential developments shall encourage clustering and avoid or minimize the adverse impacts to the visual or physical environment while still fostering rural lifestyles and rural character.

C. In a cluster development, lots should be grouped on a limited portion of the site and should be smaller than those in a conventional subdivision. As a result, part of the site shall remain undeveloped while retaining the same overall number of units.

D. Greater density bonuses shall be available in cluster developments for providing the type of land and open space amenities which the community most values.

E. Provide locational criteria for cluster subdivisions.

F. Provide for flexible building envelopes.

G. Provide for varied spacing between buildings. In some cases allow “zero lot lines” for single family residential developments. In other cases, such as co-housing projects, provide for greater spacing in clusters to foster rural living and privacy on individual lots as well as within clusters.

H. Planned Residential Developments shall require a landscaping plan that requires the retention of existing native vegetation.

I. Minimize impervious surfaces.

J. Planned Residential Developments require identification of dedicated open space areas.
K. Permit the use of open space areas in Planned Residential Developments for off-site wells, septic systems, trails and walkways, and, where desired by applicants, permit trail systems through open space areas to neighboring properties as connections to other trail systems.

L. Develop guidelines which require Planned Residential Developments be separated from lands designated Commercial Agriculture and Mineral Resource by dedicated open space areas or by other buffering measures. Buffers do not always mean trees, but may also be just a distance.

M. Conserve the County’s rural and open space character by directing and supporting residential growth within defined areas and by maintaining low density rural areas.

N. Provide for duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes in the Rural Residential land use district.

O. Both attached and detached housing units will be provided for in Planned Residential Developments with conditions which preserve rural character.

P. Provide for a variety of residential densities.

Q. Limit overall area which can be developed for large lot residential development.

R. Street yard setbacks shall be based on road classifications.

S. Innovative development concepts will be encouraged to buffer agricultural and mineral resource lands from development.

T. Lot size averaging is allowed in subdivisions and short plats.

U. Designate the siting of water storage facilities by public water systems as permitted in all land use designation subject to screening requirements.

**Economic Development**

**Goal:**

Encourage diverse economic development consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, especially opportunities for unemployed and disadvantaged residents and in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, within the capacities of natural resources, public services and facilities. Strive to increase locally based non-military jobs from the current 50% of the County labor force to 60% of the labor force by the year 2020 (this would result in a 4,000 job increase above the 1996 level of locally based jobs). The focus of job development should be the retail, service and manufacturing sectors.

**Policies:**

A. Encourage a diversity of economic activities within appropriate areas of Island County. These may include tourism, agriculture, professional, information processing, forestry, fisheries and commercial development. These economic activities should reflect the distinctive characters of the four County planning areas.
B. Acknowledge as a basis for planning that the goals of preserving rural lands and enhancing economic vitality are complementary and not mutually exclusive. The County’s rural character is a direct economic asset. It is a major factor behind the tourism industry and a major attraction for retirees and new businesses that want a higher quality of life for themselves and their employees.

C. Overall economic development with regional orientation will be pursued in cooperation with local government and the private sector, targeting specific projects aimed at diversifying and stabilizing the economy.

D. Retain existing businesses in the region and minimize obstacles to their expansion, where appropriate.

E. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.

F. The development of “living wage” employment opportunities is actively encouraged to reduce off-island commuting and provide career opportunities.

G. Pursue the development of a diversified economy that attracts business activities that inject “new money” into the local economy (i.e. academic and research organizations, light industries, financial services, information processing, engineers, and home businesses) and includes appropriate service industries such as health care and professional services.

H. Commercial developments must be designed and located to provide goods and services in a convenient, safe, attractive and environmentally responsible manner.

I. Regional shopping centers must locate within municipal UGAs.

J. Marinas and water-related commercial uses will develop in accord with the SMP.

K. Encourage and support public/farmers markets and small-scale farming operations.

L. Encourage and support efforts to enhance the profitability of agriculture and forestry operations with value-added and specialty products and cooperative marketing programs.

M. Encourage the development of appropriate support facilities and programs for the retirement industry.

N. Encourage home occupations and home industries.

O. Existing businesses that serve municipal UGAs will be encouraged to remain within these areas and expand as needed.

P. Contain isolated non-residential uses.

Q. Island County’s land use decisions will support the retention and future use of NAS Whidbey, including OLF Coupeville and the Seaplane Base for use by military aviation. In the event that any military facilities are removed, downsized or closed,
the County will promote the future use of these facilities for aviation-related activities. Should this not be economically viable, Island County will aggressively work to convert these capital assets into comparable economic benefits for the County and adjacent developed areas.

R. Encourage agricultural and forestry land uses that help farmers and foresters stay on the land thus protecting the County’s rural character, which in turn, attracts other economic activities.

Small-Scale Recreation or Tourism Uses

Goal:
Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(ii), provide the opportunity for the intensification of development on lots in the rural area containing, or new development of, small-scale recreational or tourist uses, including commercial facilities to serve those recreational or tourist uses, that rely on a rural location and setting, but that do not include new residential development.

Policies:
A. Provide for Small Bed and Breakfasts (1 to 2 rooms) in the Rural Residential, Rural, Rural Forest, Rural Agriculture and Commercial Agriculture land use designations.

B. Provide for Bed and Breakfast Inns (3 to 12 rooms) in the Rural Residential and Rural land use designations.

C. Provide for Country Inns (13 to 40 rooms) in the Rural land use designation, with appropriate screening, setbacks, and open space area requirements. For developments in the shoreline areas, the visual impact from the water shall be considered.

D. Provide for other small-scale recreation and tourist uses in the Rural land use designation, such as golf courses, model hobby parks, restaurants, wineries and breweries on parcels of an appropriate size. Provided, all activities shall be screened from the view of adjacent neighbors and the use shall not disrupt the character of any surrounding permitted uses. Residential development around golf courses, if any, must meet all requirements for residential development in the Rural land use designation.

Isolated Non-Residential, Home Occupations and Home Industries

Goal:
Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(iii), provide the opportunity for the intensification of development on lots in the rural area containing existing isolated non-residential uses or new development of isolated cottage industries and isolated small-scale businesses that are not principally designed to serve the existing and projected rural population and non-residential uses, but do provide job opportunities for rural residents.
Policies:

A. Isolated Non-Residential. The intensification of development on lots in the rural area containing existing isolated non-residential uses shall be permitted according to development standards which address impacts on surrounding properties.

B. Home Occupations. Allow the intensification or development of home occupations in the Rural Residential, Rural, Rural Agriculture, Commercial Agriculture or Rural Forest land use designations.

C. Home Industries. Allow the intensification or development of home industries in the Rural, Rural Agriculture, Commercial Agriculture or Rural Forest land use designations taking into account the size the parcel it is permitted and the associated impacts of the use. Provided that if a home industry grows too large or adversely impacts neighbors, it shall be required to relocate to a non-residential or mixed-use land use designation.

Essential Public Facility Policies

Goal:

Provide for the siting of essential public facilities.

Policies:

A. Provision shall be made in the development regulations for siting important and essential public or quasi-public facilities of County or State-wide significance. Examples include, but are not limited to, airports, state education facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and public and private utilities.

B. Siting requirements will be important factors in determining whether essential public facilities will be located in urban, growth or in rural areas. Siting requirements for County facilities within UGAs will be jointly and cooperatively established with the municipalities.

C. Essential public facilities should not be located in Resource Lands and Critical Areas unless there is a demonstrated need and no alternative siting options are reasonable/feasible. Siting of essential Public Facilities within Resource and Critical Lands must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plans of the County and Municipalities and must be compatible with adjacent land use and consistent with development regulations adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A.

D. Essential public facilities sited outside of urban and urban growth areas must be self-supporting and not require the extension of Municipal urban services and facilities.

E. The siting of major energy facilities, including throughput transmission facilities, shall not be considered essential public facilities and therefore, comprehensive plans, development regulations and local policies will apply to the siting of such facilities.

F. Essential public facilities shall not be sited in the Commercial Agriculture land use district.
Public Services

Goal:
Ensure that those public services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

Policies:
A. Promote the adopted emergency services plan. The objective is to avoid duplication, foster rapid efficient communication and insure prompt delivery of emergency services.

B. Promote the development of a comprehensive social and health service delivery program focusing on the identification of valid social and health needs and implementation of action programs.

C. Coordinate and plan for the provision of public services, and their related facilities, in the most cost effective manner incorporating both the public and private sector.

Environmental Quality

Goal:
Safeguard the natural environment as an integrated system where the land, water and air resources interact creating a balanced environment for all life on the islands.

Policies:
A. Preserve Island County’s environmental quality through the careful use of land, water and air resources.

B. Preserve a high level of air quality.

1. Emphasis will be given to alternative forms of transportation (public transit, car pools, bicycle and pedestrian trails) decreasing dependency on the single occupant automobile.

2. Promote non-polluting alternatives to wood burning, such as solar heating and chipping instead of burning slash.

C. Encourage sound use of land resources.
1. Infilling of developed lands, Urban Growth Areas and areas of more intensive rural development will be encouraged in order to provide public facilities and services in the most efficient manner.

2. Extraction of mineral resources must minimize detrimental effects to the environment.

D. Conserve energy by encouraging efficient consumption and proper land use management.
   1. Government must provide leadership and education in employing energy conservation practices and the use of renewable energy technologies.
      a) Recycling of wastes and use of recycled or reused materials will be encouraged.
      b) Use of gray and treated black water will be encouraged, provided treatment design meets public health standards.

2. Transportation systems and land use patterns must be designed to consider conservation of energy. Primary employers, commercial users and population centers will be clustered where possible to minimize worker, service and consumer travel.

3. Government services will be sited to minimize consumer travel.

E. Implement the existing Coordinated Water System Plan to effectively guide the development, expansion, combination and coordination of water systems in the County.

F. When converting land to a use that requires water availability, Island County will prohibit major alterations to the land beyond the minimum necessary to do soil and water testing prior to the issuance of a water right or other state or local authorized evidence of adequate potable water.

G. Island County will encourage developments and structures with energy conservation technologies.

H. High intensity lighting is discouraged, but where necessary will require that it must be shielded from adjacent properties and roads and shielded and directed down to reduce impacts to the dark sky.

J. Ensure that regulations to protect the environment are fair, flexible and scientifically based.

I. For agricultural activities, to protect environmental quality, utilize management practices that are tailored to the level and intensity of the agricultural activity and meet the requirements of the Growth Management Act.

(Ord. No. C-150-05 [PLG-021-05], May 15, 2006)
Government

Goal:
Assure general public health, safety and welfare without unduly jeopardizing the rights of individuals.

Policies:
A. All levels of government will coordinate planning and decision making to ensure consistency.
   1. County-wide planning policies will be given priority when conflicts arise between jurisdictions.
   2. Comprehensive planning must be adaptable to changing conditions.
   3. There should be efficient inter-departmental coordination on all major programs and projects to minimize unnecessary delays in public decision making.
B. Private property will not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
C. Applications for County permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
D. Land use planning and decision making should be closely coordinated with federal, state and local agencies to achieve the County’s overall goals.
V. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is an ongoing process involving all sectors of the community. Changes in legal codes, capital improvements and everyday decisions which affect the quality of life on the Islands will greatly depend on the desires and level of citizen support given to the planning effort. The effectiveness and value of this Plan will only be measured over an extended period of time when citizens and local officials have an opportunity to achieve common objectives.

The general goals and policies should first be viewed as an overall framework for future decision making. Public and private interest must carefully examine this statement of comprehensive planning policy to ensure cooperation and coordination in meeting common objectives.

Beyond revisions to development regulations, it is necessary for public and private interests to work in a spirit of cooperation to implement the Plan. Policies within the plan provide overall guidance for decision making, offering flexibility to developments and innovations which achieve common objectives. The Plan has been intentionally formulated to provide guidelines for future development which foster a high quality living environment for all citizens at the lowest possible public cost.

The following is an outline of general areas of implementation strategies. For this Comprehensive Plan to succeed, it is of utmost importance to proceed on schedule to accomplish all of these items.

A. Clinton and Freeland Subarea Plans

1. Island County will establish one sub-area planning group for Clinton and one for Freeland to further explore the opportunity of becoming a non-municipal urban growth area, the criteria for the planning groups to be determined. The initial study area for Clinton is defined as the Clinton Water District, and the initial study area for Freeland is defined as the Freeland Water District and the Holmes Harbor Water District. The studies shall be initiated prior to the end of 1998. It is anticipated that if the areas desire to become non-municipal UGAs, a UGA amendment will be ready for action prior to the County’s second annual review of its Comprehensive Plan. Clinton Chamber of Commerce would like the study area to include Ken’s Corner, Campbell’s Glen and the development around Deer Lake.

B. Continued Planning

1. Amendments may be made to the Comprehensive Plan once a year only after careful analysis of developing trends and a finding that the proposed amendment is in the common interest of the people of Island County. The Plan shall be reviewed at least every five years by the Planning Commission in making recommendations to improve the entire Plan. Timely and thorough review of the Plan will assist in keeping it responsive to the needs of local citizens.

2. Island County will support an on-going comprehensive planning process with sufficient resources, staff, training and equipment.
3. Island County will conduct a review every two years of the Planned Residential Development program and an analysis of development patterns within designated areas of more intensive rural development.

4. The County has the necessary information systems, databases and mapping capabilities required for effective long-range planning.

5. The Planning Commission be representative of the community and well trained for their positions.

C. Benchmark Monitoring

1. Island County will work with the cities to set benchmarks for population and employment growth so that an annual monitoring process may be established with a detailed evaluation every five years. The first annual review would be done in 2001, so that the year 2000 census data may be used.

2. Prior to the end of 1998, Island County will work with the cities to establish and adopt countywide benchmarks, so that measurable goals can be established to determine progress in implementing the Growth Management Act. The benchmarks will form a basis for the long-term monitoring and evaluation program required by the CWPPs.

3. Island County will work with the cities to establish a long-term monitoring and evaluation program for urban growth areas that is modeled after the process set forth in RCW 36.70A.215. The long-term monitoring program shall commence with a first annual review in 2001 and then every five years thereafter.

4. Preliminary List of Benchmarks. Island County will use a benchmarking system to measure its performance on Comprehensive Plan goal and policies. Each benchmark will have progress indicators for comparison against stated goals.

Growth and Development

a) Population Growth: Population growth by UGAs, areas of more intensive development and remainder of rural area.

b) Development Activity: New lots created, lot combinations, building permits, conditional use permits, shoreline and critical area permits

c) Enforcement: Number of enforcement cases, major issues

Urban Growth

a) UGAs Annexations: Amendments to UGA boundaries, and location, acreage, and populations annexed

b) Public Facilities: Transportation, water, sewer improvements

c) Commercial/Industrial Development: Location, development intensity

d) Clinton and Freeland Subarea Plans: Status, reports, recommendations
Transportation

a) General Transportation Indicators: Level of service, average daily traffic, accidents, road approach permits by road type, transit ridership, non-motorized improvements

Affordable Housing

a) Affordable Housing Supply: Supply of affordable housing, new construction, mobile home parks, use of affordable housing density bonus

b) Affordability: House purchase affordability gap for buyers, home ownership rate, trend of housing costs as compared to median income, rental vacancy rate, housing affordable to low income households

Economic Development

a) Employment: Jobs growth, on-island employment, per capita income, poverty rate percentage of population, unemployment rate

b) Business Growth: Building starts or improvements

c) Regulatory Framework: Timeliness of permit process; improvement to process

Property Rights and Permits

a) Development Regulations: Land use decisions, permit review process

b) Comprehensive Plan: Amendments, changes to regulations

Rural Lands

a) Rural Lands: Residential or non-residential land development, land divisions, acreage and locations

b) Residential Areas of More Intensive Development: Additions, deletions, acreage, building permits, undeveloped vs. developed

c) Measures to protect rural character: Status, changes, gains, losses, PRDs, overall effectiveness

d) Production: Agricultural production, timber harvest production; small farms; employment

Resource Lands

a) Production: Agricultural production, timber harvest production; employment

b) Conversion: Residential or non-residential land development, small farms, Class IV Forest Practice Permits – acreage and location

c) Earned development units: Number of development units used, number of approved farm/forest plans

d) Minerals: Extraction - quantities, sites, etc.

e) Forest and agriculture land taxation: Changes and additions

f) Measures to protect rural character: Status, changes, gains, losses, PRDs, overall effectiveness
Open Space and Recreation

a) **Natural Lands and Open Space:** Additions, deletions, locations, acreage, innovative development activities/options, corridor protection

b) **Public Benefit Rating System:** Number of properties, additions, deletions, acreage, locations

c) **Parks and Recreation:** Acreage, deletions, additions, operating budget

Natural Environment

a) **Fish and Wildlife:** Health of fish and wildlife stocks

b) **Wetlands and Streams:** Loss, gain, enhancements - locations and acreage

c) **Ground Water:** Results of studies on quantity and quality

d) **Shorelines:** Number/type of permits, enhancements, impacts (natural or other)

e) **Floodplains:** New development within flood hazard zones

f) **Geologic hazards:** New development within geologically hazardous areas

Historic, Cultural and Archaeological Resources

a) **Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve:** Review and updates of the ELHR Comprehensive Plan

b) **Sites:** New site locations, acquisitions, alterations or losses of significant resources

c) **Regulations:** New regulations (e.g. demolition ordinance), effectiveness of existing regulations, permit review findings

Public Facilities and Services

a) **Capital Facilities:** Current service levels, capital budget; 6-year financing plan

b) **Utilities:** New electric service areas, telecommunication improvements - locations, types

D. **County/Urban Growth Area Interlocal Agreements and Joint Planning Areas**

1. The County will work with the Oak Harbor and Langley to form interlocal agreement to assist in guiding development in the unincorporated portions of the Urban Growth Areas.

2. Working with the municipalities, the County will establish procedures to assist in coordinated review of land use and capital projects in Joint Planning Areas (shown on Map B).
E. Historic Preservation

1. The County will be supportive of the Congress appropriating funds to the National Park Service for the continuation of the Land Protection Plan for the Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve until all key parcels are protected.

2. The County will participate in periodic reviews and updates of the Comprehensive Plan for Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve.

3. The County will develop a demolition ordinance for the protection of significant cultural resources.

4. The County will complete the Historic Overlay section (17.02.110.H) of the Island County Zoning Code in cooperation with the Trust Board of Ebey’s Landing.

F. Economic Development

1. The County will encourage the Island County Economic Development Council, in cooperation with business associations, and the Port Districts to facilitate business training targeted to support incubator businesses.

2. Island County will work closely with Port Districts to provide small business facilities, training, promotion and marketing assistance.

3. Island County will include supporting infrastructure and transportation links for Airport areas consistent with the priorities established in the Capital Facilities and Transportation plan. Airport areas will have coordination with Port Districts, utility districts, etc., in order to provide infrastructure and transportation.

4. Island County will support marketing research and strategies by the Island County Economic Development Council for development in the Airport zone.

5. The County will develop standards for planned industrial parks in the Airport zones.

6. Design review standards shall be developed for all non-residential projects outside of UGAs which shall have for their primary purpose the avoidance or minimization of adverse visual and physical impacts on the environment and the protection of the rural character and surrounding lands. Specific design guidelines may be developed for subareas.

(Ord. C-45-04 [PLG-034-03], May 10, 2004)

G. Public Services

1. Island County will inventory all social and health service programs within the County to identify possible gaps and duplications in the delivery of services.
2. Island County will participate in the planning and decision-making processes of regional health planning agencies to assure efficient delivery of health care services.

H. Environmental Quality

1. Island County will work with other governmental agencies to encourage the establishment of effective air pollution control standards.

2. Island County will include the use of energy and water conserving technology in its building standards.
3. Island County will conduct watershed-scale planning and cumulative impact analysis to assist in conservation of water resources.

4. For existing agricultural activities, Island County will develop and apply site specific measures to protect environmental quality that constitute best available science and are fair, flexible and tailored to the level and intensity of the agricultural practices and meet the requirements of the Growth Management Act.

5. Island County will develop a water quality monitoring program to help identify adverse impacts of land activities on critical areas. (Ord. No. C-150-05 [PLG-021-05], May 15, 2006)

I. Rural Character

1. Island County will work with the real estate community, landowners and other parties to ensure that everyone is aware of the various development options that exist on a given parcel. Of particular importance is to make everyone aware that PRDs are one development option.

2. Planning and Community Development will work with other County departments to continually refine and improve the PRD development concept in order to ensure that it is achieving its intended goals of preserving rural character and that it is a viable development alternative on eligible lands. Beyond density bonuses, incentives should be incorporated which encourage use of the PRD development option, including streamlining the permit process and improving development standards that may cause a reduction in development costs. (Ord. C-44-04 [PLG-033-03], April 12, 2004)

J. Non-Residential Design

1. Island County will develop an illustrative guidebook with specific design criteria for non-residential development. The illustrative guidebook will be continually updated and improved to include drawings and pictures that better define the desired styles of non-residential development. The guidebook should be made available to all owners and developers of commercial property.

2. Island County will develop a monitoring program for non-residential design projects in order to better evaluate whether or not the completed project meets the goals, policies and objectives within the pertinent zone.

3. The County will devise a strategy for recognition of projects that meet and/or exceed the goals and standards of the non-residential design guidelines. (Ord. C-45-04 [PLG-034-03], May 10, 2004)

K. Best Management Practices

1. Island County will conduct a review every five years of the Best Management Practices program. This review should, among other things, identify the effectiveness of specific BMPs as well as the effectiveness of the overall program.
2. Island County will continue education and outreach programs that inform farmers, homeowners, contractors, road departments, real estate agents and any other applicable parties as to what requirements exist and the benefit they provide.

3. A monitoring program should be developed that evaluates compliance, and effectiveness of BMPs once installed. Information should be provided which describes when certain temporary BMPs should be removed and how to maintain the viability of any long term, permanent BMPs. The monitoring program should include randomly revisiting parcels where BMPs were required to be installed to see if they are accomplishing their intended purpose. (Ord. C-46-04 [PLG-035-03], April 12, 2004)

**L. Earned Development Unit Program**

1. Island County will conduct a review every five years of the Earned Development Unit program to determine if the program is meeting its intended purpose and goals.

2. Island County will develop an outreach strategy that is targeted at properties that are eligible for use of the program. Once the properties have been identified, Planning and Community Development will develop an informational brochure which describes the program and that will be mailed to all owners of the identified properties. (Ord. C-47-04 [PLG036-03], April 12, 2004)
GLOSSARY

Accessory Dwelling Unit: A second dwelling constructed within an existing single family home, usually for use as a rental unit. An “Accessory Unit” is a separate dwelling, including kitchen, sleeping, and bathroom facilities. Also known as “in-law apartment”.

Accident Potential Zone (APZ): Potentially hazardous areas beyond the ends of a military runway where lessening degrees of concern are a function of the distance from that runway.


Adequate Public Facilities: Facilities which have the capacity to serve development without decreasing levels of service below locally established standards.

Affordable Housing: Safe and sanitary owner occupied housing that is obtainable for 30 percent of monthly gross income of a household.

Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) Program: A comprehensive study prepared for military air installations to identify existing and compatible land use problem areas, and to formulate courses of action to promote compatible development near the air facilities. The AICUZ Study generally contains aircraft noise contour maps, Accident Potential Zone (APZ) designations, and recommended land use matrices for land areas within those noise zones and/or APZs.

Aircraft (Federal Air Regulations Part 1): A device that is used or intended to be used for flight in the air.

Airport (Federal Air Regulations, Part 1, Definitions and Abbreviations): An area of land or water that is used or intended to be used for the landing and takeoff of aircraft, and includes its buildings and facilities, if any.

Airport Operations: A takeoff and a landing.

Annexation: The act of incorporating an area into the domain of a city.

Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (RAID): Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d), rural development consisting of the infill, development, or redevelopment of existing commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use areas. The County’s interpretation of the statutory designation criteria is contained within this plan.

Assisted Housing: Owner-occupied or rental housing which is subject to restrictions on rents or sales prices as a result of one or more project based government subsidies. Assisted housing does not include holders of non-project based Section 8 Certificates.

Available Public Facilities and Services: Facilities or services which are in place or that a financial commitment is in place to provide the facilities or services within a specified time.
Best Management Practices (BMP): Conservation practices or systems of practices and management measures that: (1) control soil loss and reduce water quality degradation; and (2) minimize adverse impacts to surface water and ground water flow, circulation patterns, and to chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of wetlands.

Buffer: A separation designed to absorb potential conflicts between differing land uses, or to protect critical areas or significant natural features.

Cluster Development: A development design technique that concentrates buildings in specific areas on a site to allow the remaining land to be used for open space.

Commercial Uses: A business use or activity involving retail or wholesale marketing of goods and services.

Compatible: To exist harmoniously together; in agreement; congruous.

Comprehensive Plan: A legal document adopted by local officials establishing policies that will guide the future physical development of the community. It will be used by local officials, planning commissions, private firms and individuals when making decisions about land use development or changes, capital improvements programming, and the enactment of development regulations and related growth management legislation.

Conservation Uses: Land uses which conserve or protect natural resources or environmental quality within areas designated for flood control, protection of quality or quantity of groundwater or surface water, floodplain management, fisheries management, or protection of vegetative communities or wildlife habitats and similar uses meant to protect natural resources of the county.

Conserve: Use in a manner that maintains sustainability.

Consistency: When features of a plan or regulation are compatible with one another.

Contiguous Land: Land adjoining and touching other property including lands separated from each other by a private road or private right-of-way.

Cooperative Housing: Separate self-sustaining clustered dwelling units which are augmented with community owned and maintained facilities.

Coordination: Timely consultation and cooperation among jurisdictions.

County-wide Planning Policies: As required by GMA, the Board of Island County Commissioner’s adopted a series of policies which embody a vision of the future of Island County. These policies are intended to guide the development of communities in the county.

Critical Areas (as required by GMA): Critical areas include: wetlands; areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water; fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas; frequently flooded areas; and geologically hazardous areas.

Cultural Resource: An archeological, historical, or other feature important to the character of Island County.
Density: A measure of the intensity of development, generally expressed in terms of dwelling units per acre. It can also be expressed in terms of population density (i.e. people per acre or other units per acre).

Development Standards: Minimum standards for new development required by local governments for the provision of public facilities and the maintenance of public safety.

Domestic Water System: Any system providing a supply of potable water which is deemed adequate pursuant to RCW 19.27.097 for the intended use.

Dwelling Unit: Any building, or portion thereof which contains living facilities for not more than one family. Living facilities include provisions for sleeping, cooking, and sanitation, as required by Island County.

Earned Development Unit: The dwelling unit or fraction thereof that is granted to a farm or forest owner after the approval of a Farm or Forest Management Plan.

Economic Development: An activity that provides jobs, produces goods or services, and promotes economic health.

Essential Public Facilities: Essential public facilities include those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities, state or regional transportation facilities, state and local correctional facilities, and solid waste handling facilities. Throughput transmission facilities are not considered essential public facilities.

Existing: Unless otherwise expressly stated, existing or vested on the effective date of this Comprehensive Plan, December 1, 1998.

Existing Building: A structure, or portion thereof, which meets the definition of existing and was lawfully erected and maintained including those which, because of the enactment of this Comprehensive Plan, no longer conforms to the land use designation in which it is located.

Existing Lot: A lot or parcel of land which meets the definition of existing and was also of record and lawfully established and maintained including those which, because of the enactment of this Comprehensive Plan, no longer conforms to the land use designation in which it is located.

Existing Master Planned Resort: A resort that was in existence on July 1, 1990 and that met the definition of an Existing Master Planned Resort at that time. The resort is developed, in whole or in part, as a significantly self contained and integrated development that includes short-term visitor accommodations associated with a range of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities within the property boundaries in a setting of significant natural amenities. An existing resort may include other permanent residential uses, conference facilities, and commercial activities supporting the resort, but only if these uses are integrated into and consistent with the on-site recreational nature of the resort. (Ord. C-97-06 [PLG-010-06], August 21, 2006)

Existing Use: A use which meets the definition of existing and was lawfully established and maintained including those which, because of the enactment of this plan’s accompanying
development regulations, no longer conforms to the land use standards or use regulations of the land use district in which it is located.

**Farm/Forest Management and Development Plan:** A master plan for an entire farm or forest unit approved by the Island County Board of Commissioners that establishes both the planned location for earned development units and the specific actions to be taken by the County to strengthen and enhance the viability of the farm or forest unit.

**Farm or Forest Unit:** Tracts or parcels of land that are actively managed in agricultural or forest uses that are in one contiguous ownership.
Flight Track: The normalized track on the ground of an aircraft’s path of flight over the ground.

GMA: Growth Management Act (36.70A RCW), as amended.

Greenbelts: An open area that may be cultivated or maintained in a natural state surrounding development or used as a buffer between land uses.

Growth Management: A method to guide development in order to minimize adverse environmental and fiscal impacts, and maximize the health, safety, and welfare benefits to the residents of the community.

Impact Fee: A payment of money imposed upon development as a condition of development approval to pay for public facilities needed to serve new growth and development, and that is reasonably related to the new development that creates additional demand and need for public facilities, that is a proportionate share of the cost of the public facilities, and that is used for facilities that reasonably benefit the new development.

Incentive Zoning: Zoning that grants density bonuses in exchange for amenities that would not normally be provided through traditional zoning regulations.

Inclusionary Housing: An affordable housing strategy which seeks to provide a specified number of affordable and/or low income units within new housing developments. Inclusionary units are generally provided through density bonus incentives, requirements for cash contributions to a pool, or minimum percentages of affordable units, or combinations of requirements and incentives.

Inclusionary Zoning: Zoning which provides incentives to developers for including a specified percentage of lower cost than project standards building lots or dwelling units.

Infill Development: Development of vacant or underutilized parcels of land in otherwise built-up areas.

Infrastructure: Streets, water and sewer lines, utilities, and other public facilities basic and necessary to the functioning of an urban area.

Inter Jurisdictional: Relationships between governmental jurisdictions such as city, county, state, federal government agencies, special purpose districts, (i.e. schools, water, fire, port districts.)

Land Bank: Acquisition of land for the purpose of reserving it for specified future development types. The land bank concept can include management of existing publicly owned lands, with designated reservations or restrictions for future uses.

Land Development Regulations: Any controls placed on development or land use activities by a county or city, including, but not limited to, zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, rezoning, building codes, sign regulations, binding site plan ordinances, or any other regulations controlling the development of land.
Land Trusts: A land trust is an organization created to own and steward land for the purpose of preserving lands of historical significance, agricultural value, archeological significance, or open space.

Land Use Inventory: The catalog of the types, extent, distribution, and intensity of the uses or activities found on parcels of land or in spaces within a building.

Land Use: A term used to indicate the utilization of any piece of land.

Large Lot Zoning: Large minimum lot sizes which restrict the density of development.

Level of Service (LOS): A measure of the capacity of public facilities, services, and transportation.

Logical Outer Boundary: A term described in RCW 36.70A.070 and used by Island County to define the permanent outer limit of the Rural Residential, Rural Center, Rural Village, Rural Service, Light Manufacturing and Airport land use designations.

Long-Term Commercial Significance: As defined by GMA, long-term commercial significance includes the growing capacity, productivity, and soil composition of the land for long-term commercial production in consideration with the land’s proximity to population areas and the possibility of more intense use of land.

Low-Income Household: Households whose income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area, as determined by HUD.

May: Optional and permissive, and does not impose a requirement.

Minerals: As defined by GMA (36.70A.030 RCW), include sand, gravel, and metallic substances.

Minimum Lot Size: The smallest parcel of land which can be created by subdivision within a given zone.

Mitigation: Mitigation means (1) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action; (2) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation, by using appropriate technology, or by taking affirmative steps to avoid or reduce impacts; (3) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment; (4) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; (5) Compensating for the impact by replacing, enhancing, or providing substitute resources or environments; and/or (6) Monitoring the impact and taking appropriate corrective measures.

Mixed Use: A development involving a combination of residential and non-residential uses. Typically, a mixed use structure may have non-residential uses at street level with residential uses on the second floor.

Mixed Use Area: Specific areas established pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070 as areas of more intensive development. The Rural Center, Rural Village and Rural Service land use designations are used for these areas.
Municipal: Pertaining to a legally incorporated or duly authorized association of inhabitants of limited area for local government or other public purposes.

Native Wetland Species: Wetland species which are indigenous to Island County. Such species are defined in Flora of the Pacific Northwest (C. Leo Hitchcock and Arthur Cronquist, University of Washington Press).

Natural Resource Lands: Agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands which have long-term commercial significance.

Non-Native Wetland Species: Wetland species which have been accidentally or purposefully introduced into Island County. The development regulations contain a list of the principal non-native wetland species.

Non-Residential Areas: Specific areas established pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070 as areas of more intensive development. The Light Manufacturing and Airport land use designations are used for these areas.

Open Space Public Benefit Rating System: A tax reduction program for parcels which contain open space, or defined by RCW 84.34-020-1, the preservation of which, in its present use, serves a public purpose as defined by RCW 84.33 and RCW 84.34

Open Space Taxation Program: Forest, agricultural, and open space land valuation for tax purposes.

Open Space: Areas of a site designated and permanently committed as undisturbed areas or community area; committed to community use or committed to farm or forest use.

Overlay Zones: Additional land use regulations that guide development beyond the underlying zone.

Owner: Any person or persons, having legal right or interest such as a fee owner, contract purchaser, mortgagor or mortgagee, option or optionee, and beneficiary or grantor of a trust or deed of trust, but not including the grantee of an easement.

Parcel: A unit of land with legally defined boundaries.

Parcelization: Dividing or combining of land into new parcels.

Performance Standards: Standards used to regulate development based on the permissible impacts of a proposed use.

Performance-Based Zoning: A system which measures individual projects against clearly stated criteria, such as traffic impacts, neighborhood compatibility, infrastructure capacity, etc.

Phasing of Development: The gradual progression of new development outward from existing developed areas, supported by necessary public facilities and services.

Planned Residential Development (PRD): A Cluster residential project approved by the Board of Commissioners pursuant to Chapter 16.17 ICC. A PRD may include detached or attached dwelling units.
Planning Period: The 20-year or greater period established by the state as an initial planning horizon.

Policy: An agreed course of action adopted and pursued by decision makers for achieving one or several goals and objectives and used as a guide for formulating programs.

Preserve: To maintain unchanged; to keep or maintain intact.

Primary Land Use: The primary activity or structure for which a site is used.

Project Improvements: Site improvements and facilities that are planned and designed to provide service for a particular development project and that are necessary for the use and convenience of the occupants or users of the project, and are not system improvements. No improvement or facility included in a capital facilities plan approved by the governing body of the county shall be considered a project improvement.

Proportionate Share: That portion of the cost of public facility improvements that are reasonably related to the service demands and needs of new development.

Public Facilities: Capital facilities owned or operated by government entities: (a) Public streets and roads; (b) publicly owned parks, open space, and recreation facilities; (c) school facilities; and (d) fire protection facilities in jurisdictions that are not part of a fire district.

Public Service Obligations: Obligations imposed by law on utilities to furnish facilities and supply service to all who may apply for and be reasonably entitled to service.

Public Services: As defined by GMA (36.70A.030 RCW), the full range of services traditionally provided by local government including police and fire protection, roads, utilities, schools and parks.

Public Utilities: Enterprises of facilities serving the public by means of an integrated system of collection, transmission, distribution, and processing facilities through more or less permanent physical connections between the plant of the serving entity and the premises of the customer. Included are systems for the delivery of natural gas, electricity, telecommunications services, water, and the disposal of sewage.

Purchased Development Rights (PDR): Purchased of less than fee interest by a government or a non-profit public trust to protect open space, scenic, or historic areas.

Real Estate Excise Tax (REET): A tax levied on the sale of real property. The amount of the tax is determined as a percentage of the sales price.

Regional Transportation Plan: A transportation plan for the regionally designated transportation system which is produced by a Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO): The voluntary organization conforming to RCW 47.80.020, consisting of local governments within a region containing one or more counties which have common transportation interests.
**Right-to-Farm/Right to Practice Forestry Ordinance:** Legislation protecting farmers’/timber growers’ rights to conduct normal agricultural and silvicultural practices, and providing protection against nuisance lawsuits.

**Rural Character:** From 36.70A.030(14): Rural character refers to the patterns of land use and development established by a county in the rural element of its comprehensive plan: (a) In which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment; (b) That foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas; (c) That provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities; (d) That are compatible with the use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat; (e) That reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development; (f) That generally do not require the extension of urban governmental services; and (g) That are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and ground water and surface water recharge and discharge areas.

**Rural Governmental Services:** Public services and public facilities historically and typically delivered at an intensity usually found in rural areas, and may include domestic water systems, fire and police protection services, transportation and public transit services, and other public utilities associated with rural development and normally not associated with urban areas. Rural services do not include storm or sanitary sewers, except as otherwise authorized by RCW 36.70A.110(4).

**Rural Lands:** All lands which are not within an urban growth area and are not designated as natural resource lands having long term commercial significance for production of agricultural products or timber.

**Sanitary Sewer Systems:** All facilities, including approved on-site disposal facilities, used in the collection, transmission, storage, treatment or discharge of any waterborne waste, whether domestic in origin or a combination of domestic, commercial or industrial waste.

**Scenic Corridor:** The viewshed generally visible to the public traveling on routes characterized by unusual natural, historic, or cultural significance.

**Scenic Highway:** A federal definition based upon the interim scenic byway guidance. A road that has been designated through some legislation or some other official declaration for its scenic, historic, recreational, archaeological, or cultural values.

**Service Area:** A geographic area defined by a county or intergovernmental agreement in which a defined set of public facilities provide service to development within the area. Service areas shall be designated on the basis of sound planning or engineering principles.

**Shall:** Mandatory and imposes a requirement

**Shoreline Public Access:** A means of physical approach to and along the shoreline available to the public.

**Should:** Insofar as is practical.

**Sole Source Aquifer:** An aquifer which supplies at least fifty percent of the drinking water consumed in the area overlying the aquifer.
Small Scale: Of a size or intensity which has minor impacts on the surrounding area and which makes minor demands on existing public facilities and services.

Solid Waste Handling Facility: Any facility for the transfer or ultimate disposal of solid waste, including land fills and municipal incinerators.

Sound Attenuation: The ability of a building’s structure (roof, walls, foundation, doors, windows, vents, etc.) to prevent exterior noise from entering the interior. A measure of the lack of acoustical connection between the outdoor and indoor noise environments expressed as the amount of difference (in decibels) between the spatially averaged sound levels outdoors to indoors.

Special Needs Housing: Housing for those who face serious impediments to independent living and who require special assistance and services in order to obtain appropriate housing on a permanent, long term or transitional basis.

Sprawl: Spread out awkwardly. Development responding only to market forces, usually unplanned or poorly planned, causing rural land use change to more dense uses.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA): RCW 34.21 and its implementing regulations, WAC 197-11. The state law passed in 1971 requiring state and local agencies to consider environmental impacts in the decision-making process. A determination of environmental significance must be made for all non-exempt projects or actions which require a permit, license or decision from a government agency. If the action does not have significant adverse environmental impacts, a Declaration of Non-Significance (DNS) is issued. If the action or project could have major impacts, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required. The Act requires consideration of alternatives and mitigation of environmental impacts for major public and private projects and programs.

Steep Slopes: Refers to WAC 365-190-080, or those lands which have a slope greater than 40 percent.

Stormwater: Channeled water that is generated by precipitation and is often routed into drain systems in order to prevent flooding.

Streams: Those areas where naturally occurring surface waters produce a defined channel, bed, bank or side, and where there is clear evidence of the passage of water such as bedrock channels, gravel beds, sand and silt beds and defined channel swales. The channel or bed need not contain water year-round. This definition is not intended to include irrigation or drainage ditches or swales, canals, storm or surface water run-off devices or other artificial watercourses unless they are used by salmonids or to convey streams naturally occurring prior to construction of such watercourses.

System Improvements: Public facilities that are designed to provide service to service areas within the community at large, in contrast to project improvements.

Taking: The appropriation by government of private land for which fair and just compensation must be paid. Under the U.S. and State Constitutions property cannot be condemned through eminent domain for public use or purpose without just and fair compensation.
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): A program in which the unused portion of a “sending” property’s zoned capacity - one of the separable rights of property - is sold to the developer of a “receiving” site, who is allowed to add the capacity to the zoned limit of that site.

Transitional Housing: As defined by the Federal McKinney Act, transitional housing means a project (a) that is designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to homeless persons, including (but not limited to) de-institutionalized homeless individuals with mental disabilities and other homeless individuals with mental disabilities, and homeless families with children; and (b) that has as its purpose facilitating the movement of homeless individuals to independent living within 24 months, or within a longer period determined by HUD as necessary to facilitate the transition.

Transportation Demand Management Strategies (TDM): Strategies aimed at changing travel behavior rather than at expanding the transportation network to meet travel demand. Such strategies can include the promotion of work hour changes, ride-sharing options, parking policies, telecommuting.

Urban Growth Areas (UGAs): Areas which counties designate, in consultation with cities and towns, where urban growth will be encouraged and supported with urban levels of services. The urban growth areas are to include areas and densities sufficient to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the county for the succeeding 20-year period. Urban growth refers to growth that makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures, and impermeable surfaces to such a degree as to be incompatible with the primary use of such land for the production of food, other agricultural products or fiber, or the extraction of mineral resources.

Urban Growth Boundary: The boundary or line marking the limit between the UGAs and other areas.

Urban Services: Services, utilities, and facilities historically and typically delivered by cities and towns.

Urban Sprawl: Scattered, poorly planned urban development that occurs particularly in urban fringe and rural areas and frequently invades land important for environmental and natural resource protection.

Urban: Characteristic of a city; commercial, residential, and industrial, containing or requiring a complete infrastructure (sewers, water, etc.)

Very Low Income: Income that does not exceed 50 percent of the area median income.

Watershed: The geographic region within which water drains into a particular stream, or body of water. A watershed includes hills, lowlands, and the body of water into which the land drains.

Wetlands: Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.030(20), wetlands means areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. Wetlands do not include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from nonwetland...
sites, including, but not limited to, irrigation and drainage ditches, grass-lined swales, canals, detention facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, farm ponds, and landscape amenities, or those wetlands created after July 1, 1990, that were unintentionally created as a result of the construction of a road, street, or highway. Wetlands may include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from nonwetland areas to mitigate the conversion of wetlands.

**Zoning:** A police power measure, enacted by local government, in which the community is divided into districts or zones within which permitted and special uses are established as are regulations governing lot size, building bulk, placement, and other development standards. The Zoning Ordinance consists of two parts, the text and the map.
## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A. CONSISTENCY MATRIX - GMA GOALS/REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS/REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th>LOCATION IN PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. PLANNING GOALS RCW 36.70A.020</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Urban growth - Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities or services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Municipal Urban Growth Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reduce Sprawl - Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Commercial Development and Residential Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Transportation - Encourages efficient multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Transportation, and Transportation Element -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Housing - Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Housing, and Housing Needs Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Economic development - 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 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.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Property rights - Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Permits - Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Natural resource industries - Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Natural Lands and Parks and Recreation, and Agricultural Resource Lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Open space and recreation - Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Natural Lands and Parks and Recreation, and Parks and Recreation Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Environment - Protect the environment and enhance the state’s high quality of life, including air and water quality and the availability of water.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Environmental Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Citizen participation - Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Government, and Technical Appendix Record of Public Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Public facilities and services - Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Public Facilities and Public Services, and Capital Facilities Element</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Historic preservation - Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Historic Preservation, Natural Lands Element and Ebey’s Landing Historical Preserve Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adopted September 28, 1998
### B. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Glossary

### C. REQUIRED PLAN ELEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Land Use Element</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Identification of relevant urban growth area(s)</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter III Future Land Use - Urban Element Designations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Integration of relevant county-wide policies.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter III Goals and Policies - Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Designation of the general distribution and general location and extent of uses of land, where appropriate, for agriculture, timber production, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, open space, public utilities, public facilities, and other land uses.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter III Future Land Use - Rural Element Designations and Future Land Use Plan Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Population densities, building intensities, and estimates of future population growth.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter III Future Land Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Provisions for protection of the quality and quantity of ground water used for public water supplies.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Environmental Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Review of drainage, flooding and stormwater run-off in the plan area and nearby jurisdictions, and guidance for corrective actions for discharges that pollute.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Environmental Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Future Land Use Map (or maps)</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter III Future Land Use - Future Land Use Plan Map</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Housing Element</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Integration of relevant county-wide policies</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter III Goals and Policies - Housing, and Housing Needs Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs</td>
<td>Housing Needs Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Statement of goals, policies and objectives for the preservation, improvement and development of housing.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Housing and Residential Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Identification of sufficient land for housing, including but not limited to, government assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multi-family housing, group homes, and foster care facilities.</td>
<td>Housing Needs Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Adequate provisions for existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community.</td>
<td>Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Housing and Residential Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Capital Facilities Element</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Integration of relevant county-wide policies.</td>
<td>Policy and Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Public Facilities and Government, and Capital Facilities Plan and Capital Improvement Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities, showing the locations and capacities of the capital facilities.</td>
<td>Capital Facilities Plan and Capital Improvement Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Forecast of the future needs for such capital facilities.</td>
<td>Capital Facilities Plan and Capital Improvement Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new capital facilities.</td>
<td>Capital Facilities Plan and Capital Improvement Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Six-year plan (at least) that will finance such capital facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identifies sources of public money for such purposes.</td>
<td>Capital Facilities Plan and Capital Improvement Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
f. Requirement to reassess the land use element if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and any other measures to ensure that the land use element, capital facilities plan element, and financing plan within the capital facilities plan element are coordinated and consistent.

Capital Facilities Plan and Capital Improvement Program (Revenues Requiring Referendum)

4. Utilities Element

Island County Comprehensive Plan Utilities Element

5. Transportation Element

Island County Transportation Element

a. Integration of relevant county-wide policies.

Island County Transportation Element

b. Land Use assumptions used in estimating travel.

Island County Transportation Element, Chapters III and VI

c. Facilities and service needs, including:

(i) Inventory of air, water and land transportation facilities and services, including transit alignments, to define existing capital facilities and travel levels as a basis for future planning.

Island County Transportation Element

(ii) Regionally coordinated level of service standards for all arterials and transit routes to serve as a gauge to judge performance of the system.

Island County Transportation Element

(iii) Identification of specific actions and requirements for bringing into compliance any facilities and services that are below an established level of service standard.

Island County Transportation Element

(iv) Forecasts of traffic for at least ten years based on the adopted land use plan to provide information on the location, timing and capacity needs of future growth.

Island County Transportation Element

(v) Identification of system expansion needs and transportation system management needs to meet current and future demands.

Island County Transportation Element

d. Finance, including:

(i) Analysis of funding capability to judge needs against probable funding resources.

Island County Transportation Element

(ii) Multi-year financing plan based on the needs identified in the comprehensive plan, the appropriate parts of which shall serve as the basis for the six-year street, road, or transit program required by RCW 35.77.010 for cities, and RCW 36.81.121 for counties and RCW 35.58.2795 for public transportation systems.

Island County Transportation Element

(iii) If probable funding falls short of meeting identified needs, a discussion of how additional funding will be raised, or how land use assumptions will be reassessed to ensure that level of service standards will be met.

Island County Transportation Element

e. Intergovernmental coordination efforts, including an assessment of the impacts of the transportation plan and land use assumptions on the transportation systems of adjacent jurisdictions.

Island County Transportation Element

f. Demand management strategies.

Island County Transportation Element

6. Rural Element (counties only)

Island County Transportation Element

a. Delineation of area to which rural element applies (lands not designated for urban growth or as agriculture, forest or mineral resource lands of long-term significance.)

Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter III Future Land Use - Rural Element Designations and Future Land Use Map

b. Land uses permitted that are compatible with the rural character of such lands and provide for a variety of rural densities.

Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Rural Residential, Rural Center, Rural Village, Business/Office Park, Light Manufacturing, Rural Service, Rural, Rural Forest and Rural Agriculture

D. URBAN GROWTH AREAS

1. Area designated (if any) outside or incorporated city boundaries already characterized by urban growth or adjacent to territory already characterized by urban growth which is designated as urban growth area(s), shall include urban densities, greenbelts, and open areas.

none identified

2. Role of county-wide policies in designating urban growth area(s).

Policy Plan/Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Non-municipal Urban Growth Areas

3. Provisions adopted for joint county and city planning within urban growth area(s).

Policy Plan and Land Use Element, Chapter IV Goals and Policies - Urban Growth Areas

E. SITING PUBLIC FACILITIES

Adopted September 28, 1998
1. Process or criteria for identification of essential public facilities, including those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities, state or regional transportation facilities, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities and in-patient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities and group homes.


3. Provisions which address the situation dictate that no comprehensive plan may preclude the siting of essential public facilities.

4. Integration of relevant county-wide policies.

F. REVIEWS

1. Natural resource lands - Review of designations and regulations for consistency with comprehensive plans. Natural lands include agricultural lands, forest lands, and mineral resource lands.

2. Critical areas - Review of designations and regulations for consistency with comprehensive plans. Critical areas include: (a) wetlands, (b) aquifer recharge areas, (c) fish and wildlife conservation areas, (d) frequently flooded areas, and (e) geologically hazardous areas.

G. INVENTORIES

1. Identification of open space corridors within and between urban growth areas, including lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails and connection or critical areas.

2. Identification of lands useful for public purposes, such as utility corridors, transportation corridors, landfills, sewage treatment facilities, stormwater management facilities, recreation, schools, and other public uses.

H. CONSISTENCY

1. Internal - Plan provisions, if any, which describes how parts of the plans fit together, such as consistency of plan elements and future land use map, consistency of land use and capital facilities elements.

2. Interjurisdictional.