

FINAL UPDATE TO THE  
***FREELAND SUB AREA PLAN***

*AN ELEMENT OF THE  
ISLAND COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN*

NOVEMBER, 2007 VOLUME 1/2



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## ***FREELAND SUB AREA PLAN***

The Freeland Sub Area Plan is an integrated element of the Island County Comprehensive Plan. Elements of the Comprehensive Plans that should be consulted when using this document include the following:

1. **Policy Plan and Land Use Element**  
Island County Policy Plan/Land Use Element – Freeland Sub Area Plan
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. **Natural Lands Element**  
Island County Natural Lands Plan
6. **Parks and Recreation Element**  
Island County Parks and Recreation Plan Update
7. **Transportation Element**  
Island County Transportation Plan Update  
Island County Non-Motorized Trail Plan  
Six Year Road Program
8. **Utilities Element**  
Island County
9. **Capital Facilities Element**  
Island County Capital Facilities Plan  
Six Year Capital Facilities Improvement Program

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## ***LIST OF ACRONYMS***

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- BICC:** Board of Island County Commissioners
- 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
- GMA:** Growth Management Act
- GWMP:** Ground Water Management Program
- ICC:** Island County Code
- LID:** Local Improvement District
- LOS:** Level of Service
- NMUGA:** Non Municipal Urban Growth Area
- OFM:** Washington State Office of Financial Management
- PRD:** Planned Residential Development
- RAID:** Rural Area of Intense Development
- RCW:** Revised Code of Washington
- SMA:** Shoreline Management Act
- SMP:** Shoreline Master Program
- USFWS:** United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- WAC:** Washington Administrative Code
- WDFW:** Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

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## ***SUMMARY***

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*November, 2007*

“FREELAND’S MISSION IS CREATING A VIBRANT AND SAFE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE LOVE TO VISIT, LEARN, WORK, AND LIVE.”

## *A VISION FOR FREELAND*

Freeland in the year 2020 is a comfortable waterfront community that is known for its unique character and expansive views of the surrounding environment.

Surrounding the NMUGA boundary are farms, open fields and forest land. Within the sub area, well thought out and consistently administered development regulations have influenced quality infill that is both regionally compatible and locally unique. Views have been preserved for all to enjoy, with parks and public areas sprinkled throughout offering a variety of recreational opportunities to Freeland residents. Residents are offered a multitude of housing choices that are both architecturally intriguing and affordable to the average person.

Freeland is a community where people live, work and shop. The central commercial core retains small town character, offering mixed-use living, a vibrant and healthy downtown, and a diverse array of retail, dining, employment, and cultural opportunities. Freeland residents encourage economic development by welcoming diverse economic growth that provides satisfying and stable jobs. Commercial development along Main Street has been incorporated in a tasteful fashion with appropriate landscaping, such as drought-resistant native plants, mature trees, street amenities, and public art; building design balances business opportunity with security and aesthetic values. Outdoor lighting is respectful of neighbors and protects the regional view of the night sky.

School aged children and senior citizens share a pronounced appreciation for Freeland’s history. Community groups work with property owners to document past and future generations.

Freeland has committed to continually reducing traffic, conserving resources and protecting regionally important environmental systems. Freeland’s non municipal urban growth area has sewer capacity to accommodate Island County’s growth targets. The sewer system has been phased cost-effectively, minimizes potential harm to the environment, and provides higher water quality and infiltration instead of increased runoff. Improvements to Freeland’s Main Street have been coordinated with both sewer and stormwater infrastructure upgrades. Water quality in Holmes Harbor ensures that conditions are suitable and safe for recreational shellfish harvest, swimming, and wading. Residents are well educated and committed to aquifer recharge, and protection of groundwater resources is a high priority.

Transportation alternatives exist, putting less reliance on automobiles. Infrastructure has been developed that balances the needs of motorized, non-motorized, and transit modes of transport, particularly along Main Street. Parking and transit locations are adequate and consolidated throughout the sub area.

Island County, Washington Department of Transportation, Island Transit, The Freeland Water & Sewer District, the Washington Department of Health, and all other agencies cooperate in developing creative and innovative solutions to required changes in capital facilities, future growth management, and environmental stewardship. In the past, and into the future, both available infrastructure and an overwhelming sense of community encourage attractive options for future growth in the sub area.

These ideas are the basis of the goals and policies developed within the following Freeland Sub Area Plan.

## ***CRAFTING THE FREELAND SUB AREA PLAN***

Island County's 1998 Comprehensive Plan designated the community of Freeland as a Rural Area of Intense Development (RAID). As a RAID, the Freeland area has some urban characteristics, such as density and variety of existing land uses, but not others, such as adopted land use plans, the provision of a number of urban services, or the ability to incorporate. The community of Freeland and Island County are now working together to consider designating Freeland as a Non Municipal Urban Growth Area (NMUGA), allowing local citizens and County officials to create, adopt, and implement a sub area plan and development regulations to encourage compact urban development in designated areas.

The community members in Freeland were highly involved in crafting the 2004 Draft Freeland Sub Area Plan. From January 1999 to May 2004, the sub area planning committee held 78 public sessions, and public input has been solicited through workshops, written testimony, newspaper articles, and other general input.

At the beginning of 2005, the Director of Island County Planning and Community Development determined that data in the Freeland area Stormwater Plan was insufficient to allow the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Sub Area Plan to be issued. Further public comment and progress on the Sub Area Plan was then put on hold until key issues for "protecting the natural and built environments of the Freeland Sub Area" could be addressed.

Since then, a number of significant steps have already been taken to prepare plans concerning water quality of Holmes Harbor and infrastructure for sewer and stormwater in Freeland. In 2005, Island County completed the Freeland Comprehensive Sewer Plan and Engineering Report/Facility Plan, which was adopted by the Board of Island County Commissioners in March 2006.<sup>1</sup> Since 2006, when the Department of Health closed the south end of Holmes Harbor to recreational uses (shellfish harvest, wading, and swimming) due to fecal coliform contamination detected during a shoreline sanitary survey, the Board of Island County Commissioners has adopted a series of ordinances to clean the Harbor and ensure that prior recreational uses can be resumed. These ordinances established both a Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program for Non-Tidal Waters<sup>2</sup> and the South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection District and also adopted the South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection Program.<sup>3</sup> The Island County Public Works Department also has a Final Draft Freeland Comprehensive Drainage Plan which was prepared in April of 2005.

This version of the Draft Freeland Sub Area Plan incorporates data and information from these plans and studies.

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<sup>1</sup> March 20, 2006. Resolution #C-149-05/R-58-05, Adoption of Freeland Comprehensive Sewer Plan and Engineering Report/Facility Plan, a conditional approval conditioned that Freeland be designated as an urban growth area.

<sup>2</sup> April 24, 2006. Ordinance #C-22-06 (PLG-003-06)

<sup>3</sup> March 5, 2007. Ordinance #C-14-07 (PLG-003-07) and Exhibit B

## ***SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED GOALS AND POLICIES***

Application of the Sub Area Plan concept to the long-range needs of Freeland 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 the Implementation Chapter.

This plan organizes goals and policies under five topic areas: Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Economic Development, and Capital Facilities. Policies in the Land Use section also include policy language for each of the proposed new land use zones within the NMUGA. The analysis and background information supporting all policies and goals can be found in the corresponding chapters.

### **Land Use Chapter Goals and Policies**

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#### **Future Growth Planning Area**

**Goal:**

Provide areas within a Future Growth Planning Area for municipal Urban Growth Area expansion, which will allow for the future development of urban densities in an effective manner.

**Policies:**

A. Develop policies that encourage low-density development that is designed in such a manner so as not to preclude future urban development.

#### **Population and Growth Distribution**

**Goal:**

Achieve a staged, orderly, and distributed development pattern to foster a high quality living environment for all persons while achieving the goals of the Growth Management Act. Preserve Freeland's unique identity as a small urban enclave located within a larger rural setting by encouraging a style and type of development that is urban in nature but that also promotes a rural appearance, feel, and lifestyle.

**Policies:**

A. Accommodate the projected full-time resident population for Freeland of 4000 by the year 2020 in a manner that protects the established character of neighborhoods, preserves environmental quality, and allows for the efficient, orderly, and economic growth of the community.

B. Residential densities and commercial uses already exist at an urban level, yet, amidst this small urban community, a rural appearance and character exists. Future urban development should continue to promote, preserve, and enhance the existing rural character of Freeland.

C. Encourage development to occur in a manner that allows for the efficient and economical provision of public services and facilities.

D. Encourage infill within the Freeland NMUGA.

## **Environmental Quality**

### **Goal:**

Safeguard the natural environment as integrated systems where the land, water, and air resources interact creating a balanced environment for all life in the Puget Sound basin.

### **Policies:**

A. Preserve Freeland's environmental quality through the careful use of land, water, and air resources. Expand the range of "reasonable uses" and innovative alternatives to development techniques. Incentives and engineering should be explored and offered to properties containing critical areas.

B. Encourage combining critical areas with public spaces and parks when the quality and function of the critical area is not degraded or compromised by such a combination.

C. Preserve a high level of air quality.

D. Emphasis should be given to alternative forms of transportation (public transit, car pools, bicycle and pedestrian sidewalks, and trails), decreasing dependency on the single occupant automobile.

E. Promote non-polluting alternatives to wood burning, such as solar heating and chipping, instead of burning slash.

F. Conserve energy by encouraging efficient consumption and proper land use management.

G. Promote education, guidance, and assistance by governmental and non-governmental organizations in employing energy conservation practices and the use of renewable energy technologies.

H. Recycling of wastes and use of recycled or reused materials should be encouraged.

I. A watershed management action plan and policy should be developed at the landscape, rather than parcel, level.

J. Use of gray and treated black water should be encouraged, provided treatment design meets public health stands.

K. Transportation systems and land use patterns should 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.

L. Government services should be sited to minimize consumer travel.

M. When converting land to a use that requires water availability, Island County should 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.

N. Island County should encourage developments and structures with energy conservation technologies.

O. High intensity lighting is discouraged, but where necessary should be shielded from adjacent properties and roads and shielded and directed down to reduce impacts to the dark sky.

P. The South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection Program should be adhered to in order to ensure safe and suitable water quality levels in Holmes Harbor.

Q. Island County's additional stormwater and surface water requirements for Critical Drainage Areas should be followed.

### **NMUGA proposed zone: Business General**

#### **Definition:**

The "Business General" classification is intended for lands in and around the Freeland commercial core on which general commercial development exists or is desirable in the future, including a broad range of commercial, retail, light manufacturing, and service uses. Light manufacturing is defined as food processing or the processing, manufacture, assembly, treatment, packaging, incidental storage, distribution, or sales of light and small items made mostly from previously prepared materials; light manufacturing includes operations which do not create noise, smoke, odor, vibration or other objectionable nuisances to the extent that they are detrimental to surrounding uses. Residential dwelling units may be permitted in the proposed Business General zone when they are secondary to the primary uses in that zone.

#### **Goals:**

A. Promote the orderly and attractive development of Freeland so it can continue its role as a commercial service center providing retail, business, and professional services for the Freeland and greater South Whidbey community. Focus should be on development that serves the needs of area residents.

B. Provide employment and entrepreneurial economic development opportunities to the people of South Whidbey Island.

C. Diminish the pressure for urban type general commercial development in the rural areas of South Whidbey Island.

#### **Policies:**

A. The Business General (BG) zone should support the Freeland Village zone by encouraging the use of architectural styles that reflect the emerging character of Freeland.

B. Development in the BG zone should be functional for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and the businesses located in this zone.

C. In order to reduce pavement areas and increase pervious surfaces, development of joint parking areas serving multiple commercial establishments is encouraged. Parking should be located to the side or rear of buildings.

D. Landscape plans and visual analyses should be required for all new projects. Buffering and/or screening standards should be developed and implemented in all new development and redevelopment projects.

E. Landscaping should be installed to soften the scale of buildings and parking areas, provide continuity, and provide buffers, where appropriate. Project designs should include streetscape planning to progress toward implementation of Freeland's adopted long term street and highway corridor concepts. All lighting and signage should comply with adopted design standards and avoid impacts to surrounding properties and roadways. Parking areas should include appropriate lighting and landscaping including trees. Internally illuminated signs should not be allowed.

F. Living accommodations above or behind business activities are encouraged.

G. Infill and/or re-development of lands in the BG designation should be oriented towards light manufacturing, retail/commercial and service uses. Commercial storage and mini-storage uses should not be allowed.

### **NMUGA proposed zone: Business Office**

#### **Definition:**

Business Office areas are designated for business and professional uses with little or no retail sales.

#### **Goal:**

Provide a professional office environment that incorporates quality design, ample landscaping, and pedestrian connections to neighboring properties and uses.

#### **Policies:**

A. Pedestrian access to the Freeland Village and neighboring residential areas, parks, and other public facilities, such as the library, is encouraged.

B. Living accommodations above or behind business activities are encouraged.

C. Clustered one, two, and three-story buildings with outdoor community areas are preferred over single large structures.

D. Parking should be visually shielded by locating parking to the side or rear of properties and by landscaping and features such as berms, low walls, or a combination of these features. Parking areas should include low lighting standards and landscaping.

E. Mixtures of one, two, and three-story buildings with pitched roofs are preferred. Blank walls should also be avoided by using windows and doorways, building articulation, and/or other architectural features. Building placement should be staggered to prevent row type development.

F. Landscaping should be installed to soften the scale of buildings and parking areas and to provide green spaces or buffers between uses and buffering from roadways.

G. Development of joint parking areas serving multiple office buildings is encouraged.

### **NMUGA proposed zone: Freeland Village**

#### **Definition:**

The Freeland Village is intended for mixed commercial and residential development, with design objectives that foster a pedestrian friendly village atmosphere.

#### **Goal:**

Provide for retail sales as well as personal and business services in a pedestrian friendly environment that is reminiscent of a “traditional” small town. Residential development above street level businesses, pedestrian amenities, and outdoor gathering places are encouraged.

#### **Policies:**

A. Development should emphasize clustering of uses and buildings whose compact design fosters a village atmosphere and orientation.

B. Efforts should be made to encourage a system of motorized and non-motorized transportation facilities within the Freeland Village lands and with adjacent areas.

C. Development should include outdoor common areas, shared landscaping, street trees, benches, and other general design features that foster a village atmosphere. Pedestrian access should be provided in the form of sidewalks, trails, and pedestrian alleys.

D. Buildings should be placed close to street frontages. The scale and design of the buildings should foster a village atmosphere.

E. Joint use parking areas should be encouraged. In lieu of on-site requirements, parking facilities that serve the Village should be allowed outside the Village zone as long as convenient access is provided.

F. Those portions of Main Street located in the FV area should be scaled back with landscape trees and medians and measures to slow traffic are encouraged. Streets developed in the future should be small-scale one way streets with little or no on-street parking.

## **NMUGA proposed zone: Industrial**

### **Definition:**

Industrial is defined by business use or activity at a scale greater than light manufacturing<sup>4</sup> involving manufacturing, fabrication, assembly warehousing and/or storage. Examples of industrial uses include sawmills and boat building.

### **Goal:**

Provide areas for industry and manufacturing, assembly, fabrication, storage, wholesaling, and related activities. Regulations should be developed that mitigate the adverse impacts to the community, including, but not limited to, glare, noise, pollution, odor, view, and aesthetics.

### **Policies:**

- A. Industrial areas should be compatible with uses in adjacent land use designations.
- B. Industrial development should be designed and built in a manner that will have minimal environmental and community impacts. Impacts should be mitigated through design, technology, and landscaping to reduce air, noise, odor, light, and water pollution. If impacts can not be mitigated, then the proposed use should not be allowed.
- C. Structures should be arranged on the site to provide expansion space and adequate buffers.
- D. Provide adequate buffers by providing landscaping, berming, and screening between dissimilar uses and streets.
- E. Common or shared ingress and egress points, as well as internal circulation systems for vehicles and pedestrians, should be required.
- F. Access to public transportation should be provided.

## **NMUGA proposed zone: Mixed Use**

### **Definition:**

Mixed Use is a designation that allows for a variety of residential, commercial, and light manufacturing uses within a specified mixed-use land use category. Each mixed-use category should include specific uses that are defined as primary and others as secondary.

Three sub categories of the mixed-use designation are identified which serve to provide different functions within the Freeland community. These sub-categories are Mixed Use Transitional, Mixed Use Residential, and Mixed Use Commercial.

Mixed Use Transitional (MX-T) serves as a transitional area between one land use designation and another. It serves as a means of softening the impacts that may occur between areas that would not normally be considered compatible if they were to share a boundary.

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<sup>4</sup> Definition for “light manufacturing” can be found as a part of the definition for Business General on page 6.

Mixed Use Residential (MX-R) areas are those areas where the character of the neighborhood is primarily residential but where specified low impact non-residential uses are encouraged. In these areas, non-residential uses may only be permitted as secondary to a dominant residential use within a project. Non-residential uses should be limited in scope, scale, and proportion and must be associated with, and primarily serve, the primary residential development and its occupants.

Mixed Use Commercial (MX-C) areas are pedestrian friendly areas where residential and nonresidential uses within a project compliment each other. These areas typically provide for commercial development opportunities with an integrated residential component.

**Goals:**

**MX-T**

Provide a transition zoning classification between industrial and residential land uses that provides some mechanisms for protecting historically existing and on-going industry from future incompatible uses while preserving some residential development options.

**MX-R**

Provide a zoning classification where the tract size, location, topography, infrastructure, and other such criteria indicate the feasibility of incorporating and permitting a limited scope of complementary and supportive non-residential uses into residential development projects.

**MX-C**

Provide a zoning classification where commercial uses are the primary land use and that allow for a residential component that is complimentary to the commercial use.

**Policies:**

A. Development of land in all mixed-use classifications should be designed to be compatible with uses permitted in surrounding lands in different classifications.

B. Development of projects in all mixed-use classifications should include provisions for integrated pedestrian circulation such as sidewalks, trails, and alleyways. Project design guidelines should also encourage the establishment of community open space and recreation areas and clustering as appropriate for the type of uses proposed. Standards for scale, bulk, size, and proportion between the primary and secondary uses should be adopted that are consistent with the purposes and goals of this section.

C. In the MX-R classification, non-residential uses should be secondary to and associated with the primary residential use and character of the neighborhood. Commercial uses should be located, sized, and designed on a site so they do not become the primary attraction of the integrated project. The MX-R zone should have provisions that prevent its use for the establishment of significant retail commercial or industrial uses or other uses likely to invite significant outside traffic into the residential community.

D. Landscaping, sidewalks, and trails on the border of any zone should be designed to fit into the land use in the neighboring zone(s). Efforts should be made to encourage continuity.

E. Development of joint parking areas serving multiple commercial and residential buildings is encouraged.

F. Parking areas should include appropriate lighting and landscaping, including trees.

G. Clustered buildings with outdoor community areas are encouraged to provide for community interaction.

H. Multiple-family dwellings and planned residential-type development combining both commercial and residential aspects should generally be encouraged in the applicable mixed-use zones.

### **NMUGA proposed zone: Recreation**

#### **Definition:**

The Recreation classification is intended for land where special development patterns may occur due to the mix of public/private recreation and private residences. Development within this district should include a broad range of residential densities and non-residential uses such as retail, service, and commercial uses associated with recreation that would complement residential use.

#### **Goals:**

A. Promote the orderly and attractive development of Freeland and recreational uses by providing opportunities for development of services associated with the recreation use.

B. Encourage the development of facilities to promote the recreation as a recreational node, including lodging.

C. Provide recreational and employment opportunities to the residents of South Whidbey.

D. Incorporate a variety of housing choices for residents of Freeland in the zone.

#### **Policies:**

A. Design of recreational, residential, and commercial facilities in this zone should be integrated and should focus on the recreational and environmental attributes of Freeland and the surrounding area.

B. Promote an aesthetic environment that builds off of the existing landscape and focuses on building and landscaping design as well as development of well screened joint parking areas and limited paved areas.

C. Promote a variety of housing. Encourage living accommodations as secondary uses to business activities.

D. Development should be aesthetically pleasing and functional for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, residents, and the businesses located in this zone.

**NMUGA proposed zone: High Density Residential**

**Definition:**

The High Density Residential (HD) designation is intended for multiple-family dwellings, primarily apartment buildings, and apartment complexes at a density of no more than 10 (ten) dwelling units per acre.

**Goal:**

Provide an area of higher density housing while ensuring full access to services and blending with adjacent land use designations.

**Policies:**

A. The HD classification is intended to create an area that allows for more efficient use of land while still allowing access to water and forest sightlines that are part of Freeland's identity.

B. Developments that preserve open space while achieving the highest permitted density are encouraged.

C. High density developments should be linked with sidewalks or pedestrian pathways to promote non-motorized access and neighborhood interaction.

D. Roof heights and building styles should be varied to prevent the appearance of large overwhelming complexes. Blank walls should be avoided by the use of windows and doorways, landscaping, and/or other architectural and design features.

E. Transit and non-motorized transportation alternatives should be made easily accessible for residents of high density developments.

**NMUGA proposed zone: Medium Density Residential**

**Definition:**

Medium Density Residential (MD) lands are intended for single-family dwellings at a density of no more than 6 (six) dwelling units per acre, including single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes.

**Goal:**

Provide for a variety of housing choices in a quiet neighborhood setting.

**Policies:**

A. The MD classification should be developed as a primarily residential area. Non-residential uses allowed in this area should complement the primarily residential nature of the neighborhood.

- B. Appropriately scaled community facilities, such as fire stations, clubhouses, and associated recreational amenities should be allowed to serve the community.
- C. Building placement and height restrictions should promote neighborhood characteristics.
- D. Blank walls should be avoided by using windows and doorways and/or other architectural features.
- E. Sidewalk placement and design should promote neighborhood interaction.
- F. Roadway and other public landscaping, including the use of tree or shrub lined medians, should create the appearance of a continuous neighborhood.
- G. All new development should provide adequate off-street parking.
- H. Outdoor storage of recreational vehicles, boats, and other similar large pieces of equipment should be appropriately screened from view.

**NMUGA proposed zone: Low Density Residential**

**Definition:**

Low Density Residential (LD) designations are intended for single-family residences and duplexes at a density of no more than 3 (three) dwelling units per acre.

**Goal:**

Provide a quiet neighborhood environment.

**Policies:**

- A. The LD classification should be developed as a residential area. Non-residential uses allowed in this zone should complement the primarily residential nature of the neighborhood.
- B. Appropriately scaled community facilities, such as fire stations, clubhouses, and associated recreational amenities should be allowed to serve the community.
- C. Storage of recreational vehicles, boats, and other similar large pieces of equipment should be appropriately screened from view.

**NMUGA proposed zone: Rural Estate**

**Definition:**

The Rural Estate zone is established with the intention of preserving the existing relatively low-density single-family land-use pattern, limiting lot density to no more than 1 (one) dwelling unit per acre.

**Goal:**

Provide a low-density neighborhood environment.

**Policies:**

- A. Encourage appropriately scaled and sited structures to preserve existing rural landscape.
- B. Promote development primarily as a residential area with non-residential uses that should complement the primarily residential nature of the neighborhood.

**NMUGA proposed zone: Reserve**

**Definition:**

This designation consists of parcels that are in public ownership such as parks and public utilities.

**Goal:**

Preserve the area for public access and open space.

**Policies:**

- A. Trails, corridors, and easements should be developed to connect public areas to other parts of Freeland.
- B. Encourage new development to include open space and recreational areas that connect with existing reserve areas.

## **Transportation Chapter Goals and Policies**

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### **Goal:**

Provide for a safe, connected, and economically robust commercial environment along the Highway Corridor that fits within the natural and physical landscape of Freeland and that preserves the scenic qualities of SR 525.

### **Policies:**

#### General

- A. All new commercial, multi-family, or residential projects containing two or more dwelling units or modifications, renovations, and other improvements to same should be subject to a design review and the provisions of the overlay designation.
- B. Preservation of the natural scenic qualities enjoyed by those traveling on SR 525 should be given high priority when siting uses and structures.
- C. Development policies in the highway corridor should include incentives and options for landowners and developers to encourage attractive development along the highway corridor. These incentives could include increased densities in return for increased setbacks or other site plan considerations.
- D. Where possible, new residential subdivisions on parcels that are adjacent to the highway corridor should provide adequate tree retention and buffering in order to screen future residential construction.
- E. Where buffering is not possible, meandering road layout should be encouraged.
- F. Where buffering is not possible, parcel layout should strive to vary the orientation of residential structures throughout the subdivision.
- G. Deviations from roadway levels of service, in terms of carrying capacity and intersection performance, should not be exceeded without proper mitigation.

#### Future Growth Planning Area

- A. Preservation of the natural scenic qualities enjoyed by those traveling on SR 525 should be given high priority when siting uses and structures.
- B. To the fullest extent practicable, development within the Future Growth Planning Area should provide adequate screening by means of tree retention, buffering, landscaping, or other natural means that will hide development.
- C. On those parcels adjacent to the highway with significant stands of timber, straight driveways that allow the SR 525 traveler to see into the site and view the use should be avoided.
- D. New structures and uses should be adequately set back from the highway.

E. The siting of structures and uses on landscapes that are open and void of significant stands of timber should take into account the views and vistas enjoyed by those traveling on SR 525. To the fullest extent practicable, new structures and uses should be located to avoid blocking scenic views or vistas.

F. Utilities should be located underground wherever possible.

G. Signage associated with residential uses should be limited to monument signs that identify the name of the development and shall be located at the main entrance.

H. Landowners should be expected to keep their property, whether commercial or residential, clean and free of trash, garbage, or junk. This includes burning barrels, dilapidated automobiles, and any other object commonly understood to be junk, trash, or garbage. Junk does not include implements associated with agricultural activities.

#### Visual Impact: Setback, Vegetation, and Landscaping

A. To the fullest extent practical, existing significant trees and under-story vegetation should be preserved and incorporated into the landscape design of development.

B. Landscaping and design standards, in addition to those established in the underlying zoning district, should be developed and applied to all new development or redevelopment within the overlay district. Particular attention should be paid to those parcels that are adjacent to SR 525.

C. A primary purpose of landscaping on parcels that are adjacent to SR 525 is to “soften” the appearance of the use and provide for visual buffering between the highway and the use. Landscaping consists of trees, plants, berms, and other natural features as should be prescribed in specific design guidelines.

D. Buildings should be designed in accordance with specific design guidelines that address such aspects as color, style, material, and location. Corporate and franchise architecture should fit the character and desired appearance of Freeland.

E. Building placement and scale should be consistent with the image of Freeland as a village. Several buildings or the use of modulation and design elements that give the appearance of smaller street frontages are favored over single building masses with large monolithic faces visible along street frontages.

F. Parking should be adequately screened from travelers of SR 525.

G. Utilities should be located underground whenever possible.

H. Storage, loading dock facilities, and garbage areas should be enclosed with building materials complementary to the primary structures or landscaped such that they are not visible.

### Signage/Lighting

- A. No off-site outdoor advertising signs or structures should be permitted. No on-site outdoor advertising signs, except such signs or structures which pertain directly to permitted commercial uses on that site and which are located on or immediately adjacent to such uses, should be permitted.
- B. Excessively tall, large, internally illuminated, and/or neon signs should be prohibited.
- C. Lighting should be limited to that necessary for safety and directional concerns.
- D. Lighting of individual uses should not be directed towards the highway nor should illumination encroach upon the SR 525 right-of-way.
- E. Small-scale signage that informs the traveler of available commercial services within Freeland and that directs the traveler to those services is the preferred form of signage along the highway.
- F. Signage that is intended to attract the attention of those traveling on SR 525 should be sized relative to its distance from the highway.
- G. Signage that greets the traveler to Freeland should be placed at all designated "Gateways to Freeland."
- H. Signage associated with residential uses should be limited to monument signs that identify the name of the development and should be located at the main entrance.

### Traffic Flow/Safety

- A. Highway access should be constructed so as to minimize the number of access points to SR 525. Turn lanes and collector routes are strongly encouraged over individual access points.
- B. Strategies should be developed that encourage and enable consolidation of existing points of access.
- C. Joint use parking facilities is strongly encouraged.
- D. The safe movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists is a primary consideration in design guidelines for the area.
- E. Sight triangles on corner lots should not be obstructed. Adequate visibility at major intersections in the corridor should be ensured by increasing the mandated size of sight triangles where necessary.
- F. Roadway levels of service, in terms of carrying capacity and intersection performance, should not be exceeded without proper mitigation.

### Biking/Hiking Trail

A. Biking and/or hiking trails should be developed in cooperation with Washington DOT, Island County and private property owners. These trails should allow for connectivity between other underlying zones.

B. The bike/hike trail should be equally suitable for commuters and recreational users.

### Trash/Garbage

A. Landowners should be expected keep their property, whether commercial or residential, clean and free of trash, garbage, or junk. This includes burning barrels, dilapidated automobiles, and any other object commonly understood to be junk, trash, or garbage.

B. Garbage and trash receptacles that are associated with commercial uses should be adequately screened from the highway.

C. It is recognized that for the commercial area between SR 525 and Main Street that most of the businesses will be facing Main Street and will have their back to the highway. It is therefore especially important in this area to ensure that storage of garbage should fully screened from the highway.

### **Circulation**

#### **Goal:**

Provide for an efficient transportation network that addresses vehicular, pedestrian, and non-motorized modes individually, as well as their interconnectivity with each other.

#### **Policies:**

A. Emphasis should be placed on finalizing and implementing the 2006 Main Street Concept Study for the Business Village zone, which focuses on encouraging the use of non-motorized and pedestrian friendly modes of transport.

B. Functioning, accessible safe pathways, sidewalks, and trails – which are designed to retain rural visual character and are constructed from durable, cost effective materials – should be included in all traffic planning and development plans.

C. Priority should be placed on ensuring that the various modes of transport are interconnected with each other.

D. As underground utilities are installed – such as water, sewer, stormwater, power, phone, and television – sidewalks, pathways, and trails should be included in the same right-of-way in a coordinated planned effort.

E. With increased densities and intensities of land use in the Freeland area, the development regulations should include standards for these improvements, with developers and landowners each paying their fare share.

## **Parking Standards**

### **Goal:**

Provide parking areas that are safe for both vehicle and pedestrian traffic with minimal visual and circulatory impact.

### **Policies:**

A. Joint-use and off-site parking areas should be encouraged, especially on the periphery of Freeland, removing automobile traffic from the Freeland core.

B. Landscaping should be required to reduce the visual impact of parking.

C. Well-marked pedestrian pathways through parking areas should be required.

## **Housing Chapter Goals and Policies**

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### **Housing Standards**

#### **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. Clustering should be encouraged as a means of protecting and preserving critical areas.
- C. 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.
- D. Residential developments should require a landscaping plan that requires the retention of existing native vegetation.
- E. Encourage and allow mother-in-law and guest cottage development as a means of infill.
- F. Permit the use of open space areas in residential developments for trails and walkways, and, where desired by applicants, permit trail systems through open space areas to neighboring properties as connections to other trail systems.
- G. Provide for a variety of residential densities.
- H. Limit overall area that can be developed for large lot residential development.
- I. Street yard setbacks should be based on road classifications.
- J. Lot size averaging is allowed in subdivisions and short plats.
- K. Designate the siting of water storage facilities by public water systems as permitted in all land use designation subject to screening requirements.

## **Economic Development Chapter Goals and Policies**

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### **Economic Development**

#### **Goal:**

Encourage diverse economic development within the capacities of natural resources, public services, and facilities. Economic Development strategies should include efforts to create opportunities for unemployed and disadvantaged residents as well as efforts to target areas experiencing insufficient economic growth. Job development should be focused on the retail, service, and manufacturing sectors but should acknowledge, as a basis for planning, that the goals of preserving rural lands and enhancing economic vitality are complementary and not mutually exclusive.

#### **Policies:**

- A. Encourage a variety of economic activities within appropriate areas of Freeland. These may include tourism, professional, information processing, and commercial development.
- B. Encourage economic activities that efficiently use the commercial land within Freeland.
- C. Promote attractive pedestrian friendly business areas through the use of design, landscaping, and unified walkways by finalizing and implementing the community suggestions outlined in the 2006 Main Street Concept Study.
- D. The range of permitted and conditional uses identified in each of the land use designations should compliment each other. Land uses that directly support “Primary” businesses should be identified, allowed, and cited within appropriate land use designations.
- E. Overall economic development with regional orientation should be pursued in cooperation with the private sector, targeting specific projects aimed at diversifying and stabilizing the economy.
- F. Retain existing businesses in the community and minimize obstacles to their expansion, where appropriate.
- G. The development of “living wage” employment opportunities is encouraged to reduce off-island commuting and to provide career opportunities.
- H. Pursue the development of a diversified economy that attracts business activities capable of injecting “new money” into the local economy (i.e. academic and research organizations, light industries, financial services, information processing, engineers, and home businesses) and which includes appropriate service industries such as health care and professional services.
- I. Commercial developments should be designed and located to provide goods and services in a convenient, safe, attractive, and environmentally responsible manner.

J. Marinas and water-related commercial uses should develop in accordance with the Shoreline Master Program.

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

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

M. Encourage home occupations and home industries.

N. Businesses that reduce commuting and make the Freeland economy less dependent on transportation should be encouraged.

O. Businesses and commercial developments should be designed to minimize conflicts with adjoining areas.

### **Historic Preservation**

#### **Goal:**

Identify Freeland's historic resources and protect and preserve these resources in a manner that respects their importance.

#### **Policies:**

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

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

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

### **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 within the community.

B. Provide for other small-scale recreation and tourist uses in the community, such as restaurants, wineries, and breweries on parcels of an appropriate size; all activities should be screened from the view of adjacent neighbors and the use should not disrupt the character of any surrounding permitted uses.

## Capital Facilities Chapter Goals and Policies

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### **Parks, Recreation, & Gathering Places Standards**

#### **Goal:**

Identify and satisfy community needs and wants related to the spaces used for recreation and public gatherings.

#### **Policies:**

A. Encourage development of Island County parks with a range of recreational facilities in and near the Freeland NMUGA.

B. Encourage developers to include open space and recreational facilities in new development and re-developed areas and/or participate in a fee-in-lieu-of arrangement or other mechanism developed for creating parks and open space.

C. Encourage public and private partnerships in planning and developing parks and open space.

### **Essential Public Facility Policies**

#### **Goal:**

Provide for the efficient and effective siting of essential public facilities.

#### **Policies:**

A. Provision should 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. Development regulations should be broad enough to allow for a variety of public facilities that are needed now and that will be needed to serve future populations by enabling their establishment in a wide variety of zoning designations.

B. Essential public facilities should be adequately defined in the development regulations so that different consideration should be given to facilities that provide for county-wide and regional needs from those that provide for the needs of the Freeland community.

C. The siting of major energy facilities, including throughput transmission facilities, should not be considered essential public facilities. Therefore, comprehensive plan policies, development regulations, and other local policies should apply to the siting of such facilities.

D. As a sole source aquifer, protection of Island County's ground water resources is a high priority. A centralized sewer system and a reclaimed water reuse system would provide significant protection to ground water resources and encourage improved recharging.

E. Implementation of centralized sewer and stormwater infrastructure will provide greater efficiency in the use of land by freeing up areas currently devoted to drainfields and stormwater collection facilities.

F. Centralized sewer, water, and stormwater systems will allow for increased densities and more intensive use of commercial and industrial land. Higher densities and more intense use of commercial and industrial land should allow for the more effective management of growth within South and Central Whidbey by enabling that growth to occur in a concentrated manner within the Freeland NMUGA.

G. Even with a centralized stormwater system, as much stormwater as possible should continue to be retained on site versus entering a central collection system. Efforts should be employed for each development that requires or encourages the reduction of impervious surfaces and methods for reducing stormwater runoff, particularly in designated Critical Drainage Areas.

H. Infrastructure associated with communication lines and facilities should be appropriately planned such that rights-of-way and easements are used efficiently and shared with other types of infrastructure.

I. New development and redevelopment should locate new utilities underground. Expansion of existing developments should be encouraged to locate existing utilities underground when feasible. In order to lessen the total amount of space utilized for infrastructure, sidewalks, trails, and other pedestrian corridors should be located adjacent to or in common easement with underground utilities.

## **Public Services**

### **Goal:**

Ensure that those public services necessary to support development are 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 and ensure that special consideration is afforded to Freeland, both under existing conditions as well as those anticipated in conjunction with future growth. 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.

## **Additional Policy and Goal Sections**

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### **Design Standards**

#### **Goal:**

Develop design standards that ensure an organized, cohesively designed community that also encourages development.

#### **Policies:**

- A. Develop architectural standards that are appropriate in appearance for Freeland. This should include outside finishing, roofing, siding materials, and colors with parameters set to encourage a type of style unique to Freeland.
- B. Development regulations should identify desired and discouraged design features.
- C. Lighting and signage standards should address commercial and residential uses separately.
- D. Lighting standards should be based on the use, type, style, and wattage of lighting as well as the time of day lighting will be used.
- E. Sign regulations should be based on the size of the building; location, type, and size of signs; density of signage; and evaluations of illumination in relation to property lines.
- F. Setbacks and height limitations should be specific to the commercial and residential zones due to the differences in goals.
- G. Standards for landscaping should be developed as a means of improving the aesthetic character of the use.
- H. A percentage of native plantings should be required to be included in landscaping plans.
- I. Stormwater runoff should be addressed through landscaping controls.

### **Government**

#### **Goal:**

Assure general public health, safety, and welfare without unduly jeopardizing the rights of individuals.

#### **Policies:**

- A. All levels of government should coordinate planning and decision making to ensure consistency with Freeland planning objectives.
- B. Comprehensive planning within Freeland should be adaptable to changing conditions.
- C. There should be efficient inter-departmental coordination on all major programs and projects to minimize unnecessary delays in public decision making.

D. Private property should not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners should be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.

E. Applications for permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictably.

D. Land use planning and decision making should be closely coordinated with federal, state, and local agencies to achieve the County's overall goals.



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# ***INTRODUCTION***

## ***OVERVIEW OF WORKPLAN***

The goals of the Sub Area Planning Committee from the beginning of its work were to:

1. Solicit and capture citizen input in a “bottom up” approach;
2. Provide for local involvement and control in the planning and decision making process;
3. Plan in a coordinated fashion that is consistent with the goals set forth in the Island County Comprehensive Plan; and
4. Meet State Growth Management Act requirements.

To meet these goals, the committee began identifying the primary issues that were relevant to the community of Freeland. Various public presentations and discussions were conducted as a way of informing the committee members and interested members of the public about key issues and the future plans of such agencies as Washington State Department of Transportation, United States Post Office, Island County Sheriff’s Department, etc. The committee then began an analysis of existing conditions within Freeland, both with respect to the built environment and the natural environment, in order to establish a baseline to aid future decision making and to gain a deeper understanding of their community. Logical boundaries were then established delineating neighborhoods within the study area which, in turn, were used to define general land use classifications. Policy language was then developed for each of the land use designations; these policies will become the framework for developing zoning and land development standards. What emerged met the test of public discussion and debate and fit with the Freeland community’s collective vision for the future.

This Plan, and its attendant goals, 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. Additional information from the Sub Area Planning Committee process can be found in the appendices for this document.

## ***PURPOSE AND COMPONENTS OF PLAN***

This Sub Area 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 and Freeland. It represents the community’s policy plan for growth through the year 2020.

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 formulation of a sub area plan that is responsive to the future needs and challenges of Freeland residents and provides local control is the primary objective of this planning effort. This plan will therefore be valuable in the following ways:

- This provides an implementation plan and defined policy statements which address the specific needs and desires of Freeland residents and business owners.

- This process provides a high level of local control and citizen participation as citizens create specific policy statements, implement those policies, and monitor their effectiveness.
- There will be a high level of confidence in the sub area plan because local citizens will have authored the policy statements.
- Public understanding of and participation in the planning process is facilitated by the straightforward character of the policy statements.
- Elected officials and their appointees become closely involved in the planning process through the 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 plan complies with the Island County Comprehensive Plan and the Washington State Growth Management Act.
- The plan incorporates information from recent reports regarding the plans for water quality, public health, and sewer and stormwater systems in Freeland.

### **Intent**

The intent of this plan is:

- To set goals and policies to guide growth in Freeland through the year 2020;
- To develop future land use patterns and maps;
- To develop goals and policies for each of the future land use designations that address identified needs, desired appearance, and the general public welfare and safety; and
- To establish a specific program for plan implementation including development regulations and administrative processes.

### **Themes**

Central themes that run throughout this sub area plan are:

- Citizen input is an essential part of the sub area 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. The only way to ensure the success of this sub area plan is if the community understands and believes in the adopted policy plan and implementing development regulations.

- Providing incentives for the development of affordable housing for the residents of Freeland and Island County is a priority of this plan.
- All residents of Island County benefit from the rural setting of Whidbey and Camano Island. Encouraging infill within Urban Growth Areas such as Freeland creates an attractive alternative for residents over the gradual conversion of rural lands to residential uses and low-density sprawl. Higher density residential development within the Freeland NMUGA is the preferred alternative to large lot development in order to ensure a tight, compact community and the ability to allow efficient functionality of the lands within the Freeland NMUGA.
- Providing landowners with incentives and development options which will allow for efficient development is essential to the success of this sub area plan. Encouraging clustering on lots that have an identified critical area will allow the protection of that critical area and will allow the land owner maximum use of the property given the applicable land use designation. These assets, under the owner's control, must be recognized as features that enhance the value of the property and incentives must be built into the development regulations which foster this idea. Likewise, installation of water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure will provide an improved mechanism to ensure a high level of public health and safety while increasing the usable amount of land on each parcel. For example, the 2005 Comprehensive Sewer Plan recommends a number of strategies that would benefit local environment by reducing the amount of ground water pumped out of the local aquifer and helping to replenish the aquifer. The Comprehensive Drainage Plan recommends stormwater management facilities that improve water quality and correct anticipated drainage problems associated with future development. Additionally, the South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection Program presents a strategy to identify and reduce or eliminate pollution sources that can adversely affect public health, shellfish, and other aquatic habitat.
- This planning effort places great importance on providing employment opportunities for an increasing population and allowing an increased percentage of residents to work in Freeland and not have to commute by means of highway or ferry to offset limited job opportunities in the Freeland area.

### ***ISLAND COUNTY'S COUNTY WIDE PLANNING POLICIES***

Island County adopted County Wide Planning Policies in 1998 outlining the cooperation required between the County and municipal Urban Growth Areas (UGA). These policies provide framework for both County and municipal comprehensive plans. Under these policies, the County and Municipality will jointly designate the UGA boundaries, promote rural character in the County, and promote public works facilities within the UGA. These facilities include: streets, bridges, and sidewalks; water storage, transmission and treatment facilities; and collection and treatment facilities for both sanitary and storm sewer. The County and Municipality can enter into Interlocal Agreements for joint review of certain development proposals and public projects.

These policies specifically recognize both Clinton and Freeland as having urban characteristics such that it may be appropriate to designate these areas as urban growth areas. In 1998, Policy

1.7 initiated a sub area planning process to determine potential UGA boundaries for Freeland in addition to urban land use designations and capital facilities necessary to provide urban services.

Policy 5 provides the coordinated framework for the County, Municipality, and utility service providers to ensure that development within Municipal Urban Growth Areas will be contiguous and orderly. These policies outline the preference for urban development within municipal boundaries; to this end, the expansion of rural areas of more intense development (RAIDs) is limited unless designated as Urban Growth Areas.

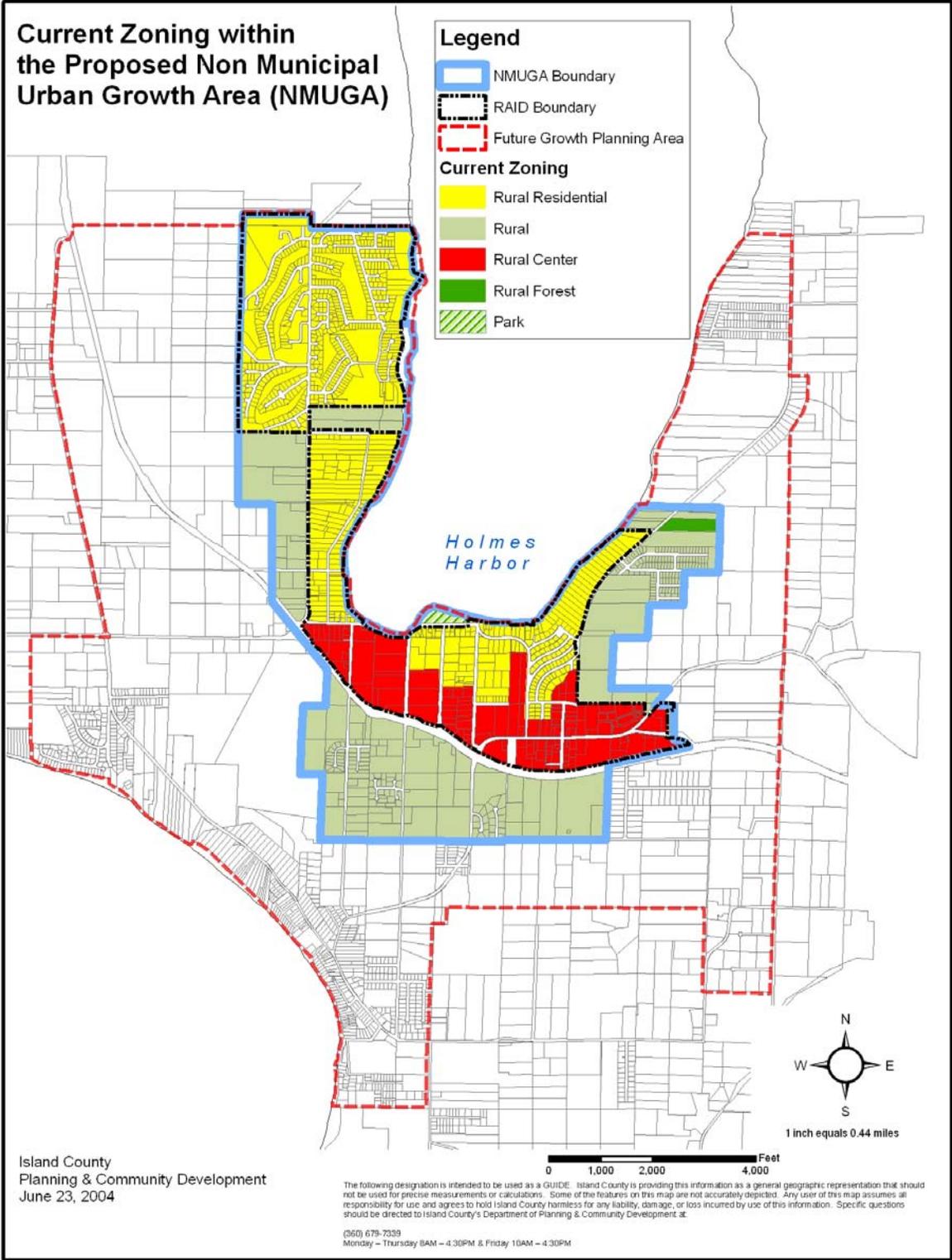
Policy 9 establishes procedures for the County and Municipality to project population and employment growth, to conduct long-term monitoring of population growth and distribution, and to increase non-military, locally-based employment. The population distribution objective of this policy is to increase the percentage of total county population growth occurring inside the urban growth areas – including potential non municipal urban growth areas in Freeland and Clinton – and also to decrease the percentage of total county population growth occurring in the rural areas.

### ***SUB AREA PLAN HISTORY***

On September 28, 1998, the Board of Island County Commissioners adopted the Island County Comprehensive Plan and implementing Development Regulations. Recent amendments to the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) had allowed Counties to identify existing areas of more intensive development by designating them something other than rural or urban. These are areas that look and feel urban – in terms of their existing density, uses and infrastructure – but have not necessarily adopted land use plans, infrastructure plans, and the funding mechanisms to provide urban services. These areas were to be defined by the existing development pattern and contained such that they are not allowed to expand, thereby eliminating sprawling development. The County adopted a future land use map that identified a number of residential, non-residential, and mixed use Rural Areas of Intense Development (RAIDs) in accordance with this new provision of the GMA.

With the adoption of the Island County Comprehensive Plan in 1998, the community of Freeland had been designated as a mixed use RAID that had both a commercial and a residential component. The RAID designation prohibits Freeland from expanding beyond what existed as of July 1, 1990, prohibits commercial development to occur beyond the scale or intensity that existed as of July 1, 1990, and limits the residential density to that which existed as of July 1, 1990 (*Refer to Map 1*). It also means that the regulations that govern land use in Freeland continue to be identical to those governing land uses everywhere else in the unincorporated areas of the county; adoption and implementation of zoning and land use regulations takes place in Coupeville, 18 miles north of Freeland. But the RAID designation, as it was applied to Freeland, was considered an interim measure while a sub area planning committee began a local effort to consider the designation of Freeland as a Non Municipal Urban Growth Area (NMUGA). The designation of Freeland as an NMUGA would allow local citizens to create, adopt, and implement a sub area plan and development regulations that would be entirely citizen initiated, thereby restoring local control to the citizens of Freeland. (*Refer to Map 1 for the extent of the NMUGA boundary.*)

**Current Zoning within  
the Proposed Non Municipal  
Urban Growth Area (NMUGA)**



**Map 1: Current Zoning**

In addition, designation of Freeland as an NMUGA is an important component of achieving numerous goals of the Island County Comprehensive Plan. These include: encouraging efficient compact urban development in designated areas which will promote preservation of rural character; increasing the overall efficiency and quality of such services as drinking water, sanitary sewer and stormwater; preserving agricultural and forestry lands; improving the economic viability of a thriving commercial and community center; and providing protection to critical areas and wildlife habitat.

A fundamental goal of the GMA is to create a land use scenario that promotes growth in urban areas and limits population growth and sprawl in rural areas. In order to achieve this goal, Island County has identified areas where urban growth is appropriate. In these areas, Island County intends to plan for attractive, compact, and walkable developments that create places which foster strong community bonds and civic engagement. In doing so, the County hopes to make living and working in such an urban-type area a desirable and viable option for residents of South Whidbey. The Island County Comprehensive Plan sets forth a goal of achieving a 50/50 urban rural split. With Freeland and Clinton as RAIDs, the current split is 70% growth to the rural area and 30% growth to the urban area. Achieving the 50/50 split would require the designation of Freeland and Clinton as an NMUGA. The NMUGA designation would allow a boundary to be defined based on a given population allocation rather than on the 1990 built environment and would allow more intensive residential densities within the defined boundary of the NMUGA. This designation would require the adoption and implementation of comprehensive plans that address the installation and funding source of area wide sewer, water, and stormwater systems. A number of significant steps have already been taken to prepare these plans and consider them for adoption. In 2005, Island County completed the Freeland Comprehensive Sewer Plan and Engineering Report/Facility Plan, which was adopted by the Board of Island County Commissioners in March 2006.<sup>5</sup> Since 2006, when the Department of Health closed the south end of Holmes Harbor to recreational uses (shellfish harvest, wading, and swimming) due to fecal coliform contamination detected during a shoreline sanitary survey, the Board of Island County Commissioners has adopted a series of ordinances to clean the Harbor and ensure that prior recreational uses can be resumed. These ordinances established both a Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program for Non-Tidal Waters<sup>6</sup> and the South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection District and also adopted the South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection Program.<sup>7</sup> The Island County Public Works Department also has a Final Draft Freeland Comprehensive Drainage Plan which was prepared in April of 2005.

An NMUGA designation would also require a Comprehensive Plan amendment for Freeland that complements the land use element including plans for transportation, parks, capital facilities, and affordable housing. Furthermore, implementing development regulations that address such standards as design review, zoning classifications, setbacks, density, bulk and size limitations, view corridors, and others would be adopted as a means of achieving the goals of this plan.

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<sup>5</sup> March 20, 2006. Resolution #C-149-05/R-58-05, Adoption of Freeland Comprehensive Sewer Plan and Engineering Report/Facility Plan, a conditional approval conditioned that Freeland be designated as an urban growth area.

<sup>6</sup> April 24, 2006. Ordinance #C-22-06 (PLG-003-06)

<sup>7</sup> March 5, 2007. Ordinance #C-14-07 (PLG-003-07) and Exhibit B

Following the adoption of the Island County Comprehensive Plan, the Board of Island County Commissioners assembled a community based Sub Area Planning Committee comprised of 9 local Freeland residents and business owners to prepare a comprehensive land use plan and infrastructure plans for sewer, water, and stormwater. The committee first convened in January 1999 and began conducting community meetings twice a month with periodic public workshops, which were used to present the public with completed phases of the plan and the various concepts that were being considered. Press releases, doorbelling efforts, and a survey were conducted as means of informing the local citizenry and encouraging citizens to become involved in the process. Identification of major planning problems, issues, and desires were the primary outcome of these meetings.

Since the adoption of the first Island County Zoning Ordinance in 1966, and subsequent major revisions in 1984 and 1998, Freeland has shared the same non-residential and residential zoning designations as the rest of the County. As a result, development proposals in the Freeland area were reviewed in the same manner as those proposed in areas as close as Clinton and as far away as Camano Island. Because Freeland is a unique area with issues that are very different than those anywhere else in the County, a customized land use plan, vision, and set of development regulations would foster a community and identity that will address specific issues, needs, desires, and concerns particular to the community. Because the sub area plan and development regulations will be co-authored by the residents of Freeland and Island County Planning & Community Development, the look, feel, and future of Freeland will be consistent with the goals of the local residents rather than the policies and rules established at the County level.

The sub area planning process began as an educational process for the committee members and citizens of the community. Presentations were made explaining state laws related to GMA, existing County Codes, rationale, and methodologies related to population projections and allocations, short, and long term plans of the Washington State Department of Transportation related to SR 525, existing stormwater, water and sewer facilities, and a host of other topics. These presentations continued throughout the entire process as specific questions and needs were identified. During this stage, work also began on an existing conditions report. The report identified existing neighborhoods, densities, uses, infrastructure, land improvements, critical areas, trails, etc. The engineering firm of R.W. Beck was contracted to conduct a comprehensive analysis of all existing infrastructure related to water, stormwater, and sewer facilities in order to establish a baseline for the completion of water, stormwater, and sewer comprehensive plans.

Following the existing conditions report, the committee began identifying possible alternative NMUGA boundaries, zoning boundaries, zoning designations, densities, and Comprehensive Plan land use designation goals and policies. A buildable lands analysis was conducted in order to further define the zoning boundaries and densities relative to the population allocation.

The County contracted the services of local engineers to prepare conceptual sewer, water, and stormwater plans. These plans were not engineered designs; rather, they served as a preliminary infrastructure plan that identified needs based on draft land use designations, densities, and a preliminary per parcel cost estimate for each utility.

In the course of preparing this plan, 78 public sessions were held by the sub area planning committee during the period of January 1999 to May 2004. A first draft of the Freeland Sub

Area Plan was sent to the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) and distributed to other state government agencies for review and comment. Comments were received from CTED and several of the other agencies.

Citizen involvement has occurred at every phase of plan development. Workshop sessions have been informal to allow maximum citizen input. Written testimony was solicited, collected, and considered. Public meetings were also held, newspaper articles written, and general input sought from every source.

### ***HISTORY OF FREELAND***

Freeland has frequently been described as being somewhat different in its historical development compared to other South Whidbey small pioneer communities. Freeland, located at the south end of Holmes Harbor, was settled in 1900 by a small group of socialists called the *Free Land Association*. There was plentiful fish and game, edible berries, crabs, and clams for the new arrivals. The socialist group was an offshoot of the Equality Colony in Skagit County. Each member of the Freeland Association was to have a 5-acre plot upon which he built his home and did his farming. The members paid \$10.00 down payment on the property; the rest of the payments were to be made from the profits of the cooperative enterprises.

The most important community contribution made by the socialists was the donation of 5 acres of land for a public park and community hall. The Freeland Community Hall was built on this property in 1914.

There is another building, beside the Freeland Hall, that has survived the 10 decades since it was built by a member of the Socialist colony. This is the “Widow’s Watch” house, which sits atop the hill overlooking Holmes Harbor and Mutiny Bay. It has been a Freeland landmark over the years and, in 1985, was owned by Robert and Manita Guidero who began restoring the venerable building. There is some dispute regarding its origin and history but there is general agreement that it was built about 1901 by William Sandford.

In the late 1800s, long before the arrival of the Socialist colony, a number of settlements arrived in Freeland. One of these families purchased land and in the 1920s started the Harbor Cash Store along with other business ventures including a machine shop, a dock, a sawmill and a log-peeling factory. They operated a logging operation on the west shore of Holmes Harbor. Part of the machine shop still remains and has become part of Nichols Brothers Boat Building operation. One of the Spencer homes was converted into a bed & breakfast establishment called “Pillars by the Sea.” It still stands at the southwest corner of Holmes Harbor.

The Socialists and the other private citizens like the Spencers were not the only ones who had shown an interest in the land around the beautiful Holmes Harbor waterway. As far back as 1872, an entrepreneur named Jay Cook had planned a railroad, which would start at the lower end of the harbor and run northward to Deception Pass.

This plan caused tremendous excitement among speculators, and the entire area around the harbor was platted into lots in anticipation of a large influx of settlers. The Cook plan never

materialized, but in 1891 there was another rash of developmental excitement when the Chicago and Skagit Valley Railroad company came up with a plan to establish a railroad which would traverse the island including the Holmes Harbor area. This too failed to become a reality.

Again in 1906, the community was thrown into a tizzy when a Pennsylvania syndicate optioned 10,000 acres of land between Holmes Harbor and Mutiny Bay and laid plans to build a mile long canal from the end of the harbor to the bay with a railroad track running along the side of the canal. Like the other two elaborate plans this one also fell through. Freeland village was platted in 1900. The D.W. Daniels Addition (Sunny View Farms off Fish Road) was added in 1903. The following is a list of properties within the Freeland sub area that are known to have a historical significance to the region:

1. Sandford (Widow's Watch) house on Freeland Ave.
2. Freeland Hall
3. Spencer machine shop (now part of Nichols Boat Builders)
4. Spencer home on Shoreview Drive, currently Pillars by the Sea, but no longer a Bed & Breakfast.
5. Water tower along East Harbor Road near June Beach was probably built in the 1920's.
6. Gay 90's restaurant near the intersection of Highway 525 and Fish Road.
7. Robinson home above Mutiny Bay.
8. Small home on N.E. corner of Robinson Road and Mutiny Bay road.

The landscape of Whidbey continues to grow and change, shaped by the community of people who live and work here. Farms are still farmed, forests are logged, and historical buildings are still actively used today as homes or places of business. Preservation of this history can come in many forms ranging from an interpretive plaque to dedication of properties to state or national registry.

## ***DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION***

This plan is based on background information about the Freeland area. Each chapter addresses the following background issues:

### **Land Use**

- Population Growth
- Critical Areas
- Critical Drainage Areas
- Archeologically Significant Areas
- Land Use Conditions Report

### **Transportation**

- Highway Corridor
- Circulation
- Business Core
- Automobile Traffic
- Non-Motorized Traffic
- Transit

### **Housing**

- Housing

### **Economic Development**

- Economic Development
- Historic Preservation

### **Capital Facilities**

- Parks and Gathering Spaces
- South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection District
- Infrastructure
- Community Services and Facilities

Additional information from the Sub Area Planning Committee process can be found in the appendices for this document:

- Appendix A: Consistency Matrix – GMA Goals/Requirements
- Appendix B: Buildable Lands Analysis
- Appendix C: Persons Per Household Analysis
- Appendix D: Sewer Workshops
- Appendix E: Issue Papers
- Appendix F: Existing Conditions Report
- Appendix G: Comprehensive Sewer Plan and Engineering Report
- Appendix H: Freeland Stormwater Plan



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## ***LAND USE***

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*November, 2007*

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Population Growth**

Freeland will continue to experience population growth consistent with Island County population projections. From 1996 to 2020 the Island County Comprehensive Plan estimates that the Freeland RAID population will grow from 1,400 to 4,000, an increase of 2,600. The bulk of the increase in population will most likely be retirees from the Seattle area moving to south Whidbey to enjoy a more rural environment. Population will also come from other parts of the country as Whidbey Island's reputation for quality of life attracts them. Substantial commercial growth is expected in Freeland to support the overall increase in population of south Whidbey; this will provide local employment. We anticipate that many of the people working in the service and retail sectors will live in the Freeland NMUGA. Population growth may also occur from people commuting to the Seattle - Everett area to work, particularly at Boeing in Everett. Because Freeland will have the infrastructure to support higher density housing, we believe it will act as a "magnet" to attract that portion of the population who desire to live in a community versus a more isolated rural environment. As Freeland becomes more attractive, with community services, shopping, and an attractive downtown area, it is anticipated that population will increase to higher densities.

### **Critical Areas**

Critical areas are lands that possess certain development limitations or that provide important public resources that require specific considerations in planning and development. While these regulatory factors may be viewed as barriers to full enjoyment of property rights, innovative and sound solutions can allow the goals of both the property owner and the environmental regulations. However, a property owner cannot be deprived of reasonable use and enjoyment of lands on which critical areas and their associated buffers, if any, are located.

Development in or near the following critical areas is regulated by Island County Code Title XVII, Chapter 17.02.

Wetlands

Aquifers recharge areas

Fish and Wildlife habitat conservation areas

Frequently flooded areas

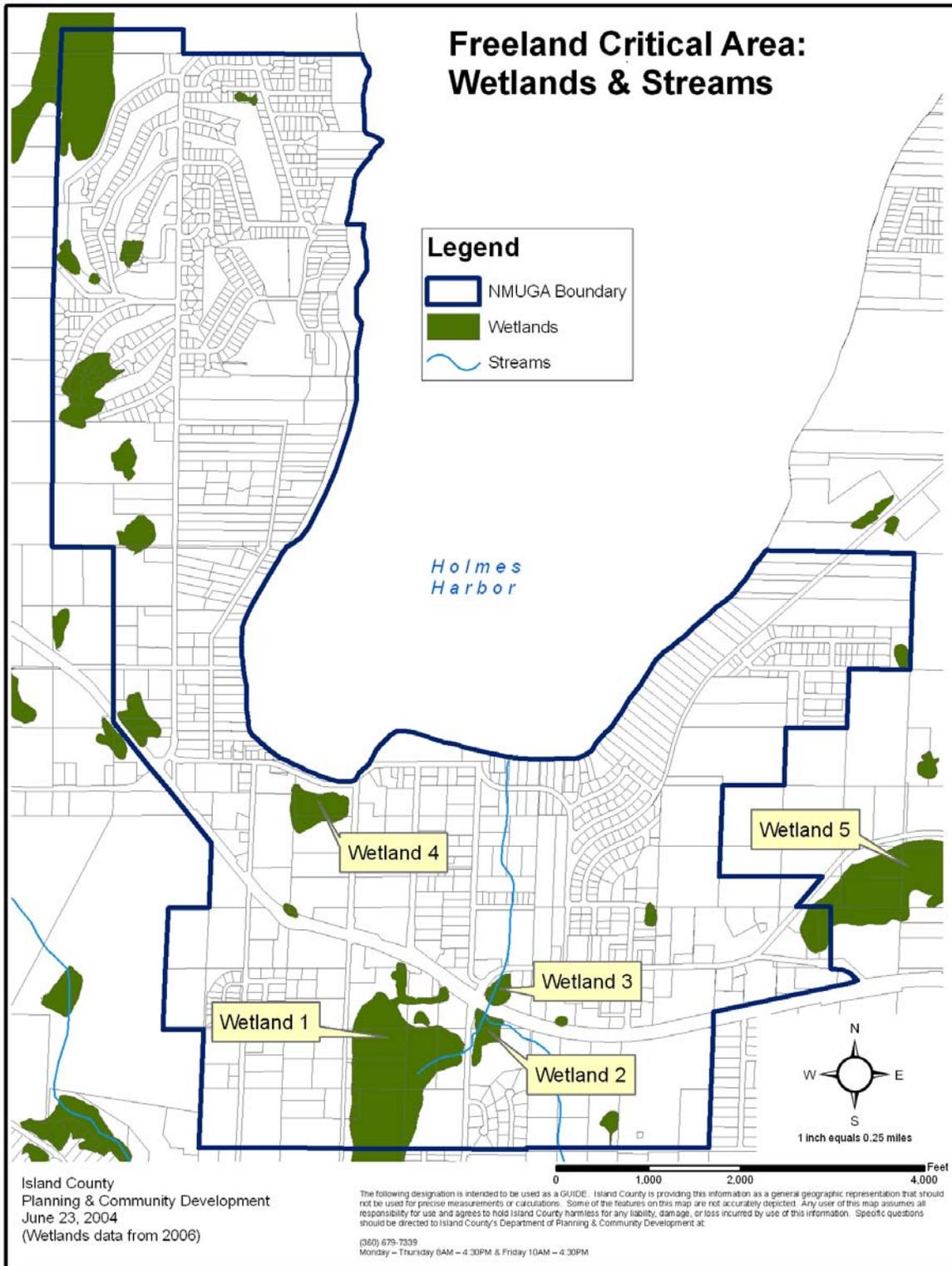
Geologically hazardous areas

Shorelines

Inventories of the defined critical areas indicate existence of many types of critical areas within the proposed Freeland NMUGA. Understanding and identification of all of the critical area systems is of paramount importance in achieving development goals that balance protecting the critical areas with maintaining reasonable use to property owners. A comprehensive approach to Freeland's critical area systems should be used in developing a management plan for Freeland and the Future Growth Planning Area. Since critical areas often straddle artificial borders, such as NMUGA, Future Growth Planning Area, or parcel boundaries, evaluation of these features is more appropriately based on their landscape context. Sound scientific evidence emphasizes the importance of evaluating development impacts to critical areas from a macro viewpoint that incorporates accurate inventories as a key component to establishing a baseline for future analysis. Conservation of existing critical environmental systems can aid in protecting elements of rural character, preserving property values, and providing clean water, native wildlife and vegetation for current and future generations.

### **Wetlands**

Existing wetland in the Freeland NMUGA have been identified in the region by digital mapping with Island County's GIS system (*Refer to Map 2*). Wetlands occur in the transitional zone between the upland environment and open water. Wetlands perform transitional storage and processes associated with water quality. Water level, flow, and frequency have a direct effect on the ecological processes that these wetlands can perform. The opportunity for water quality functions to occur is sharply reduced where the length of residency is reduced due the simplified landscape features, steep slopes, and simplified drainage conveyances. Therefore, it is important to have knowledge of landscape properties that control wetland hydrology and water chemistry. The cumulative and individual effects of upland development on watershed basins, wetlands, marine waters, and other critical areas need to be considered to regulate contaminated effluent and provide unique habitat for a wide array of flora and fauna. Because of the limited development potential of parcels with significant wetlands, many municipal areas have incorporated critical areas into public space and parks. In situations where a public dedication is not a viable option, education can be a valuable tool for informing property owners of the options and benefits for protecting the critical area as well as alternatives for innovative development techniques to mitigate impacts to local or regional environmental systems. The 2005 Final Draft Comprehensive Drainage Plan, Vol. 1 identifies five wetlands of interest in the Freeland Basin and includes a qualitative evaluation by Adolfson Associates of four out of those five wetlands (wetlands two through five on Map 2). These evaluations provide specific drainage recommendations as well as recommending water quality treatment for runoff that might discharge into some of these wetlands.



**Map 2: Wetlands and Streams**

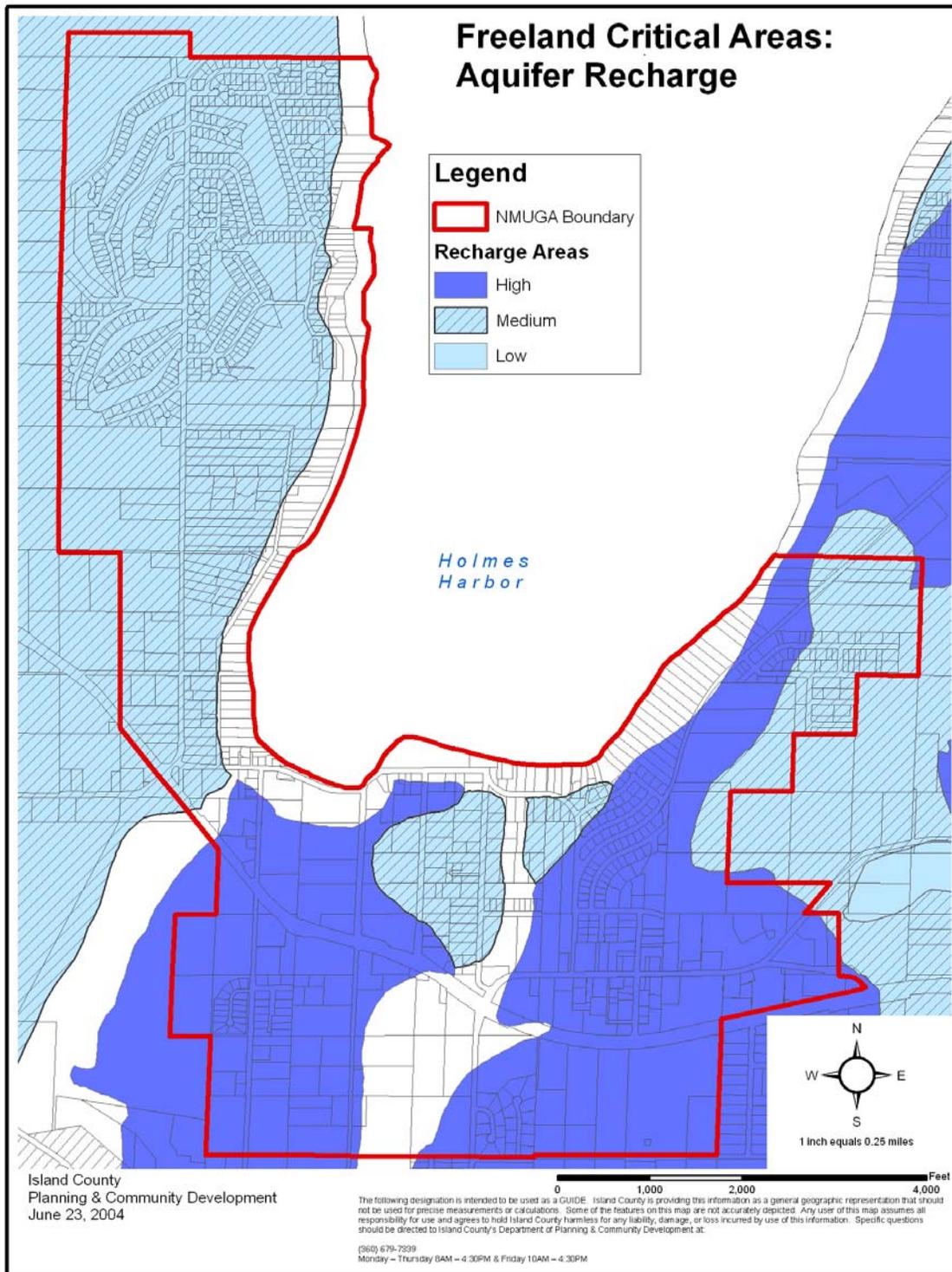
November, 2007

### **Aquifer Recharge**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated Whidbey Island as a sole source aquifer. Consequently, all of Island County is considered a critical aquifer recharge area. This means the Island's aquifer depends entirely on rainfall for regeneration. Ample regeneration not only maintains a supply of fresh water but also excludes salt water from entering the aquifer. The quality and quantity of groundwater need to be conserved, and these features are influenced by overlapping, yet distinct, sets of factors. Identifying these factors and developing a plan that considers them should be integral to any comprehensive plan for Freeland. A failure to manage and conserve Freeland's water could result in aquifer exhaustion or contamination. Groundwater conservation is a regional issue that cannot be contained within political boundaries. The Island County Health Department employs a full-time hydrogeologist that is constantly monitoring aquifer levels and water quality throughout the county; also the county has developed a ground water management plan that identifies goals and policies pertaining to regional groundwater withdrawal. Map 3 shows the areas within the NMUGA which have high, medium, and low susceptibilities to contamination.

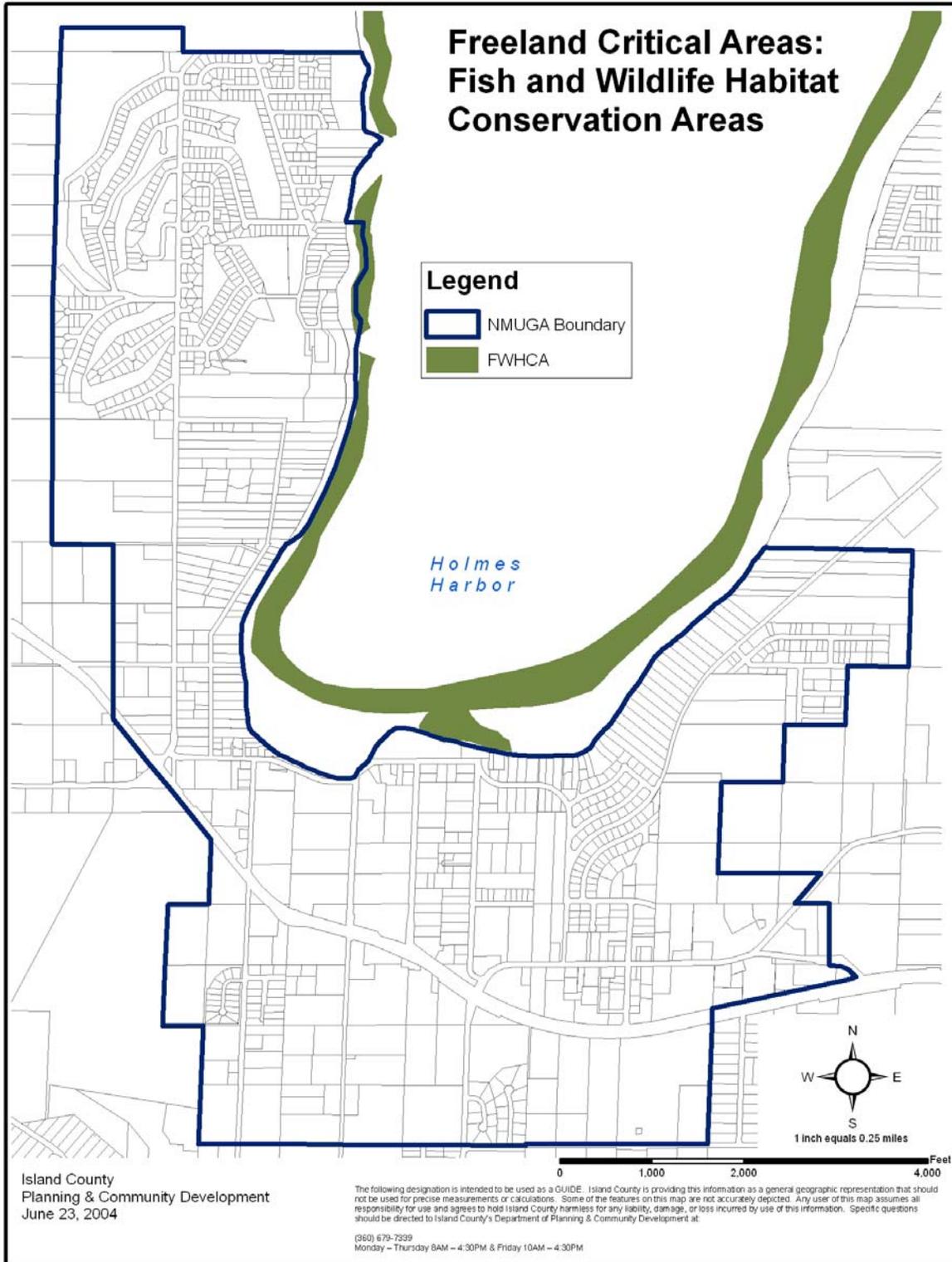
### **Fish & Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas**

The proximity of Freeland's Holmes Harbor to the highly productive Skagit, Stillaguamish, and Snohomish Rivers make the harbor a potential feeding station for outmigrating salmon smolts. Similarly, Mutiny Bay is located along the narrow exit of Puget Sound into the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Pacific Ocean, and ocean-bound salmon and returning adult spawners may utilize its near shore resources. Salmon habitat, stormwater drainage and overall watershed management are micro issues that are dependent upon each other. Marine Habitat areas have been delineated adjacent to the Freeland Sub Area in Holmes Harbor (*Refer to Map 4*). These boundaries illustrate an area of known habitat for forage fish including pacific herring, surf smelt, and pacific sand lance as well as areas of known eelgrass habitat. It is known that these marine environments are sensitive to pollution most commonly associated with urban stormwater runoff. (See the following section on the South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection District on page 95.) Retention and treatment of urban stormwater has come a long way in the last couple of years through standardization and implementation of stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) during clearing, grading, and construction phases on newly developed lots. Freeland is currently designated as a "Critical Drainage Area," which requires developers to infiltrate stormwater on site to the best of their abilities, thus reducing the overall volume of urban stormwater that is flowing into Holmes Harbor. (See the following section on Critical Drainage Areas on page 48.)



**Map 3: Aquifer Recharge**

This map shows the areas within the NMUGA that have high, medium, and low susceptibility to contamination.



**Map 4: Habitat Conservation**

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### **Frequently Flooded Areas**

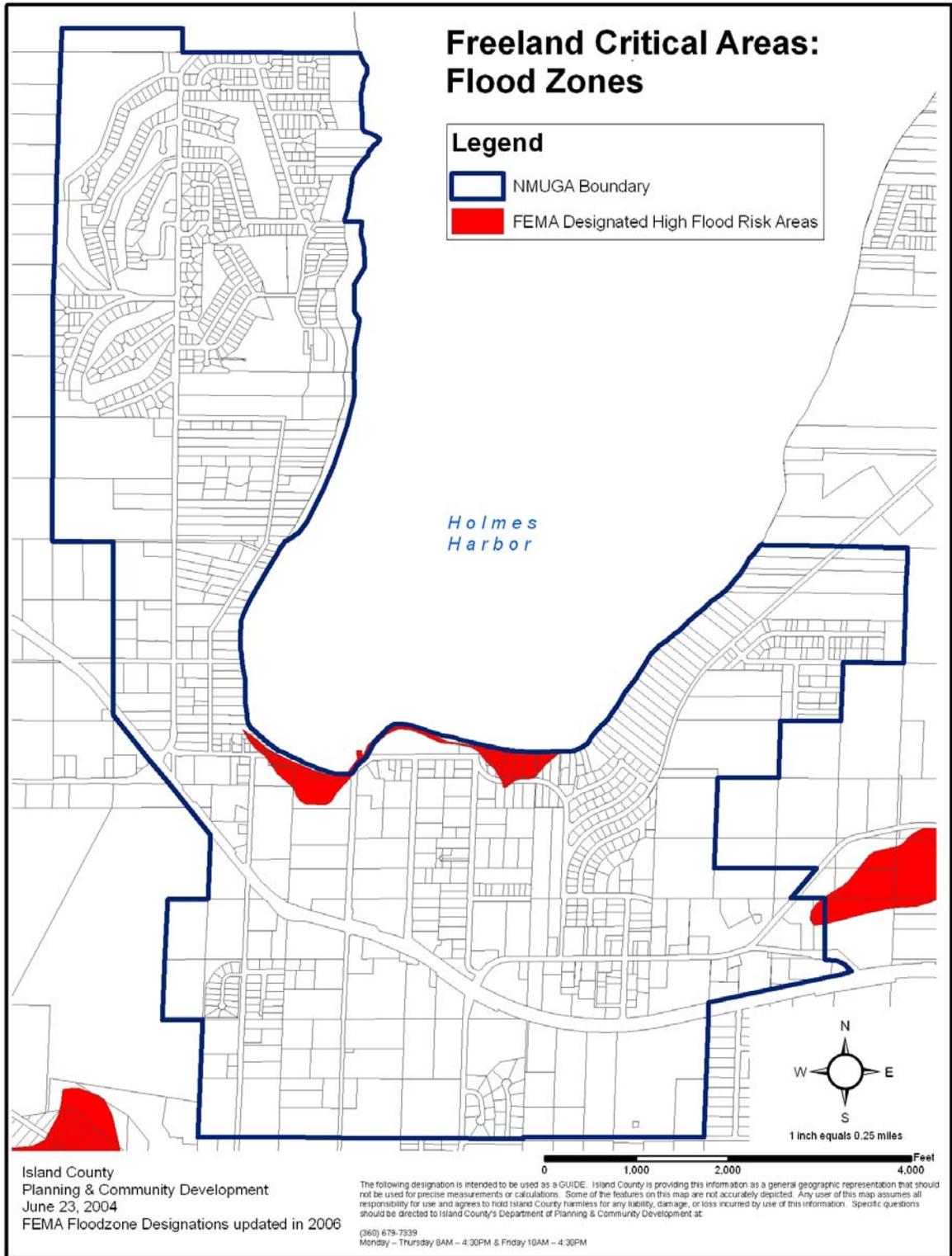
The relative lack of major hydrology in Freeland should not be interpreted as an immunity to flood threats. Flooding can occur during intense storms or as a result of unusually high tides, large seas, and low barometric pressure around low-lying marine shoreline areas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has designated flood hazard boundaries for the high risk areas within the Freeland NMUGA<sup>8</sup> (*Refer to Map 5*). Future development, channeling of surface water, loss of wetlands, and increases in impervious surfaces all increase the rate of runoff and the potential for future flooding. Local conditions require local solutions, but also the understanding that jurisdictional boundaries often are straddled by watersheds which must all be considered when mitigating flood hazards. Freeland is currently categorized as a “Critical Drainage Area,” which requires additional stormwater infrastructure for future development in an effort to infiltrate runoff on site, thus reducing cumulative development impacts and potential flooding. (See the following section on Critical Drainage Areas on page 48.)

### **Geologically Hazardous Areas**

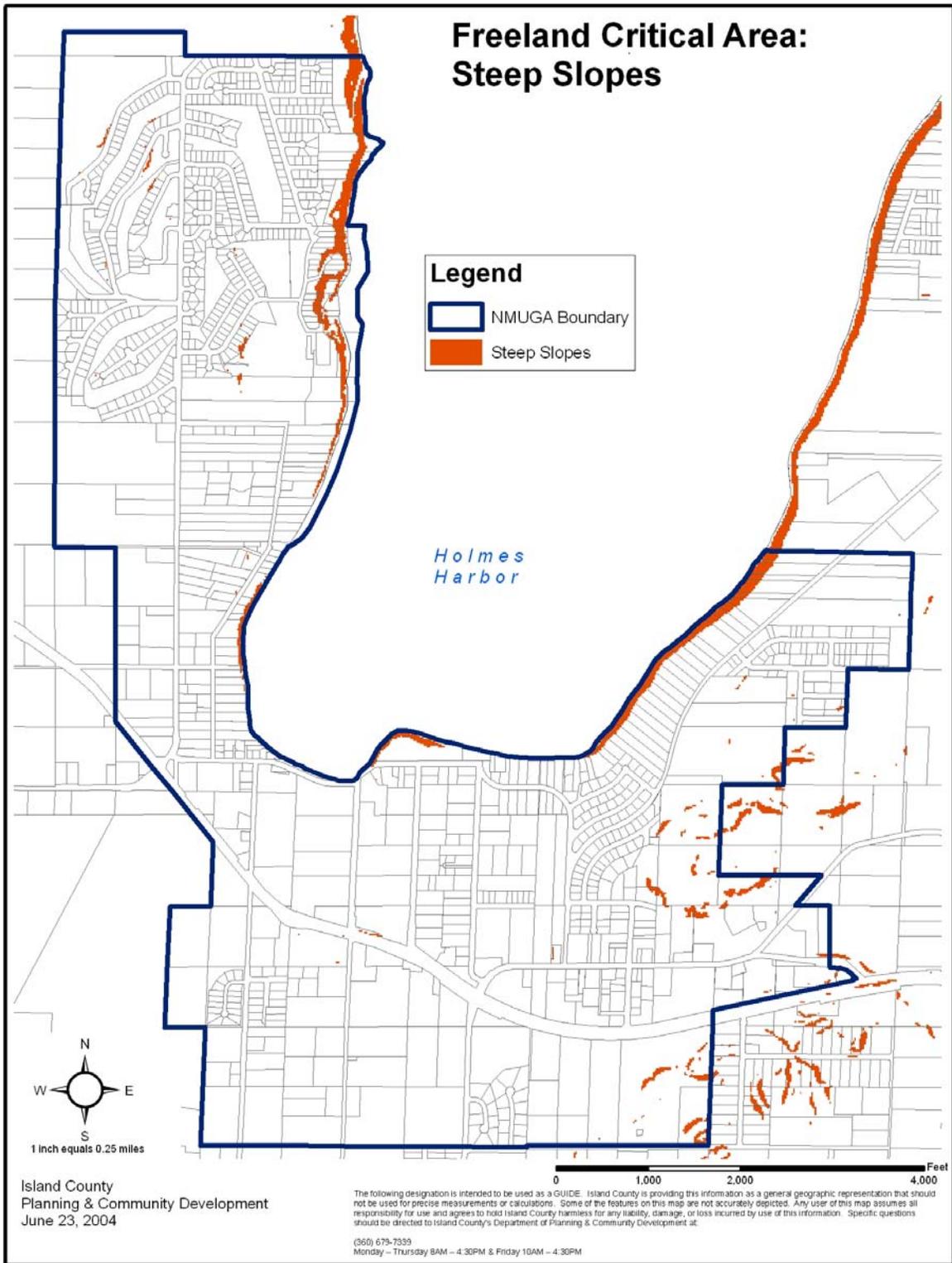
Steep Slopes exist within the Freeland NMUGA mostly along the southeastern area of Holmes Harbor (*Refer to Map 6*). Developments in these areas need to pay close attention to actions that would destabilize the existing slope. Protocols established in the Island County Development Regulations Chapter 17.03 and Shoreline Master Program Chapter 17.05 shall be followed when considering any type of development within the Geologically Hazardous areas identified on Island County critical areas maps.

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<sup>8</sup> These zones are defined as either: “Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding and a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. Because detailed analyses are not performed for such areas; no depths or base flood elevations are shown within these zones.” or “Areas with a 1% annual chance of shallow flooding, usually in the form of a pond, with an average depth ranging from 1 to 3 feet. These areas have a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. Base flood elevations derived from detailed analyses are shown at selected intervals within these zones.” according to FEMA’s Map Service Center, accessed on August 1 via <http://msc.fema.gov/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/info?storeId=10001&catalogId=10001&langId=-1&content=floodZones&title=FEMA%20Flood%20Zone%20Designations>.



**Map 5: Flood Zones**



**Map 6: Steep Slopes**

November, 2007

## 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. Island County will update its Shoreline Master Program by the end of 2012.<sup>9</sup> The Shoreline Program applies to development within 200 feet of lakes, streams, coastal areas, and associated wetlands of statewide significance. Shoreline review would continue to be a function of Island County, based on the regional goals and jurisdiction of the Island County Shoreline Management Program. 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 proposed Freeland NMUGA includes three of these "environments" along Holmes Harbor:

- **Urban Environment:** generally an area of intensive development including but not limited to urban density residential, commercial, and industrial uses.  
**Extent within the NMUGA:** The shoreline in front of Nichols Brothers Boat Builders, Inc.
- **Conservancy Environment:** permits varying densities of human activity while retaining the aesthetic, cultural, ecological, historic, and recreational resources.  
**Extent within the NMUGA:** The shoreline near Freeland Hall, Freeland Park, and most of the Southern extent of Holmes Harbor.
- **Residential Environment:** an area that has been modified from its original natural state by residential unit construction. These areas have more development – or more development potential – than the Rural shoreline environment.  
**Extent within the NMUGA:** Both the east and west facing shorelines along Holmes Harbor within the proposed NMUGA designation.

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. Use regulations 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.

## Critical Drainage Areas

Currently, much of the area within the proposed Freeland NMUGA is designated as a Critical Drainage Area, as is shown on Map 7. The Board of Island County Commissioners can designate a Critical Drainage Area if the land meets any one of the following three criteria:

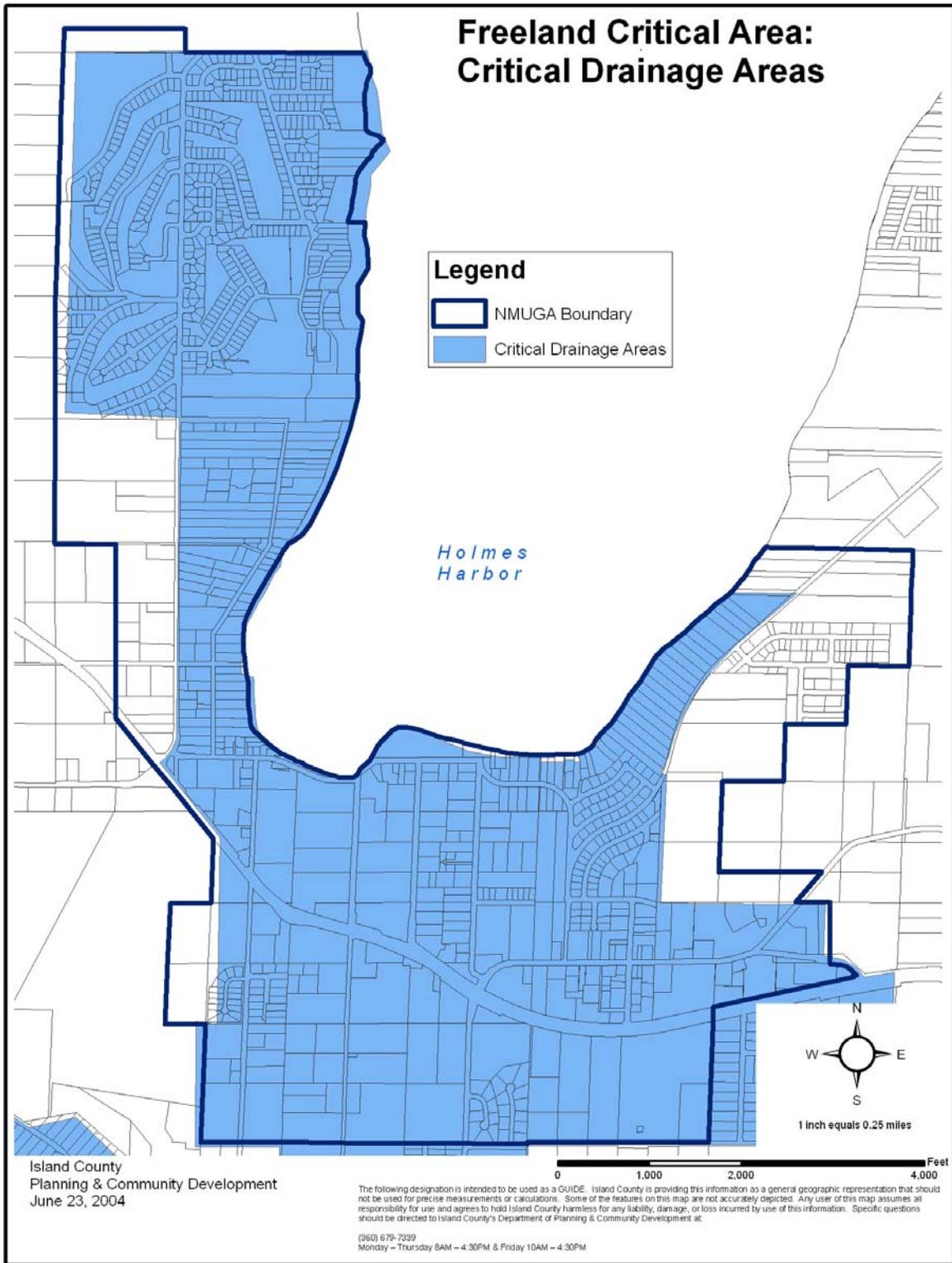
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<sup>9</sup> Information taken from following URL on July 30, 2007:  
[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sma/laws\\_rules/90-58/schedule.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sma/laws_rules/90-58/schedule.html)

- A. Areas which are sensitive to the effects of construction or development. These areas are identifiable because the cumulative impacts of development and urbanization have resulted in, or will result in severe flooding, drainage, or erosion and sedimentation conditions.
- B. Areas that drain to a body of water that has a documented water quality problem and has been designated a “water quality sensitive area.”
- C. Areas where a basin plan, a watershed ranking process, or Growth Management Act planning has identified the need for additional stormwater control measures.

Chapter 11.03 of Island County Code on Stormwater and Surface Water is administered by Public Works. The code includes number of additional requirements for development proposals related to or in Critical Drainage Areas; a summary of these additional requirements is as follows:

- In Critical Drainage Areas, small development activities (residential and other) on lots which are larger than 2.5 acres do not qualify for exemptions from stormwater quantity control, source control of pollution, and stormwater treatment best management practices from Chapter 11.03.
- Drainage narratives for small residential developments have additional requirements.
- Small development activities (residential and other) may be required to submit a preliminary drainage plan.
- Projects in Critical Drainage Areas need to mitigate drainage impacts resulting from changes in the volume of runoff, and additional mitigation shall also be required.
- The Drainage Manual has additional surface water quantity and quality controls and design parameters for major development activities in UGAs and RAIDs with Critical Drainage Areas.
- However, retention and detention system requirements from the Drainage Manual might not be applicable if a downstream analysis demonstrates that there will be no negative impacts to Critical Drainage Areas.
- Redevelopments that are considered major developments might need to apply Chapter 11.03 requirements to the entire site and to adjoining parcels that are part of the project (rather than applying requirements only to the portion of the site being redeveloped).



**Map 7: Critical Drainage Areas**

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## **Archaeologically Significant Areas**

Archaeologically significant areas are present throughout all of Island County and are typically discovered along shorelines. While the shoreline in Freeland is somewhat developed, it would not be highly unusual to discover an archaeological resource during redevelopment of a site. Typical resources include shell middens and burial sites. Protection of these resources is required, and the County will continue its policy of including tribal agencies when development occurs within one of these areas.

## **Land Use Conditions Report**

In March 2000, the first draft of the Phase I Existing Conditions Report was completed. The purpose of the report was to gain an intimate understanding of the Freeland NMUGA prior to discussing the policies and measures needed to shape a robust and attractive community. Questions that this report answered (or at least provided a base line for additional questions to be asked) include:

- Which locations are appropriate or inappropriate for development?
- What community needs and desires should this plan address?

The following is the methodology that was used to assemble the Existing Conditions Report.

The Sub Area Planning Committee began by identifying existing neighborhoods within Freeland. Defining these neighborhoods served multiple purposes, including: breaking Freeland down into manageable areas for analytical purposes, creating a starting point for delineating potential land use boundaries and densities, and allowing the Committee to discuss policies that protect and enhance specific neighborhoods.

The Committee was then provided with maps that reflect current land use for each property within the boundary based on Island County Assessor records. This information was ground checked for accuracy and any changes necessary were made to our database. Defining the existing land use assisted the Committee in making their initial determinations of the location of future land use boundaries.

The next task was to identify features of the natural environment such as wetlands, steep slopes, streams, and wildlife corridors. The Committee was provided county critical area maps as a starting point. The critical area maps used at the county are generalized maps that show the approximate location of specific critical areas, so the Committee verified the location of critical areas shown on the maps and added ones that were not indicated.

Within each neighborhood, summations were calculated for the number of parcels, total acreages, and the number of undeveloped parcels. Additional parcel information was gathered for zoning, land use, and water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure

The Existing Conditions Report provided the basis for the Buildable Lands Analysis. The Buildable Lands Analysis is the device used to determine that the land uses, allowed

densities, and NMUGA size are proportionate to the population projection for a given area. The Buildable Lands Analysis and findings are described below and in Appendix B.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Introduction**

The buildable lands program is a planning tool used to size an Urban Growth Area (UGA) and establish densities within the UGA. This process will provide an appropriate land capacity that can accommodate the projected population growth allocation for the area. UGAs, and the densities that are applied within their boundaries, should be designated relative to the given population allocation. In other words, the UGA needs to be big enough to accept the population allocation but small enough to ensure that development will occur in a compact and efficient manner.

Several precedents have been established through Growth Management Hearings Board rulings related to urban densities and market factors which aid in determining the appropriate size of an NMUGA and the densities that are allowed within. For example, at full build out, the UGA should maintain an average density of at least four dwelling units per acre. Regular monitoring efforts need to be in place for reviewing development trends in order to determine that this benchmark is achieved. Additionally, the total net land supply should not exceed 125% of the total population allocation.

The Freeland Buildable Lands Analysis provides the baseline study for determining the final NMUGA boundary and the densities and intensities that will be allowed within. Based on these determinations, the Analysis will provide the starting point for the trend analysis required as a part of the benchmarking process. Development trends will be evaluated and compared to the desired densities and intensities set forth in the Sub Area Plan. Over time, population trends and approved subdivisions, building permits, and other land use activities will be monitored to ensure that development is occurring within the range of densities desired within each zone. If this evaluation proves otherwise, land use and development regulations, as well as the overall population allocation, will be reevaluated and modified accordingly.

### **Methodology**

#### **Freeland Community Buildable Lands Analysis**

A Buildable Lands Analysis, based on the Existing Conditions Report, was conducted for the proposed Freeland NMUGA. Appendix B details the complete methodology used for this Analysis including: examples, complete list of NMUGA parcel database, summation tables, and additional analysis. This analysis reached the following conclusions for capacity under both the current zoning and the proposed NMUGA zoning:

- **Current Zoning Capacity:** The following table represents the Freeland NMUGA boundaries at the full build-out potential under the current Island County zoning. The residential analysis consisted of parcels that are currently zoned Rural and Rural Residential. Areas zoned Rural Center were evaluated as commercial areas. The public areas consisted of parks and exempt land and the golf parcels refer to the Holmes Harbor Golf & Country Club.

**Table 1: Current Zoning Capacity Totals**

	# of Parcels	Acreage	Dwelling Units (L)	Dwelling Units (H)	Population (low)	Population (high)
Residential Totals	1014	787.38	1351	1351	3159	3159
<i>Commercial Totals</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>165.77</i>	<i>296</i>	<i>1380</i>	<i>692</i>	<i>3229</i>
Public/INS/Golf/	32	107.51	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Freeland Totals</b>	<b>1173</b>	<b>1060.7</b>	<b>1647</b>	<b>2731</b>	<b>3851</b>	<b>6388</b>

**Proposed NMUGA Zoning Capacity:** The NUMGA conclusions are based on planning scenario 6, with zoning categories and densities decided upon by the Freeland Sub Area Planning Committee. The residential and commercial analysis evaluates the residential build-out potential within the Freeland NMUGA boundaries. Residential areas consisted of parcels with proposed zoning designations of: Low Density, Medium Density, High Density, Mixed Use and Rural Estate. The Commercial parcels consist of Business General, Business Office, Business Village, and Industrial. The last category consists of public parcels, the Holmes Harbor Golf & Country Club, and Institutional uses.

**Table 2: NMUGA Zoning Capacity Totals**

	# of Parcels	Acreage	Dwelling Units (L)	Dwelling Units (H)	Population (low)	Population (high)
Residential Totals	1036	828.33	1707	2689	3988	6308
<i>Commercial Totals</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>124.82</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>162</i>	<i>194</i>	<i>376</i>
Public/INS/Golf	32	105.51	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Freeland Totals</b>	<b>1173</b>	<b>1061.20</b>	<b>1791</b>	<b>2860</b>	<b>4182</b>	<b>6684</b>

### Additional Analysis

A commonly used method for buildable lands analysis involves analyzing the net total acreage available for future development. Under this method, the current population baseline is calculated by taking 2000 Census data for the Freeland area and adding residential building permits granted within the proposed NMUGA through 2006, with each residential building permit accounting for 2.34 persons. Then, in calculating for land available for future development, critical areas, and areas needed for public facilities are removed from the total land area within the proposed NMUGA and an analysis is conducted on the remaining acreage using the following steps:

- Calculate the total acreage by proposed zoning within the NMUGA
- Subtract percentage of acreage which may be required to devote to rights-of-way (18%), and public use (16%)
- Subtract a percentage of acreage to account for market factors (20%)
- Calculate development potential (in acreage) based on densities (in dwelling units per acre) proposed in the Freeland Sub Area Plan.

This method was applied to all residential zones, including mixed use, proposed in the Freeland Sub Area Plan. The following areas and densities were used in this analysis:

**Table 3: NMUGA Zoning Acreage Totals**

Low Density (3 dwelling units/acre)	480 acres
Medium Density (6 dwelling units/acre)	208 acres
High Density (10 dwelling units/acre)	4 acres
Mixed Use (10 dwelling units/acre)	95 acres

Due to the development patterns in Freeland, it is unlikely that these subtractions would be applied to a substantial portion of developable land. Therefore, according to this method of analysis, the development potential in this Sub Area Plan is expressed as a low and high range:

- Additional Dwelling Units: 1,290-2,800
- Additional Population (based on 2.34 persons/dwelling unit): 3,020-6,550

## ***FINDINGS FOR FUTURE LAND USE***

The citizens of Freeland propose 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), the Island County Comprehensive Plan, and the Countywide Planning Policies. This growth management strategy will also respond to the unique developmental forces that have shaped Freeland's settlement pattern in the past and will continue to be the primary force for development over the foreseeable future. The future well being of the citizens of Freeland and the wise conservation of the County's resources depends upon the decisions made today.

### **Growth Projections**

The State Office of Financial Management (OFM) provides 20-year population forecasts for counties and requires counties and cities to create plans based on these forecasts. OFM has provided the County with a countywide population projection. The County used the OFM countywide population projection as a reference and utilized the Buildable Lands Analysis to determine population projections for the proposed NMUGA.

### **Population Allocation**

The following factors will have a dramatic impact on future growth within the sub area:

- **Seasonal Residency:** The Island County Comprehensive plan identified a 10% decrease in seasonal home ownership from 1980 to 1990, which is believed to be partially due to increased property value and costs of ownership.
- **Infrastructure:** Currently many parcels are limited in their development potential because of a lack of sewer and stormwater infrastructure. Infrastructure may increase the net acreage of developable land, but the cost to construct the infrastructure may act as a deterrent to immigration and result in escalating housing prices.
- **Affordable Housing:** Will sufficient affordable housing be available within the Freeland NMUGA to support the regional work force?

### **Employment Forecasts**

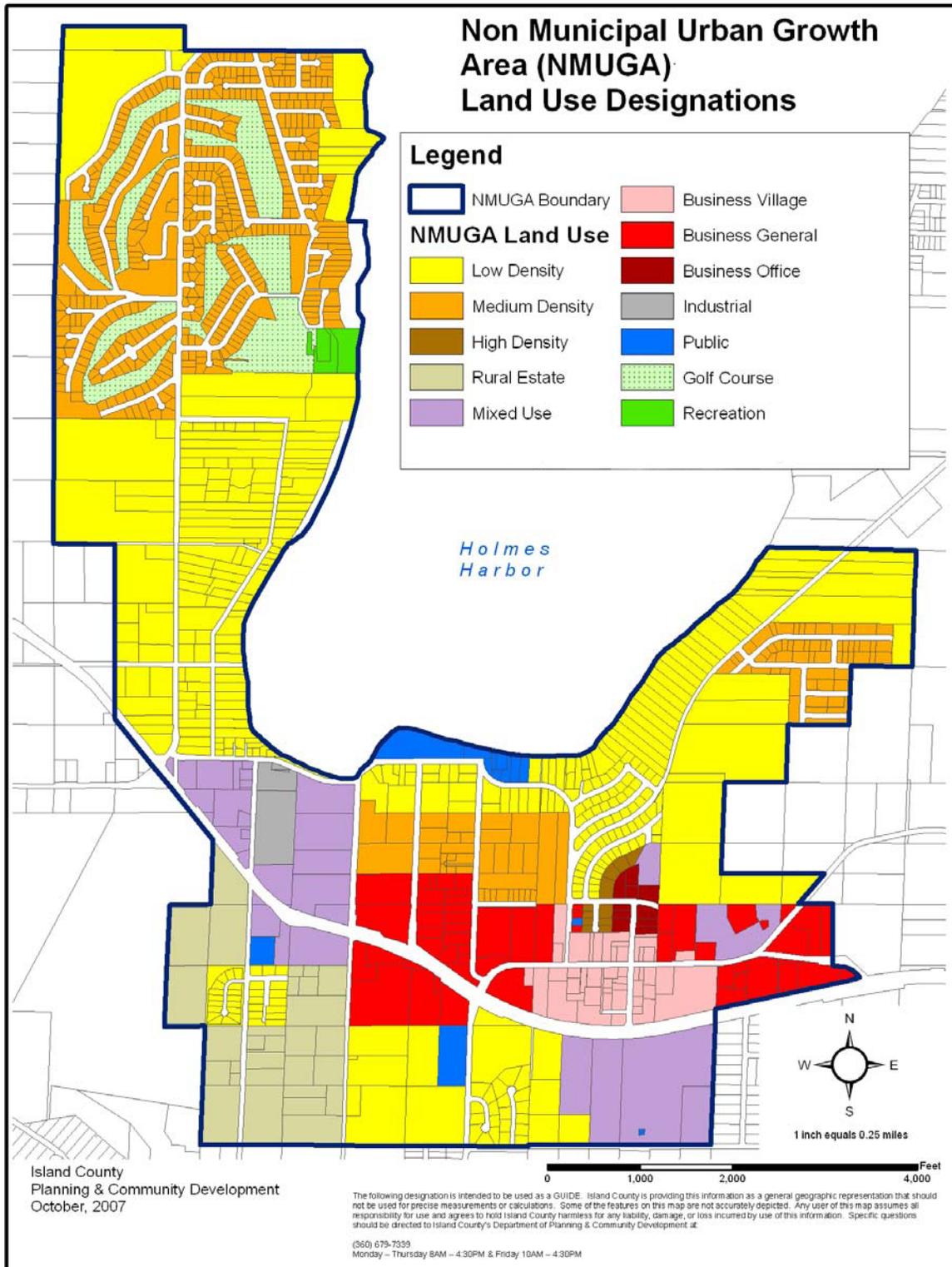
It is difficult to predict future employment in the Freeland NMUGA due to lack of credible data. The Island County Economic Development Council has reported that current employment in Freeland is 717 at 176 firms. The Sub Area Planning Committee has no way of projecting future employment; however it is reasonable to project higher employment rates as business activity expands in Freeland.

## **General Overlays and Critical Areas**

Island County currently regulates: Highway Corridor Overlays, Wetlands, Aquifer Recharge Areas, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas, Frequently Flooded Areas, Geologically Hazardous Areas, and Shorelines.

## **Future Land Use Plan Map**

Map 8 describes the future land use plan for Freeland. The land use plan is based on: major Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Economic Development, and Capital Facilities issues (identified at the beginning of those respective chapters); on the existing land use analysis and the goals and policies that will be used to guide and accommodate future growth in the Land Use chapter; and on the Buildable Lands Analysis from both the Land Use chapter and Appendix B. Detailed atlases (at 1 inch = 200 feet) which more clearly delineate the Non Municipal Urban Growth Areas 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.



**Map 8: Proposed Future Land Use Map**

November, 2007

## ***LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES***

### **Future Growth Planning Area**

**Goal:**

Provide areas within a Future Growth Planning Area for municipal Urban Growth Area expansion, which will allow for the future development of urban densities in an effective manner.

**Policies:**

A. Develop policies that encourage low-density development that is designed in such manner so as not to preclude future urban development.

### **Population and Growth Distribution**

**Goal:**

Achieve a staged, orderly, and distributed development pattern to foster a high quality living environment for all persons while achieving the goals of the Growth Management Act. Preserve Freeland's unique identity as a small urban enclave located within a larger rural setting by encouraging a style and type of development that is urban in nature, but that also promotes a rural appearance, feel, and lifestyle.

**Policies:**

A. Accommodate the projected full-time resident population for Freeland of 4000 by the year 2020 in a manner that protects the established character of neighborhoods, preserves environmental quality, and allows for the efficient, orderly, and economic growth of the community.

B. Residential densities and commercial uses already exist at an urban level, yet, amidst this small urban community, a rural appearance and character exists. Future urban development should continue to promote, preserve and enhance the existing rural character of Freeland.

C. Encourage development to occur in a manner that allows for the efficient and economical provision of public services and facilities.

D. Encourage infill within the Freeland NMUGA.

### **Shorelines**

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

### **Environmental Quality**

**Goal:**

Safeguard the natural environment as integrated systems where the land, water, and air resources interact creating a balanced environment for all life in the Puget Sound basin.

**Policies:**

A. Preserve Freeland’s environmental quality through the careful use of land, water, and air resources. Expand the range of “reasonable uses” and innovative alternatives to development techniques. Incentives and engineering should be explored and offered to properties containing critical areas.

B. Encourage combining critical areas with public spaces and parks when the quality and function of the critical area is not degraded or compromised by such a combination.

C. Preserve a high level of air quality.

D. Emphasis should be given to alternative forms of transportation (public transit, car pools, bicycle and pedestrian sidewalks, and trails), decreasing dependency on the single occupant automobile.

E. Promote non-polluting alternatives to wood burning, such as solar heating and chipping, instead of burning slash.

F. Conserve energy by encouraging efficient consumption and proper land use management.

G. Promote education, guidance, and assistance by governmental and non-governmental organizations in employing energy conservation practices and the use of renewable energy technologies.

H. Recycling of wastes and use of recycled or reused materials should be encouraged.

I. A watershed management action plan and policy should be developed at the landscape, rather than parcel, level.

J. Use of gray and treated black water should be encouraged, provided treatment design meets public health stands.

K. Transportation systems and land use patterns should 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.

L. Government services should be sited to minimize consumer travel.

M. When converting land to a use that requires water availability, Island County should 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.

N. Island County should encourage developments and structures with energy conservation technologies.

O. High intensity lighting is discouraged, but where necessary should be shielded from adjacent properties and roads and shielded and directed down to reduce impacts to the dark sky.

P. The South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection Program should be adhered to in order to ensure safe and suitable water quality levels in Holmes Harbor.

Q. Island County's additional stormwater and surface water requirements for Critical Drainage Areas should be followed.

## ***RECOMMENDED DEFINITIONS, GOALS, AND POLICIES FOR EACH NMUGA PROPOSED ZONE***

### **NMUGA Land Use Designations**

The future land use plan concept is based on an analysis that recognizes Freeland's location as historically characterized by retail sales and service adjacent to residential uses. Previous development trends and land use regulations fostered a fragmented land use pattern that mixed both densities and locations. However, since past development has not occurred in an even or uniform manner, there are still abundant natural features, resource lands and other open space. The proposed land use designations presented in this chapter will form the basis for a new zoning map.

### **Business General**

#### **Definition:**

The "Business General" classification is intended for lands in and around the Freeland commercial core on which general commercial development exists or is desirable in the future, including a broad range of commercial, retail, light manufacturing, and service uses. Light manufacturing is defined as food processing or the processing, manufacture, assembly, treatment, packaging, incidental storage, distribution, or sales of light and small items made mostly from previously prepared materials; light manufacturing includes operations which do not create noise, smoke, odor, vibration or other objectionable nuisances to the extent that they are detrimental to surrounding uses. Residential dwelling units may be permitted in the proposed Business General zone when they are secondary to the primary uses in that zone.

#### **Goals:**

A. Promote the orderly and attractive development of Freeland so it can continue its role as a commercial service center providing retail, business, and professional services for the Freeland and greater South Whidbey community. Focus should be on development that serves the needs of area residents.

B. Provide employment and entrepreneurial economic development opportunities to the people of South Whidbey Island.

C. Diminish the pressure for urban type general commercial development in the rural areas of South Whidbey Island.

**Policies:**

A. The Business General (BG) zone should support the Freeland Village zone by encouraging the use of architectural styles that reflect the emerging character of Freeland.

B. Development in the BG zone should be functional for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and the businesses located in this zone.

C. In order to reduce pavement areas and increase pervious surfaces, development of joint parking areas serving multiple commercial establishments is encouraged. Parking should be located to the side or rear of buildings.

D. Landscape plans and visual analyses should be required for all new projects. Buffering and/or screening standards should be developed and implemented in all new development and redevelopment projects.

E. Landscaping should be installed to soften the scale of buildings and parking areas, provide continuity, and provide buffers, where appropriate. Project designs should include streetscape planning to progress toward implementation of Freeland's adopted long term street and highway corridor concepts. All lighting and signage should comply with adopted design standards and avoid impacts to surrounding properties and roadways. Parking areas should include appropriate lighting and landscaping including trees. Internally illuminated signs should not be allowed.

F. Living accommodations above or behind business activities are encouraged.

G. Infill and/or re-development of lands in the BG designation should be oriented towards retail/commercial and service uses. Commercial storage and mini-storage uses should not be allowed.

**Business Office**

**Definition:**

Business Office areas are designated for business and professional uses with little or no retail sales.

**Goal:**

Provide a professional office environment that incorporates quality design, ample landscaping, and pedestrian connections to neighboring properties and uses.

**Policies:**

A. Pedestrian access to the Freeland Village and neighboring residential areas, parks, and other public facilities, such as the library, is encouraged.

B. Living accommodations above or behind business activities are encouraged.

C. Clustered one, two, and three-story buildings with outdoor community areas are preferred over single large structures.

D. Parking should be visually shielded by locating parking to the side or rear of properties and by landscaping and features such as berms, low walls, or a combination of these features. Parking areas should include low lighting standards and landscaping.

E. Mixtures of one, two, and three-story buildings with pitched roofs are preferred. Blank walls should also be avoided by using windows and doorways, building articulation, and/or other architectural features. Building placement should be staggered to prevent row type development.

F. Landscaping should be installed to soften the scale of buildings and parking areas and to provide green spaces or buffers between uses and buffering from roadways.

G. Development of joint parking areas serving multiple office buildings is encouraged.

## **Freeland Village**

### **Definition:**

The Freeland Village is intended for mixed commercial and residential development, with design objectives that foster a pedestrian friendly village atmosphere.

### **Goal:**

Provide for retail sales as well as personal and business services in a pedestrian friendly environment that is reminiscent of a “traditional” small town. Residential development above street level businesses, pedestrian amenities, and outdoor gathering places are encouraged.

### **Policies:**

A. Development should emphasize clustering of uses and buildings whose compact design fosters a village atmosphere and orientation.

B. Efforts should be made to encourage a system of motorized and non-motorized transportation facilities within the Freeland Village lands and with adjacent areas.

C. Development should include outdoor common areas, shared landscaping, street trees, benches, and other general design features that foster a village atmosphere. Pedestrian access should be provided in the form of sidewalks, trails, and pedestrian alleys.

D. Buildings should be placed close to street frontages. The scale and design of the buildings should foster a village atmosphere.

E. Joint use parking areas should be encouraged. In lieu of on-site requirements, parking facilities that serve the Village should be allowed outside the Village zone as long as convenient access is provided.

F. Those portions of Main Street located in the FV area should be scaled back with landscape trees and medians and measures to slow traffic are encouraged. Streets developed in the future should be small-scale one way streets with little or no on-street parking.

## **Industrial**

### **Definition:**

Industrial is defined by business use or activity at a scale greater than light manufacturing<sup>10</sup> involving manufacturing, fabrication, assembly warehousing and/or storage. Examples of industrial uses include sawmills and boat building.

### **Goal:**

Provide areas for industry and manufacturing, assembly, fabrication, storage, wholesaling, and related activities. Regulations should be developed that mitigate the adverse impacts to the community, including, but not limited to, glare, noise, pollution, odor, view, and aesthetics.

### **Policies:**

- A. Industrial areas should be compatible with uses in adjacent land use designations.
- B. Industrial development should be designed and built in a manner that will have minimal environmental and community impacts. Impacts should be mitigated through design, technology, and landscaping to reduce air, noise, odor, light, and water pollution. If impacts can not be mitigated then the proposed use should not be allowed.
- C. Structures should be arranged on the site to provide expansion space and adequate buffers.
- D. Provide adequate buffers by providing landscaping, berming, and screening between dissimilar uses and streets.
- E. Common or shared ingress and egress points, as well as internal circulation systems for vehicles and pedestrians, should be required.
- F. Access to public transportation should be provided.

## **Mixed Use**

### **Definition:**

Mixed Use is a designation that allows for a variety of residential, commercial, and light manufacturing uses within a specified mixed-use land use category. Each mixed-use category should include specific uses that are defined as primary and others as secondary.

Three sub categories of the mixed-use designation are identified which serve to provide different functions within the Freeland community. These sub-categories are Mixed Use Transitional, Mixed Use Residential, and Mixed Use Commercial.

Mixed Use Transitional (MX-T) serves as a transitional area between one land use designation and another. It serves as a means of softening the impacts that may occur between areas that would not normally be considered compatible if they were to share a boundary.

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<sup>10</sup> Definition for “light manufacturing” can be found as a part of the definition for Business General on page 6.

Mixed Use Residential (MX-R) areas are those areas where the character of the neighborhood is primarily residential but where specified low impact non-residential uses are encouraged. In these areas, non-residential uses may only be permitted as secondary to a dominant residential use within a project. Non-residential uses should be limited in scope, scale, and proportion and must be associated with, and primarily serve, the primary residential development and its occupants.

Mixed Use Commercial (MX-C) areas are pedestrian friendly areas where residential and nonresidential uses within a project compliment each other. These areas typically provide for commercial development opportunities with an integrated residential component.

**Goals:**

**MX-T**

Provide a transition zoning classification between industrial and residential land uses that provides some mechanisms for protecting historically existing and on-going industry from future incompatible uses while preserving some residential development options.

**MX-R**

Provide a zoning classification where the tract size, location, topography, infrastructure, and other such criteria indicate the feasibility of incorporating and permitting a limited scope of complementary and supportive non-residential uses into residential development projects.

**MX-C**

Provide a zoning classification where commercial uses are the primary land use and that allow for a residential component that is complimentary to the commercial use.

**Policies:**

A. Development of land in all mixed-use classifications should be designed to be compatible with uses permitted in surrounding lands in different classifications.

B. Development of projects in all mixed-use classifications should include provisions for integrated pedestrian circulation such as sidewalks, trails, and alleyways. Project design guidelines should also encourage the establishment of community open space and recreation areas and clustering as appropriate for the type of uses proposed. Standards for scale, bulk, size, and proportion between the primary and secondary uses should be adopted that are consistent with the purposes and goals of this section.

C. In the MX-R classification, non-residential uses should be secondary to and associated with the primary residential use and character of the neighborhood. Commercial uses should be located, sized, and designed on a site so they do not become the primary attraction of the integrated project. The MX-R zone should have provisions that prevent its use for the establishment of significant retail commercial or industrial uses or other uses likely to invite significant outside traffic into the residential community.

D. Landscaping, sidewalks, and trails on the border of any zone should be designed to fit into the land use in the neighboring zone(s). Efforts should be made to encourage continuity.

E. Development of joint parking areas serving multiple commercial and residential buildings is encouraged.

F. Parking areas should include appropriate lighting and landscaping, including trees.

G. Clustered buildings with outdoor community areas are encouraged to provide for community interaction.

H. Multiple-family dwellings and planned residential-type development combining both commercial and residential aspects should generally be encouraged in the applicable mixed-use zones.

## **Recreation**

### **Definition:**

The Recreation classification is intended for land where special development patterns may occur due to the mix of public/private recreation and private residences. Development within this district should include a broad range of residential densities and non-residential uses such as retail, service, and commercial uses associated with recreation that would complement residential use.

### **Goals:**

A. Promote the orderly and attractive development of Freeland and recreational uses by providing opportunities for development of services associated with the recreation use.

B. Encourage the development of facilities to promote the recreation as a recreational node, including lodging.

C. Provide recreational and employment opportunities to the residents of South Whidbey.

D. Incorporate a variety of housing choices for residents of Freeland in the zone.

### **Policies:**

A. Design of recreational, residential, and commercial facilities in this zone should be integrated and should focus on the recreational and environmental attributes of Freeland and the surrounding area.

B. Promote an aesthetic environment that builds off of the existing landscape and focuses on building and landscaping design as well as development of well screened joint parking areas and limited paved areas.

C. Promote a variety of housing. Encourage living accommodations as secondary uses to business activities.

D. Development should be aesthetically pleasing and functional for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, residents, and the businesses located in this zone.

### **High Density Residential**

#### **Definition:**

The High Density Residential (HD) designation is intended for multiple-family dwellings, primarily apartment buildings, and apartment complexes at a density of no more than 10 (ten) dwelling units per acre.

#### **Goal:**

Provide an area of higher density housing while ensuring full access to services and blending with adjacent land use designations.

#### **Policies:**

A. The HD classification is intended to create an area that allows for more efficient use of land while still allowing access to water and forest sightlines that are part of Freeland's identity.

B. Developments that preserve open space while achieving the highest permitted density are encouraged.

C. High density developments should be linked with sidewalks or pedestrian pathways to promote non-motorized access and neighborhood interaction.

D. Roof heights and building styles should be varied to prevent the appearance of large overwhelming complexes. Blank walls should be avoided by the use of windows and doorways, landscaping, and/or other architectural and design features.

E. Transit and non-motorized transportation alternatives should be made easily accessible for residents of high density developments.

### **Medium Density Residential**

#### **Definition:**

Medium Density Residential (MD) lands are intended for single-family dwellings at a density of no more than 6 (six) dwelling units per acre, including single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes.

#### **Goal:**

Provide for a variety of housing choices in a quiet neighborhood setting.

#### **Policies:**

A. The MD classification should be developed as a primarily residential area. Non-residential uses allowed in this area should complement the primarily residential nature of the neighborhood.

B. Appropriately scaled community facilities, such as fire stations, clubhouses, and associated recreational amenities should be allowed to serve the community.

- C. Building placement and height restrictions should promote neighborhood characteristics.
- D. Blank walls should be avoided by using windows and doorways and/or other architectural features.
- E. Sidewalk placement and design should promote neighborhood interaction.
- F. Roadway and other public landscaping, including the use of tree or shrub lined medians, should create the appearance of a continuous neighborhood.
- G. All new development should provide adequate off-street parking.
- H. Outdoor storage of recreational vehicles, boats, and other similar large pieces of equipment should be appropriately screened from view.

### **Low Density Residential**

#### **Definition:**

Low Density Residential (LD) designations are intended for single-family residences and duplexes at a density of no more than 3 (three) dwelling units per acre.

#### **Goal:**

Provide a quiet neighborhood environment.

#### **Policies:**

- A. The LD classification should be developed as a residential area. Non-residential uses allowed in this zone should complement the primarily residential nature of the neighborhood.
- B. Appropriately scaled community facilities, such as fire stations, clubhouses, and associated recreational amenities should be allowed to serve the community.
- C. Storage of recreational vehicles, boats, and other similar large pieces of equipment should be appropriately screened from view.

### **Rural Estate**

#### **Definition:**

The Rural Estate zone is established with the intention of preserving the existing relatively low-density single-family land-use pattern, limiting lot density to no more than 1 (one) dwelling unit per acre.

#### **Goal:**

Provide a low-density neighborhood environment.

#### **Policies:**

- A. Encourage appropriately scaled and sited structures to preserve existing rural landscape.

B. Promote development primarily as a residential area with non-residential uses that should complement the primarily residential nature of the neighborhood.

### **Reserve**

#### **Definition:**

This designation consists of parcels that are in public ownership such as parks and public utilities.

#### **Goal:**

Preserve the area for public access and open space.

#### **Policies:**

A. Trails, corridors, and easements should be developed to connect public areas to other parts of Freeland.

B. Encourage new development to include open space and recreational areas that connect with existing reserve areas.

## ***RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES***

### **Population Growth and Density**

1. Benchmarks for population and employment growth should be established so that an annual monitoring process may be established with a detailed evaluation every seven years

2. A long-term monitoring and evaluation program for the Freeland Non Municipal Urban Growth Areas should be established that is modeled after that which is set forth in RCW 36.70A.215. The long-term monitoring program should commence with the first annual review after adoption then every seven years after that.

3. The Buildable Lands Analysis in this plan, and in Appendix B, is an important tool used to determine that the Freeland NMUGA is achieving the desired densities. The Buildable Lands Analysis establishes a baseline of existing conditions, while future analyses should take note of trends in densities and uses. This analysis should continue to be a fundamental tool for evaluating consumption of land since the previous analysis and for evaluating the availability of land for commercial, residential, and industrial uses over a 20 year planning timeframe.

4. Population growth within Freeland should be monitored relative to the county-wide population projection provided by the Office of Financial Management and the respective share that is allocated to Freeland.

5. Population growth within Freeland should be monitored relative to the county-wide goal of achieving a 50/50 urban-rural split of new population.

6. Island County should monitor the number of new residential parcels that are created on an annual basis relative to the density that is allowed in the underlying zoning category. Island County should monitor the number and location of residential building permits that are issued each year.

### **Environmental Quality**

1. Pursuant to the Growth Management Act, Island County has adopted and implemented a Critical Areas Ordinance. Island County is required to conduct a detailed review of the Critical Areas Ordinance every seven years beginning after adoption. This detailed review requires the use of best available science in establishing critical areas that must be protected and the buffers and standards that must be adhered to. Island County should continue to implement and enforce the county-wide Critical Areas Ordinance in Freeland.

2. The Critical Areas Ordinance should continue to protect wetlands, streams, geologically hazardous areas, steep slopes, bald eagle habitat, osprey and heron habitat, kelp and eelgrass beds, commercial and recreational shellfish beds, pacific herring and sand lance spawning grounds, archaeological areas, a variety of flora and fauna, habitats of local importance, and natural heritage lands and preserves.

3. Island County should continue conducting field visits and updating maps that show the location of environmentally sensitive features. This mapped data should be made available to the public via the Internet, at public libraries, and at county offices.

4. Island County should continue to maintain the South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection District and to implement the South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection Program and water quality monitoring until upland point and non-point sources of fecal coliform have been reduced, thus ensuring that the water quality in Holmes Harbor is suitable and safe conditions for shellfish harvesting, swimming, and wading.



# ***TRANSPORTATION***

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## **BACKGROUND**

No traffic or transportation analysis was conducted as a part of the Sub Area Planning Committee's process in developing this plan. However, this draft of the plan includes some additional information describing intersection levels of service within the Freeland Area and Island County's Draft Transportation Improvement Program for 2008-2013.

### **Scenic Byway**

State Route 525, which bisects the proposed Freeland NMUGA, has been designated as a scenic byway by the Washington DOT. This scenic byway designation provides access to certain grants and imposes some additional regulations on signage. Island County Commissioners adopted the final Whidbey Scenic Isle Way Corridor Management Plan on December 16, 2004. This Corridor Management plan establishes goals for the corridor, analyzes current conditions, provides transportation system recommendations, seeks to preserve and enhance the byway's character, makes signing and wayfinding recommendations, develops marketing strategies, and provides an action plan to improve the corridor. This plan does not have specific regulations for developments, but it does make some recommendations, such as to create a scenic byway overlay zone in Freeland.

### **Highway Corridor**

The relationship between Freeland as a community and State Route 525 as a major transportation corridor can be described as both complimentary and conflicting. How people use SR 525 and their attitudes towards its purpose and function vary a great deal. A primary goal of this sub area plan is to harmonize this relationship through the development of goals, policies, and regulations that protect the scenic qualities of SR 525's surroundings. These goals should improve the character of the community and promote a robust economic environment within Freeland.

SR 525 is the gateway into Freeland for those who call this community home as well as for those staying for just a short visit. It acts as the major portal used by all residents of South Whidbey Island who rely on Freeland's commercial and service industries. It is also a major thoroughfare through Freeland for those on their way to other parts of the County.

SR 525 has several major vistas overlooking Holmes Harbor and across rural landscapes to Mutiny Bay and is lined with proud stands of mature Douglas Fir and Western Red Cedar. These rural surroundings help delineate a logical outer boundary for the proposed NMUGA.

Within the proposed Freeland Future Growth Planning Area (*Refer to Map 1*), the corridor travels through a number of different landscapes and uses. It is important to address the aesthetic and functional qualities of the highway corridor within the entire Future Growth Planning Area and establish standards that are consistent with both Freeland and the surrounding Future Growth Planning Area.

Currently, SR 525 provides important physical and visual access to many existing businesses that rely on visibility and accessibility to ensure their success. On the other hand, increasing traffic congestion on the highway and inadequate development standards could potentially threaten the economic viability of many businesses and the safety of pedestrians and commuters.

The Freeland Survey of 2000 asked a number of questions related to the SR 525 highway corridor through Freeland. The goal of this portion of the survey was to determine how many people use SR 525 on a daily basis. It was assumed that travelers either travel through Freeland, or they travel to Freeland to take advantage of the commercial services; additionally, it was important to assess these users' opinions of the functional and aesthetic qualities of the highway corridor. The results showed that a vast majority of users desire a more attractive and safer highway corridor. Recurring opinions supported the retention of native vegetation, mature trees, increased landscaping, attractive architecture, improved safety, and the addition of trails or sidewalks. Most users, however, focused on limiting the number, size, type, and style of signs located along the highway.

In response to the opinions gathered in the survey, one potential tool to address these concerns would be to delineate a highway corridor overlay zone. This zone could be defined by a set of goals, objectives, and implementing development regulations. It may be appropriate to have sub designations within the highway overlay zone with unique standards to address the different land uses that are adjacent to the highway corridor. Highway corridor standards within the NMUGA should address urban types of commercial, industrial, and residential development. Areas located outside of the NMUGA, but within the proposed Future Growth Planning Area, may have standards that are less stringent yet still retain an element of consistency with NMUGA development patterns. Future Growth Planning Area standards would focus more attention on significant tree retention along the highway.

Goals and policies should be developed for a Highway 525 overlay zone to reduce or eliminate individual access points serving a single interest in favor of consolidated access points that serve multiple establishments. Also, small-scale signage is an appropriate tool that should be used to route travelers off the highway and into Freeland at consolidated access points to take advantage of the many services available along Freeland's Main Street.

Numerous comments and concerns have been raised about providing a public walking or bike riding trail located within the highway corridor overlay zone. Trails and paths should not only provide for a more connected and attractive community, they should achieve a higher level of safety by routing pedestrian travel off the highway shoulder and away from the high speed automotive travel on the highway.

Building setbacks within the highway corridor are an important standard that should be incorporated into implementing development regulations. Setbacks could potentially push development away from the highway, allowing for an increased ability to provide for some visual buffering through the use of significant tree retention and landscaping. In residential areas, buffering may be appropriate for screening a future development from the noise and distractions of the highway. In commercial zones, landscaping standards should be used as a means of softening the appearance of development rather than hiding it.

Signage will have a great deal of impact on the highway corridor. A number of other communities have been plagued by a lack of control over signage. Typically businesses try to compete with other businesses by building bigger and more visible signs to passersby. The result is clutter; neither the business nor the consumer benefit because too many signs try to attract attention, and signs drown each other out. Standards should be developed that limit the size, scale, type, and location of signs while still providing adequate advertising exposure.

The Freeland portion of SR 525 is designated as a scenic corridor. In order to maintain this designation, special attention should be given to efforts that help beautify future development. It is important to note that development along the corridor will not necessarily result in a removal of a scenic corridor designation as long as development takes place in a proper and responsible manner. Many towns located along scenic highways continue to maintain this designation due to attention to detail.

## **Circulation**

A great deal of public input has been received regarding vehicular, pedestrian, and non-motorized travel within Freeland. Transportation is a personal activity, a social service, and an industry. The community of Freeland is directly affected by varying types and scales of existing transportation facilities and infrastructure. These facilities are maintained and operated by various agencies including the Washington State Department of Transportation, Island Transit, and Island County. Coordination between the community, County, State, public transit agencies, industry, and local business is essential to ensure an effective transportation system. Transportation systems must meet identified and projected transportation needs in a timely and cost effective manner. The need to protect rural character while maintaining increased levels of service (LOS) can sometimes present conflicting goals.

The array of transportation facilities and services in Island County must fit projected needs within the limits of preserving rural character. Safety, coordination, and efficiency in a wide variety of transportation modes in Freeland are essential. Increases in population are inevitable and traffic circulation can play a significant role in the character and appeal of the regional community. The impacts of population growth on the quality of life in Freeland should be considered. Land use planning and transportation planning should be coordinated. The following issues have been identified as the important factors effecting the efficiency and circulation in Freeland:

- Business Core/Commercial Delivery
- Automobile Traffic
- Non-Motorized Transportation
- Transit
- Parking

## **Business Core**

To preserve economic development opportunities in Freeland, transportation proposals should consider impacts on vehicle dependant businesses, and circulation goals should create an attractive environment for business patrons who are both on foot and in vehicles.

Infrastructure which encourages walking in a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment has long been both a common suggestion and a high priority for the residents of Freeland. The 2006 Main Street Concept Study helped the community identify ways to encourage pedestrians while continuing to accommodate vehicles such that business patrons might park in one place and then walk and shop along the Main Street business core. The concept study resulted in the following suggestions from the community:

- Retain “small town” character
- Landscaping – fully mature plantings and trees – along Main Street that is not too uniform and uses low maintenance, drought tolerant, native plants
- Public art
- Transit stop improvements (such as pull-outs and bus stops)
- On street parking on Main Street (combinations of angled and parallel) that retains the number of parking spaces, possibly by consolidating some into a central municipal parking lot
- Sidewalks on both sides of the street (which maintain rural in character, i.e. not too wide – around 6 feet – and with simple design treatments such as gray scored concrete with accent pavers)
- Use durable and cost effective materials
- Controlled driveway access
- Street amenities such as benches, trash receptacles and pedestrian-scale lighting
- Planted medians east and west of the business core (Concept A of the Main Street Study) or a roundabout at the corner of Main and Harbor Ave. (Concept B)
- Mid-block crossings at certain locations
- Curb bulb-outs at intersections

These improvements would allow for coordination among pedestrian, vehicle, and transit uses. Future development and population increases may require designated corridors to allow commercial to avoid the residential and high-density business zones. Businesses may require increased delivery areas which allow large trucks the freedom to maneuver.

Currently, commercial traffic, including tractor-trailer, must share the main arterial with commuter and pedestrian traffic, resulting in increased traffic delays. Future development and population increases may require designated areas for commercial traffic corridors which avoid residential and high-density business zones. Businesses that receive deliveries may require increased delivery areas with sufficient area to allow large trucks the freedom to maneuver.

## **Automobile Traffic**

Currently, the principal traffic controls in Freeland consist of four-way and two-way stop signs. Speed limits are mainly restricted to 25 miles per hour in the business core and 35 miles per hour in the outlying areas. Island County Public Works Department has applied



- 2009 to 2012 – SR 525/Honeymoon Bay Road Signal – Intersection improvements with minor channelization, planned joint funding with STP(S) and WSDOT
- 2011 to 2013 – Freeland Main Street Improvements – road reconstruction, curb, gutter, and sidewalk.

### **Non-Motorized Transportation**

Non-Motorized transportation is usually defined as pedestrian, bicycles, and equestrian activities. Proper infrastructure that promotes non-motorized activities can have a positive effect on a community. Non-Motorized forms of transportation can result in reduced levels of air pollution, smaller parking lots, and lighter traffic. These aesthetically pleasing attributes contribute to a small community by preserving elements of rural character.

Currently, Freeland does not have sufficient pedestrian infrastructure to encourage non-motorized transportation as a viable alternative to driving a car. Within the Freeland Business core, only 170 lineal feet of sidewalk exists on 8,300 lineal feet of roadway. The recent addition of a senior care facility within the Freeland Business core has placed a higher priority on improved pedestrian infrastructure to preserve the health and safety of Freeland residents. It may be appropriate for specified areas of future pedestrian infrastructure development to incorporate sidewalk design standards that meet ADA standards. Providing adequate separation between sidewalk and traffic lanes when possible is another design consideration when analyzing the overall circulation layout.

Bicycle riding is another form of non-motorized transportation that can improve community aesthetics with minimal impact and cost. The lack of accommodations for bicycle riders currently creates hazards for both cyclists and motorists. SR 525 is listed as a dedicated bicycle route by a number of bicycle clubs; future establishment of a dedicated bicycle path could potentially lead to increased tourist attraction and a solid alternative for commuters.

The Freeland NMUGA is limited in its space for providing for equestrian facilities. Island County has established areas throughout the county to accommodate the interests of equestrian riders.

### **Transit**

Island Transit's mission is to increase mobility while decreasing traffic congestion, resulting in efficient travel throughout Island County. In pursuit of this goal, Freeland must establish a transit system that provides a realistic alternative to driving a car. Coordination between the residents of Freeland, Island County, and Island Transit is an important element in the success of a regional transit system that achieves the goals of all agencies and riders. Transit needs can be divided into three types of services to Freeland residents:

- Regional: Connect Freeland to regional Urban Growth areas as well as other means of transportation systems like the Washington State Ferry system.
- Local: Connecting the Freeland business core with outlying residential areas.
- In-town: Convenient, small-scale cross-town shuttle.

Future plans for Freeland should consider transit development and incorporation as an implementation strategy.

### **Parking**

Currently Freeland has an abundance of vehicle parking. A parking survey performed in July 2000 showed that Freeland contained approximately 250 parking spaces beyond that required by the Island County development regulations for the business core. However, much of the parking is not clearly defined and is not efficiently laid out to provide for the needs of the businesses or patrons. The success of parking in Freeland depends on using parking and commercial areas more efficiently to accommodate transit, pedestrian and bicycle uses. Other issues pertaining to parking involve sufficient landscaping to soften the appearance of the parking area along with the addition of design techniques to balance aesthetic impacts of parking areas with safe and efficient circulation.

## ***TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND POLICIES***

### **Adopted Regulations and Plans**

Roadside signs and outdoor advertising are controlled by the 1971 Washington State Scenic Vistas Act. This act places regulations on the place, size, and type of signs and advertisements that can be placed along the roadsides of interstates and scenic byways.

Island County's Whidbey Scenic Isle Way Corridor Management Plan has recommendations that relate directly to Freeland about interpretive messages, themes, and ideas for development and signage near SR 525 such as:

- Wayfinding to experience Freeland on foot – markers for wetland, trails, etc
- Interpretive signs about the history of Freeland and its early Socialist development
- Value of retaining native vegetation in an urban setting

Additionally, a local committee involved in the historic site commemoration project is currently coordinating with Island County and Washington State Department of Transportation on the placement of directional signing to help visitors find Freeland Hall.

The Freeland Sub Area Planning Committee also recommends creating a highway corridor overlay zone in Freeland for SR 525. The goal of the overlay zone is to consolidate access for businesses, enhance safety at pedestrian crossings, and add trails, paths, and sidewalks to better connect pedestrian and bicycle environments. The committee recommends that the following policies be included in standards and regulations for development within close proximity to the highway:

**Goal:**

Provide for a safe, connected, and economically robust commercial environment along the highway corridor that fits within the natural and physical landscape of Freeland and that preserves the scenic qualities of SR 525.

**Policies:**

General

- A. All new commercial, multi-family, or residential projects containing two or more dwelling units or modifications, renovations, and other improvements to same should be subject to a design review and the provisions of the overlay designation.
- B. Preservation of the natural scenic qualities enjoyed by those traveling on SR 525 should be given high priority when siting uses and structures.
- C. Development policies in the highway corridor should include incentives and options for landowners and developers to encourage attractive development along the highway corridor. These incentives could include increased densities in return for increased setbacks or other site plan considerations.
- D. Where possible, new residential subdivisions on parcels that are adjacent to the highway corridor should provide adequate tree retention and buffering in order to screen future residential construction.
- E. Where buffering is not possible, meandering road layout should be encouraged.
- F. Where buffering is not possible, parcel layout should strive to vary the orientation of residential structures throughout the subdivision.
- G. Deviations from roadway levels of service, in terms of carrying capacity and intersection performance, should not be exceeded without proper mitigation.

Future Growth Planning Area

- A. Preservation of the natural scenic qualities enjoyed by those traveling on SR 525 should be given high priority when siting uses and structures.
- B. To the fullest extent practicable, development within the Future Growth Planning Area should provide adequate screening by means of tree retention, buffering, landscaping, or other natural means that will hide development.
- C. On those parcels adjacent to the highway with significant stands of timber, straight driveways that allow the SR 525 traveler to see into the site and view the use should be avoided.
- D. New structures and uses should be adequately set back from the highway.

E. The siting of structures and uses on landscapes that are open and void of significant stands of timber should take into account the views and vistas enjoyed by those traveling on SR 525. To the fullest extent practicable, new structures and uses should be located to avoid blocking scenic views or vistas.

F. Utilities should be located underground wherever possible.

G. Signage associated with residential uses should be limited to monument signs that identify the name of the development and shall be located at the main entrance.

H. Landowners should be expected to keep their property, whether commercial or residential, clean and free of trash, garbage, or junk. This includes burning barrels, dilapidated automobiles, and any other object commonly understood to be junk, trash, or garbage.

#### Visual Impact: Setback, Vegetation, and Landscaping

A. To the fullest extent practical, existing significant trees and under-story vegetation should be preserved and incorporated into the landscape design of development.

B. Landscaping and design standards, in addition to those established in the underlying zoning district, should be developed and applied to all new development or redevelopment within the overlay district. Particular attention should be paid to those parcels that are adjacent to SR 525.

C. A primary purpose of landscaping on parcels that are adjacent to SR 525 is to “soften” the appearance of the use and provide for visual buffering between the highway and the use. Landscaping consists of trees, plants, berms, and other natural features as should be prescribed in specific design guidelines.

D. Buildings should be designed in accordance with specific design guidelines that address such aspects as color, style, material, and location. Corporate and franchise architecture should fit the character and desired appearance of Freeland.

E. Building placement and scale should be consistent with the image of Freeland as a village. Several buildings or the use of modulation and design elements that give the appearance of smaller street frontages are favored over single building masses with large monolithic faces visible along street frontages.

F. Parking should be adequately screened from travelers of SR 525.

G. Utilities should be located underground whenever possible.

H. Storage, loading dock facilities, and garbage areas should be enclosed with building materials complementary to the primary structures or landscaped such that they are not visible.

### Signage/Lighting

- A. No off-site outdoor advertising signs or structures should be permitted. No on-site outdoor advertising signs, except such signs or structures which pertain directly to permitted commercial uses on that site and which are located on or immediately adjacent to such uses, should be permitted.
- B. Excessively tall, large, internally illuminated, and/or neon signs should be prohibited.
- C. Lighting should be limited to that necessary for safety and directional concerns.
- D. Lighting of individual uses should not be directed towards the highway nor should illumination encroach upon the SR 525 right-of-way.
- E. Small-scale signage that informs the traveler of available commercial services within Freeland and that directs the traveler to those services is the preferred form of signage along the highway.
- F. Signage that is intended to attract the attention of those traveling on SR 525 should be sized relative to its distance from the highway.
- G. Signage that greets the traveler to Freeland should be placed at all designated "Gateways to Freeland."
- H. Signage associated with residential uses should be limited to monument signs that identify the name of the development and should be located at the main entrance.

### Traffic Flow/Safety

- A. Highway access should be constructed so as to minimize the number of access points to SR 525. Turn lanes and collector routes are strongly encouraged over individual access points.
- B. Strategies should be developed that encourage and enable consolidation of existing points of access.
- C. Joint use parking facilities is strongly encouraged.
- D. The safe movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists is a primary consideration in design guidelines for the area.
- E. Sight triangles on corner lots should not be obstructed. Adequate visibility at major intersections in the corridor should be ensured by increasing the mandated size of sight triangles where necessary.
- F. Roadway levels of service, in terms of carrying capacity and intersection performance, should not be exceeded without proper mitigation.

### Biking/Hiking Trail

- A. Biking and/or hiking trails should be developed in cooperation with Washington DOT, Island County and private property owners. These trails should allow for connectivity between other underlying zones.
- B. The bike/hike trail should be equally suitable for commuters and recreational users.

### Trash/Garbage

- A. Landowners should be expected to keep their property, whether commercial or residential, clean and free of trash, garbage, or junk. This includes burning barrels, dilapidated automobiles, and any other object commonly understood to be junk, trash, or garbage.
- B. Garbage and trash receptacles that are associated with commercial uses should be adequately screened from the highway.
- C. It is recognized that for the commercial area between SR 525 and Main Street that most of the businesses will be facing Main Street and will have their back to the highway. It is therefore especially important in this area to ensure that storage of garbage should fully screened from the highway.

## **Circulation Recommendations**

### **Goal:**

Provide for an efficient transportation network that addresses vehicular, pedestrian, and non-motorized modes individually, as well as their interconnectivity with each other.

### **Policies:**

- A. Emphasis should be placed on finalizing and implementing the 2006 Main Street Concept Study for the Business Village zone, which focuses on encouraging the use of non-motorized and pedestrian friendly modes of transport.
- B. Functioning, accessible safe pathways, sidewalks, and trails – which are designed to retain rural visual character and are constructed from durable, cost effective materials – should be included in all traffic planning and development plans.
- C. Priority should be placed on ensuring that the various modes of transport are interconnected with each other.
- D. As underground utilities are installed – such as water, sewer, stormwater, power, phone, and television – sidewalks, pathways, and trails should be included in the same rights-of-way in a coordinated planned effort.

E. With increased densities and intensities of land use in the Freeland area, the development regulations should include standards for these improvements, with developers and landowners each paying their fare share.

## **Parking Standards**

### **Goal:**

Provide parking areas that are safe for both vehicle and pedestrian traffic with minimal visual and circulatory impact.

### **Policies:**

A. Joint-use and off-site parking areas should be encouraged, especially on the periphery of Freeland, removing automobile traffic from the Freeland core.

B. Landscaping should be required to reduce the visual impact of parking.

C. Well-marked pedestrian pathways through parking areas should be required.

## ***RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES***

### **Transportation**

1. Coordinated planning efforts should continue in conjunction with the Washington State Department of Transportation. Areas of focus should include access off of the highway, locations of transit stops, highway signage, highway signalization, and vegetative management.

2. Coordinated planning efforts should continue in conjunction with Island Transit. Areas of focus should include transit stop locations, transit stops appearance, transit routes, and shuttle service within Freeland.

3. Freeland Non-Motorized Transportation Plan should be developed that identifies potential pedestrian and biking paths. The Plan should focus on multiple goals including pedestrian oriented paths within the Freeland Village area that connect the various commercial uses; pedestrian and biking paths that connect commercial areas, residential areas and open spaces; centralized and evenly spaced bike lock ups within the commercial, industrial and mixed use areas; and pedestrian and biking paths that connect commercial and residential areas to transit stops.



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## ***HOUSING***

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Housing**

Housing is one of the most important elements in our lives and in our communities today. Buying a house is usually the largest purchase a family makes. The housing industry is a major partner in the economic life of our communities: as a consumer of goods and services, as a producer of dwelling units, and as a provider jobs and income for citizens.

Creation of affordable housing is a significant challenge that needs to be addressed in the Freeland area. The abundance of view amenities and the rural character of Freeland and the lack of buildable land have contributed to escalating housing prices. The growth of businesses and service industry in Freeland will require more employees in the future. These employees need housing at a rate they can afford. Many types of low-income households (elderly, disabled, single parents, etc.) cannot afford adequate housing; or they find that their incomes, after housing costs are paid, are inadequate to buy other necessities. Moreover, many first-time homebuyers cannot afford the down payment or qualify for a loan to purchase even a modest home. Consequently, housing affordability is an important issue in Freeland is affordability.

Several types of developments have been identified that can contribute to more affordable housing.

#### **Cluster Housing**

Under the guidance of a Planned Residential Development (PRD), a developer could potentially receive more flexibility in the overall density and setbacks requirements of a residential development in exchange for building homes in a specified lower price range.

#### **Medium and High-Density Housing**

Future expansion of medium and high-density housing including apartments, condominiums, duplexes, and triplexes can be an effective tool in providing affordable housing. The creation of a significant supply of medium and high-density housing in Freeland will likely require the development of sewer and stormwater infrastructure. In an effort to mitigate the traffic impacts on surrounding neighborhoods, high-density housing should be located as close as possible to business and transit connectors.

#### **Manufactured Homes**

Manufactured homes can be an effective solution to affordable housing. Manufactured homes shall be encouraged in the Freeland area located close to business or transit services. Development regulations would also need to address criteria to ensure proper future development of mobile manufactured homes on single lots in an effort to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of residents in the Freeland area.

#### **Auxiliary/Accessory Housing**

Auxiliary/accessory, or mother-in-law, housing can in many cases provide additional affordable housing without major changes to the existing structure or overall aesthetics of a

region. Future projects should pay particular attention to appearance and the maintenance of any landscaping in an effort to preserve the established rural character of Freeland. Auxiliary and accessory housing options can be expanded depending on septic, sewer, and zoning limitations. Auxiliary/Accessory housing shall be encouraged in the Business Village, Business General, and Mixed use areas of Freeland through the use of apartment units associated with the business buildings. Auxiliary/Accessory units shall be permitted in the residential zones of Freeland. These units shall be for the use of family members and/or caregivers and shall not be converted for use as rental units for unrelated parties.

## ***HOUSING GOALS AND POLICIES***

### **Housing Standards**

#### **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. Clustering should be encouraged as a means of protecting and preserving critical areas.
- C. 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.
- D. Residential developments should require a landscaping plan that requires the retention of existing native vegetation.
- E. Encourage and allow mother-in-law and guest cottage development as a means of infill.
- F. Permit the use of open space areas in residential developments for trails and walkways, and, where desired by applicants, permit trail systems through open space areas to neighboring properties as connections to other trail systems.
- G. Provide for a variety of residential densities.
- H. Limit overall area that can be developed for large lot residential development.
- I. Street yard setbacks should be based on road classifications.
- J. Lot size averaging is allowed in subdivisions and short plats.

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

## ***RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES***

### **Housing**

1. Affordable housing policies and regulations should be developed that promote residential construction affordable to a range of median income families. Guest cottages, mother-in-law dwellings, density bonuses, and mixed uses are all tools that can be used to encourage a range of small to large scale affordable housing projects.

2. Data that need to be collected included: house purchase affordability gap for buyers, home ownership rate, trend of housing costs as compared to median income, rental vacancy rate, housing affordability for low income households.



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## ***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT***

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*November, 2007*

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Economic Development**

This sub area plan is intended to guide long-term improvements in the use of land, labor, and capital resources in Freeland during the next 20-years.

Inadequate transportation, stormwater, water, and sewer systems have been limiting factors in the economic development of South Whidbey Island for many years. However, with proper planning and policies, Freeland has qualities that can provide a strong economic future for its citizens and regional population. Freeland 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 location, along with attributes of charm and quality of life, provides a great setting for a diversified economy.

#### **Existing Economic Activity**

Continued reliance on off-island employment sources stresses the County's already limited transportation accessibility to the mainland. A vital, resourceful economy is the only sure way to provide services, opportunities, and benefits for our future and ourselves. A strong community oriented center will drastically improve the opportunity to generate economic activity and create an employment base.

#### **Opportunities for Economic Development**

In order to enhance Freeland's economy, new business development compatible with the area is essential. Freeland is the de facto center of commerce for South Whidbey Island and as such it needs to provide economic development opportunities beyond those necessary for just the people living in the immediate Freeland area.

Freeland should strive to attract and site desirable business and commercial development best suited to the Island's environment by taking into consideration transportation, water, stormwater, and sewer limitations. In addition, Freeland should strive to attract and site business and commercial development that supports development within the urban growth area, and provides both living wage jobs and locally needed goods and services. Examples could 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.

Changes in the workplace, such as advances in computer and telecommunications technology, will affect Freeland'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 community should support changes that would make Freeland more self sufficient and less subject to drastic change by outside economic interests.

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

“Primary” businesses that inject new money into Freeland’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 Freeland economy less dependent on transportation should be encouraged. 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 which encourage air and water conservation should be pursued. Protection of the environment and rural character can be achieved by directing new business and commercial development into Freeland, 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.

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. 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 to provide a higher quality of life for their employees. This should be a factor in development of businesses in Freeland.

### **Diversified Economy**

Overall economic development with a regional orientation should be pursued in cooperation with the private sector to target projects aimed at diversifying and stabilizing the economy. However, a diversified economy requires a self-sustaining community that can furnish transportation, infrastructure, and affordable housing consistent with job locations and wages, particularly as Freeland attempts to expand its job base so that residents are not required to commute off-island for well-paying jobs. This requires the implementation of mechanisms for encouraging and assisting the development of desired economic activity such as land use, zoning regulations, policies and procedures.

### **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. There is no historic preservation district within the Freeland NMUGA, nor are there any federal or state listed historic structures or sites. However, preservation of locally recognized historic buildings and landmarks that are significant to the community and its identity may be considered. Preservation goals for Freeland are: to identify Freeland’s historical resources, to protect and preserve these resources in a manner that respects their importance, to foster the understanding and appreciation of the importance of the area’s heritage, and to develop a

mechanism that balances the property owner's right to reasonable use of their property while preserving any significant cultural resources.

## ***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES***

### **Economic Development**

#### **Goal:**

Encourage diverse economic development within the capacities of natural resources, public services, and facilities. Economic Development strategies should include efforts to create opportunities for unemployed and disadvantaged residents as well as efforts to target areas experiencing insufficient economic growth. Job development should be focused on the retail, service, and manufacturing sectors but should acknowledge, as a basis for planning, that the goals of preserving rural lands and enhancing economic vitality are complementary and not mutually exclusive.

#### **Policies:**

A. Encourage a variety of economic activities within appropriate areas of Freeland. These may include tourism, professional, information processing, and commercial development.

B. Encourage economic activities that efficiently use the commercial land within Freeland.

C. Promote attractive pedestrian friendly business areas through the use of design, landscaping, and unified walkways by finalizing and implementing the community suggestions outlined in the 2006 Main Street Concept Study.

D. The range of permitted and conditional uses identified in each of the land use designations should compliment each other. Land uses that directly support "Primary" businesses should be identified, allowed, and cited within appropriate land use designations.

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

F. Retain existing businesses in the community and minimize obstacles to their expansion, where appropriate.

G. The development of "living wage" employment opportunities is encouraged to reduce off-island commuting and to provide career opportunities.

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

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

J. Marinas and water-related commercial uses should develop in accordance with the Shoreline Master Program.

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

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

M. Encourage home occupations and home industries.

N. Businesses that reduce commuting and make the Freeland economy less dependent on transportation should be encouraged.

O. Businesses and commercial developments should be designed to minimize conflicts with adjoining areas.

## **Historic Preservation**

### **Goal:**

Identify Freeland's historic resources and protect and preserve these resources in a manner that respects their importance.

### **Policies:**

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

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

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

## **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 within the community.

B. Provide for other small-scale recreation and tourist uses in the community, such as restaurants, wineries, and breweries on parcels of an appropriate size; all activities should be screened from the view of adjacent neighbors and the use should not disrupt the character of any surrounding permitted uses.

***RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES***

**Economic Development**

1. A streamlined permit process for commercial and industrial developments should be implemented in order to improve the timeliness of the permit process.
2. Island County should seek the assistance of the Island County Economic Development Council to establish a strategy for attracting businesses to Freeland that are clean, environmentally friendly, and provide living wage jobs.
3. The 2005 Main Street Concept Study uses community participation to promote an attractive, pedestrian friendly, robust commercial core. In finalizing and implementing this plan, particular attention should be paid towards design, landscaping, lighting, signage, parking, trails and massing, and coordination with sewer and stormwater improvements.
4. Efforts should be made to ensure that the commercial centers of Freeland are connected to vital infrastructure and transportation systems that encourage efficient use of the limited commercial land within Freeland.



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## ***CAPITAL FACILITIES***

## ***BACKGROUND***

### **Parks, Recreation, and Gathering Places**

Public spaces add to the quality of life of a community. Whether they are parks, land preserved in its natural state, or a community center, the public area helps the community to develop a positive identity. From the growth of this positive identity comes a host of other benefits to the community including, but not limited to: increased civic pride, community involvement, environmental awareness and conservation, and increased property values. As such, Freeland should consider integrating the concepts from the 2006 Main Street Concept Study into its development of a well-written plan for improving both the quality and quantity of its public spaces.

Freeland's existing parks and recreational areas will continue to attract people to the region. Goals and policies aimed at maintaining and potentially expanding public areas in Freeland will only result in positive benefits to the community

There have been many ideas on how to expand recreation and public gathering places, such as:

- The development of a “Town Square” as a central gathering place and focal point for the community
- Acquisition of more land for both developed and undeveloped parks and open space, as well as requirements for parks and open space to be included in new residential developments either as part of the development plan or through a “fee in lieu of” arrangement
- Planning and development of a trail system throughout the area that will connect community parks, the Freeland Village area, and residential areas, and eventually connect to an island-wide trail system. Trails should be suitable for a range of minimal impact forms of transportation options
- A youth activity center and skateboard park
- A small boat center for motorized or non-motorized watercraft
- A wooden boardwalk along the Fish Road and Freeland Bog
- Ball fields, tennis courts, and facilities for other sports and recreational pursuits
- A community and/or arts center
- A gateway at the western end of Main Street near the intersection with SR 525
- Street improvements that encourage walking such as sidewalks, midblock crossings, intersection curb bulb-outs, non-uniform landscaping, benches, trash receptacles, and pedestrian-scale lighting

- Small parks and garden rooms along Main Street
- Access through Freeland Park to recreational activities such as shellfish harvest, wading, and swimming once the water quality of Holmes Harbor has been returned to safe and useable levels

The citizens of Freeland have consistently agreed that the availability of parks and recreation is an important community value that must be included in the community's future growth plan. It is the opinion of residents in Freeland that recreational facilities, open space, and gathering places should serve a broad range of interests and that these places should serve as a basis for the development of Freeland's character while still maintaining the protection of the environment as a high priority.

Throughout the planning process, the community has strongly voiced a need for improved public spaces as a major component of and benefit for Freeland's future.

As Freeland citizens have organized to make their dreams reality, there is also evidence that Freeland, and the entire South Whidbey community, is willing to financially support their desire for greater recreational opportunities. In the 1991 County Parks and Recreation Survey, more than 75% of South Whidbey respondents indicated a willingness to pay for more facilities and open space. Forming a local improvement district (LID) to physically capture that support is only one option for securing the necessary financial backing to achieve the goals that Freeland creates for itself. Other proposed funding and acquisition mechanisms include:

- Federal, State, and non-profit organization grants
- Friends of Freeland fundraising efforts
- Joint acquisition and development by public agencies
- Private donations (land or funds)
- "Fee in lieu of" arrangements based on a master plan
- Density/development bonuses in exchange for parks or green space

With an attractive system of parks, gathering places, trails, and open spaces, Freeland will have a solid foundation on which to build itself into a well-planned and balanced island village.

## **Infrastructure**

The Growth Management Act requires that an area designated as an NMUGA should provide for such urban services as sewer, water, and stormwater utilities. Two primary issues that continue to be raised are how much these services will cost each landowner and the effect that availability of these services will have on the rate of development. These issues aside, installation of these facilities to serve existing development would improve Freeland's

current situation because centralized sanitary sewer and stormwater systems will improve conditions related to failing septic systems; this could potentially decrease the fecal coliform contamination of South Holmes Harbor and ensure that the Harbor is safe for shellfish harvesting, swimming, and wading. Additionally, this infrastructure will allow for: effective management and treatment of sewage, higher levels of groundwater recharge, and a more efficient use of lands that are currently occupied by on-site septic and stormwater infrastructure.

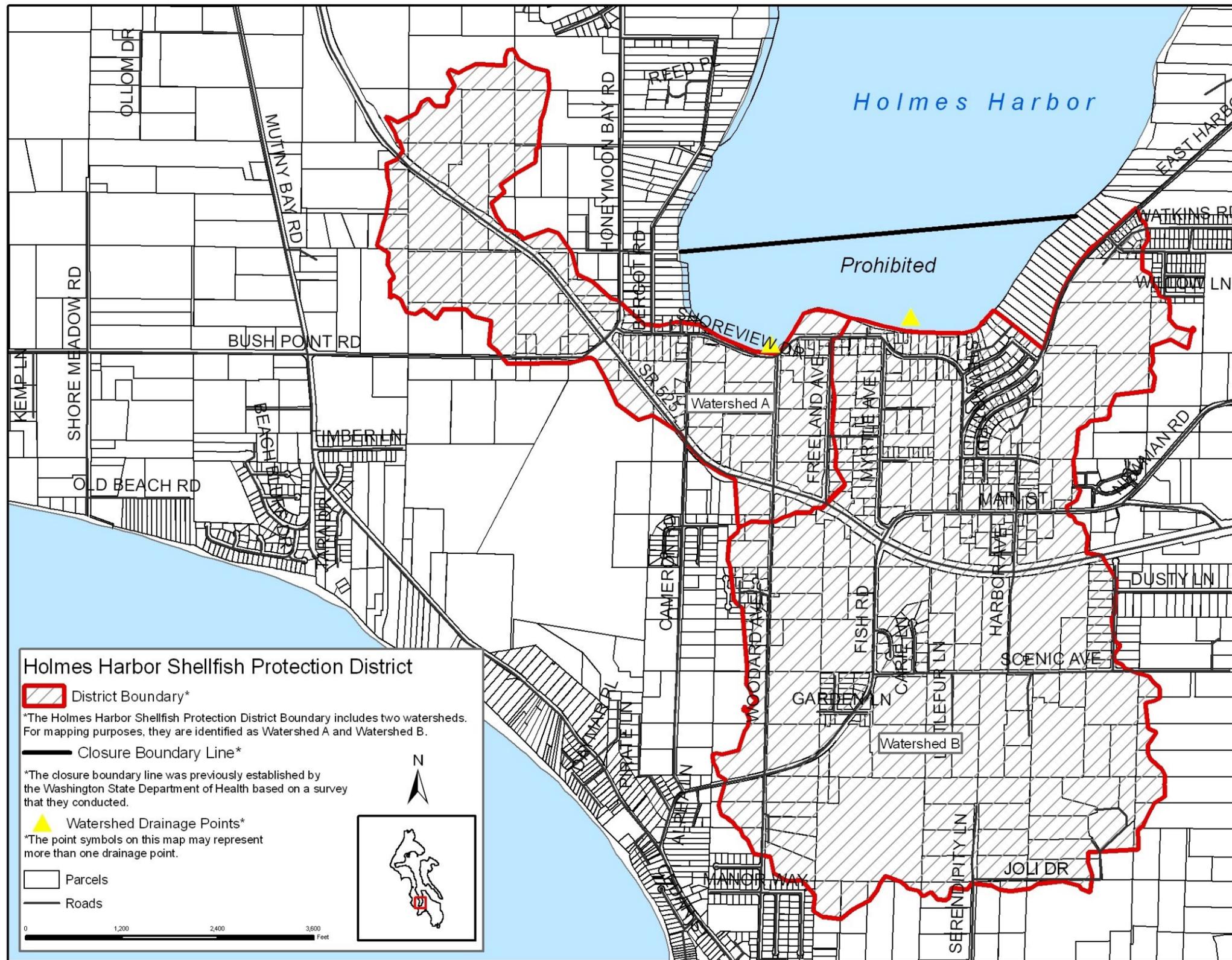
Routine shoreline sanitary surveys in 2006 identified fecal coliform bacteria as a primary pollutant affecting South Homes Harbor. Fecal coliform is identified as having an adverse impact on shellfish and other aquatic habitats. While fecal coliform bacteria do not directly cause disease, their presence suggests that the water may contain other disease causing agents. Data from the survey show that fecal coliform counts in South Holmes Harbor are high, but the sources have not yet been identified. Possible sources include: pets, livestock, wildlife, and malfunctioning septic systems.

Based on the results of this survey, the Department of Health prohibited shellfish harvesting, swimming, and wading in South Holmes Harbor. The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) requires local government to establish a shellfish protection district as a result of this “prohibited” classification. In response to the RCW requirement, the Board of Island County Commissioners adopted a resolution<sup>12</sup> that established the required district boundaries based on the results from in the shoreline survey (*Refer to Map 9*).

The Board’s resolution also established Island County’s response strategy, the South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection Program. This strategy describes in detail how Island County will ensure full use of South Holmes Harbor. The overall purpose of the strategy is to improve public health and the marine environment in South Holmes Harbor and to conduct actions that will reduce or eliminate upland point and non-point sources of fecal coliform. Elimination of the fecal coliform will ensure safe and suitable water quality conditions.

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<sup>12</sup> Resolution PLG-003-07



Map 9: South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection District

Taken from Island County's South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection Program

## **Water**

The Freeland Water District currently provides drinking water to a large portion of the area defined as the proposed Freeland NMUGA. The Freeland Water District currently has 432 connections, 714 equivalent residential units available for use with a future capacity of 1,152 equivalent residential units. An equivalent residential unit is defined as an amount of water use (gallons per day) that is equivalent to the amount a single household would use. In residential zones, a single house would require a single equivalent residential unit. In commercial and industrial zones, the number of equivalent residential units that a single use would require will vary depending upon how water intensive that use is. Some commercial uses don't use as much water as a residential household does; therefore the equivalent residential unit may be less than one. Other commercial uses may use much more water than a residential household and would therefore require multiple equivalent residential units. Future expansion of the system maybe necessary in order to serve the entire NMUGA at full buildout. The Holmes Harbor Water Company currently provides water to the residents of the Holmes Harbor Golf and Country Club. The 2005 Freeland Comprehensive Sewer Plan and Engineering Report/Facility Plan proposes a wide range of future possibilities for water reclaimed from a centralized sewer system treatment plant. Given that the Freeland community intends to retain the water rights to any reclaimed water, such possibilities include in-town irrigation systems, nearby forest irrigation, and additional land application (as sites are identified in the future). The Freeland Water District would be better able to manage the groundwater resource by reducing the demand on wells, tanks and the distribution network if the treated effluent were used in lieu of potable water. Likewise, redistributing the treated water through irrigation would improve the probability of recharging the aquifer.

## **Sewer**

One of the primary reasons for designating an NMUGA is to enable Freeland to grow as intended in the Vision Statement of this plan. However, an NMUGA also requires that a sanitary sewer system be built to address additional density, failing septic systems, and the resultant drop in water quality. Therefore, the decision to proceed with a sanitary sewer system in Freeland is contingent upon the adoption of the NMUGA.

Two portions within the proposed Freeland NMUGA already have sewer service: 1) The Holmes Harbor Sewer District has the capacity to serve the equivalent of 700 homes in and around the Holmes Harbor Golf Course; and 2) the Main Street Sewer District is sized to serve 41 units of senior housing, the assisted care facility, and a small amount of commercial and office space at the Maple Ridge community center in Freeland.

A sewer system throughout the remaining Freeland NMUGA, as proposed in the 2005 Island County Freeland Comprehensive Sewer Plan and Engineering Report/Facility Plan, could be implemented in expanding phases that would allow increases in density and the ability to construct some multi-family housing and a limited amount of more intense commercial and residential development primarily focused in a commercial core near Main Street. An increase in density is important because the additional land capacity will allow Freeland to accommodate a percentage of the forecasted growth for South and Central Whidbey and would broaden the base to defer sewer service cost to more people.

Sewer infrastructure would allow for effective and efficient management of wastes, potentially increased groundwater quality and aquifer recharge, and greater protection to marine areas containing shellfish beds and nearshore habitat for salmon such as Mutiny Bay and Holmes Harbor. This last goal is particularly pertinent because South Holmes Harbor is currently closed for shellfish harvest, swimming, and wading due of the presence of contaminants, such as fecal coliform; this contamination could potentially be reduced or eliminated with an increase in ground water quality such as might be achieved with a sewer system. However, sewer service would also be viewed by many as a magnet for growth that would eventually lead to the degradation of the community. There is a perception that the installation of sewer would lead to rapid growth, causing traffic congestion and an overall decline in community and public safety. Cost per household will play a key role in determining the financial feasibility of a centralized sewer system that serves the entire NMUGA. For those who own commercial property, the benefit of converting commercial acreage from septic systems to valuable, buildable land could potentially far outweigh the cost of sewer service. For those property owners who are experiencing septic failure or cannot build due to a septic denial, the benefit of connecting to a sewer system may very well outweigh the cost per hook up. And for those property owners with large vacant lands, the cost of hook-up, while potentially severe, could potentially be less than the increase in property value. In contrast, for those who have already built on their land and experience no septic problems, the benefit of sewer service may be minimal.

The 2005 Island County Freeland Comprehensive Sewer Plan and Engineering Report/Facility Plan recommends serving the Freeland NMUGA (excluding the Holmes Harbor Sewer District and the Main Street Sewer District) with a phased, area-wide sewer system that would establish long term sewage collection, treatment, emergency and wintertime storage, and conveyance in addition to effluent discharge or reuse facilities. The purpose of this system would be to allow sewer capacity to match population growth in a cost-effective manner that minimizes potential harm to the environment. The report provides analysis and preliminary engineering for where and how such a system can be built in Freeland. Perhaps the largest challenge for implementation of such a plan is an affordable funding option. Tetra Tech/KCM is currently in the process of completing a Freeland Water and Sewer District Wastewater Facilities Financial Feasibility Study to examine this issue.

### **Stormwater**

Island County Public Works commissioned the 2005 Final Draft Freeland Comprehensive Drainage Plan to meet the comprehensive stormwater planning requirements to support the NMUGA designation as well as to provide a planning tool for Public Works to identify and prioritize surface water requirements within the Freeland Basin for a 20-year planning window. Stormwater infrastructure will be a necessary component for dealing with future development, the impacts development has on the amount of impervious surface created, and how surface water is collected and where it is delivered. Uncontrolled stormwater runoff results in sedimentation and pollution within streams, destruction of hillsides and bluffs, increased flooding and ponding on properties that are downslope from development, and coastal pollution.

Freeland is already fairly developed, with a significant amount of existing impervious surface throughout. Given the number of existing undeveloped lots within the NMUGA boundary,

and the number of lots that could be created under either RAID or NMUGA designations, the amount of impervious surface has the potential to expand exponentially. A stormwater utility would greatly benefit the Freeland community, both in terms of protection and improvement of environmental quality and protection of property values. Like sewer service, stormwater infrastructure must be funded. It too, will have an associated per acre or per connection fee which will directly affect the viability of the service and level of public support generated. Additionally, much of the area in the proposed Freeland NMUGA is designated as Critical Drainage Area, which means an additional set of considerations apply to development and water quality. (See page 48 for additional discussion of Critical Drainage Areas.)

The 2005 Final Draft Freeland Comprehensive Drainage Plan focuses on the following areas: 1) evaluating the existing stormwater infrastructure, 2) modeling the infrastructure based on future land use, 3) identifying water quality issues associated with stormwater and making recommendations to preserve and protect the water quality of wetlands and Holmes Harbor, and 4) preparing cost estimates and a capital improvement plan for these recommendations.

Infrastructure improvements can be implemented in a variety of different ways. Likewise, the method of funding can also vary a great deal. While sewer, water and stormwater infrastructure must be planned for the entire NMUGA, the location and speed of implementation will be entirely dependent upon the will of the property owners within the NMUGA. It is anticipated that infrastructure improvements will be implemented in the commercial core much sooner than in the outer residential areas due to the potential economic incentive of maximizing the use of commercial and industrial land. The decision to develop sewer and stormwater systems will not lie with the County; rather it will be as a result of a large enough contingent of property owners who desire to pay for service in exchange for increasing the development potential of their land.

Coordination and phasing across multiple types of infrastructure improvements can ensure efficiency. For example, the concepts from the Main Street Concept Study will be prioritized based on the plans to update Freeland's sewer infrastructure. The Main Street improvements also present an opportunity to coordinate with stormwater and drainage improvements by incorporating elements such as bio-filtration into new proposed landscaping.

Additional infrastructure may be provided that shares use of easements and rights-of-way, including services such as: telephone, electricity, cable television, and other communication facilities. As such, there are a number of different interests that will be competing for and sharing land areas that should be thoughtfully planned.

### **Community Services and Facilities**

Public facility planning will focus on providing adequate public facilities and services required under the Growth Management Act. Freeland as a Non Municipal Urban Growth Area will continue to rely on Island County's Capital Facilities Plan, which will be updated periodically to reflect the services and facilities needed throughout the county. Public police, fire protection, and health services are all integrated into the County's 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.

Finally, recreational opportunities for the community have been identified as a high priority. In order to create a sense of community, public gathering places, parks, trails, benches, access to shorelines, and market places are essential.

## ***CAPITAL FACILITIES GOALS AND POLICIES***

### **Parks & Gathering Places Standards**

#### **Goal:**

Identify and satisfy community needs and wants related to the spaces used for recreation and public gatherings.

#### **Policies:**

A. Encourage development of Island County parks with a range of recreational facilities in and near the Freeland NMUGA.

B. Encourage developers to include open space and recreational facilities in new development and re-developed areas and/or participate in a fee-in-lieu-of arrangement or other mechanism developed for creating parks and open space.

C. Encourage public and private partnerships in planning and developing parks and open space.

### **Essential Public Facility Policies**

#### **Goal:**

Provide for the efficient and effective siting of essential public facilities.

#### **Policies:**

A. Provision should 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. Development regulations should be broad enough to allow for a variety of public facilities that are needed now and that will be needed to serve future populations by enabling their establishment in a wide variety of zoning designations.

B. Essential public facilities should be adequately defined in the development regulations so that different consideration should be given to facilities that provide for county-wide and regional needs from those that provide for the needs of the Freeland community.

C. The siting of major energy facilities, including throughput transmission facilities, should not be considered essential public facilities. Therefore, comprehensive plan policies, development regulations and other local policies should apply to the siting of such facilities.

D. As a sole source aquifer, protection of Island County's ground water resources is a high priority. A centralized sewer system and a reclaimed water reuse system would provide significant protection to ground water resources and encourage improved recharging.

E. Implementation of centralized sewer and stormwater infrastructure will provide greater efficiency in the use of land by freeing up areas currently devoted to drainfields and stormwater collection facilities.

F. Centralized sewer, water, and stormwater systems will allow for increased densities and more intensive use of commercial and industrial land. Higher densities and more intense use of commercial and industrial land will allow for the more effective management of growth within South and Central Whidbey by enabling that growth to occur in a concentrated manner within the Freeland NMUGA.

G. Even with a centralized stormwater system, as much stormwater as possible should continue to be retained on site versus entering a central collection system. Efforts should be employed for each development that requires or encourages the reduction of impervious surfaces and methods for reducing stormwater runoff, particularly in designated Critical Drainage Areas.

H. Infrastructure associated with communication lines and facilities should be appropriately planned such that rights-of-way and easements are used efficiently and shared with other types of infrastructure.

I. New development and redevelopment should locate new utilities underground. Expansion of existing developments should be encouraged to locate existing utilities underground when feasible. In order to lessen the total amount of space utilized for infrastructure, sidewalks, trails, and other pedestrian corridors should be located adjacent to or in common easement with underground utilities.

## **Public Services**

### **Goal:**

Ensure that those public services necessary to support development are 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 and ensure that special consideration is afforded to Freeland, both under existing conditions as well as those anticipated in conjunction with future growth. 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.

## ***RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES***

### **Infrastructure**

1. The Freeland Water District should continue to provide water to the majority of the Freeland NMUGA. Other smaller water systems exist within the NMUGA, but it is anticipated that the Freeland Water District should be the primary provider for the community.
2. The Freeland Water District should implement the Comprehensive Sewer Plan for Freeland. Upon demand from the public, the Freeland Water District should be available to assist in setting up the funding mechanisms and ultimately constructing and operating the sewer system.
3. Implementation of a comprehensive stormwater plan will be necessary in order to resolve a number of existing environmental problems that relate to a currently fragmented, and in many instances non-existent, method of stormwater collection, treatment, and discharge. Attention will be afforded to a system that is environmentally friendly, economically feasible, aesthetically pleasing, and adheres to Island County's requirements for stormwater management in Critical Drainage Areas.
4. Grants and low/no interest loans should be vigorously pursued in order to assist in the financing of sewer, water, and stormwater infrastructure.
5. Freeland should retain the water rights to any reclaimed water from a centralized sewer system treatment facility such that reclaimed water can be incorporated into the overall long term implementation of the sewer plan for irrigation and other non-potable water needs.
6. Sewer, stormwater, and water planning efforts need to be coordinated with other underground utilities and Main Street improvements so that easements and rights-of-way are used properly and efficiently.
7. As the Freeland sewer, water, and stormwater plans are implemented, periodic review needs to occur in order to take advantage of technological advancements for treatment, collection, storage, and distribution.
8. Level of service requirements should be incorporated into development regulations that are applicable to residential subdivisions and commercial and industrial developments.

### **Parks and Gathering Places**

1. Appropriate standards should be developed that provide for an adequate amount of parks that are relative to the population and amount of visitors in Freeland. The County, the

development community, and the general citizenry all play a role in implementing this strategy.

2. Places for the public to gather, both inside and outside, should be established in Freeland. Standards should be developed that require certain commercial, residential, and industrial developments to provide for parks and gathering places.

3. A non-motorized or non-invasive transportation plan and the presence of critical areas should provide a basic network for connecting parks and gather places and other open spaces.



## ***IMPLEMENTATION***

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Freeland is designated as a Rural Area of Intense Development (RAID) in the Island County Comprehensive Plan. RAIDs are designated where development has occurred in a manner that is not typically considered rural. A logical outer boundary must be established such that it contains existing development and does not allow future urban type development on the periphery of the existing built environment, thereby eliminating the possibility of sprawl. Once established, RAID boundaries can not to be expanded or modified.

Because Freeland includes residential, commercial, and industrial uses it is designated as a mixed-use RAID. The RAID boundary contains approximately 600 acres, 428 acres of which is zoned Rural Residential and 172 of which is zoned Rural Center.

In order to be able to expand, an area currently designated as a RAID must be designated as an Urban Growth Area in compliance with RCW 36.70A.110. Because it is not adjacent to an existing incorporated municipality, Freeland would be designated a Non Municipal Urban Growth Area (NMUGA).

As a prerequisite to becoming an NMUGA, a boundary should be established that will accommodate projected population growth. A plan must be developed that provides for urban land uses and the provision of urban services. The Freeland Sub Area Plan establishes a boundary which contains approximately 1,176 acres, nearly twice the area within the original RAID boundary.

In addition to the preparation of the Freeland Sub Area Plan, a number of significant steps have already been taken to prepare these plans and consider them for adoption. In 2005, Island County completed the Freeland Comprehensive Sewer Plan and Engineering Report/Facility Plan, which was adopted by the Board of Island County Commissioners in March 2006.<sup>13</sup> Since 2006, when the Department of Health closed the south end of Holmes Harbor to recreational uses (shellfish harvest, wading and swimming) due to fecal coliform contamination detected during a shoreline sanitary survey, the Board of Island County Commissioners has adopted a series of ordinances to clean the Harbor and ensure that prior recreational uses can resume. These ordinances established both a Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program for Non-Tidal Waters<sup>14</sup> and the South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection District and also adopted the South Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection Program.<sup>15</sup> The Island County Public Works Department also has a Final Draft Freeland Comprehensive Drainage Plan which was prepared in April of 2005.

### **Land Use and Zoning**

The Freeland Sub Area Plan includes up to twelve land use/zoning categories. The plan includes a description, goals and polices for each of these categories. Most of these categories do not currently exist in the Island County Zoning Code. Therefore, zoning

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<sup>13</sup> March 20, 2006. Resolution #C-149-05/R-58-05, Adoption of Freeland Comprehensive Sewer Plan and Engineering Report/Facility Plan, a conditional approval conditioned that Freeland be designated as an urban growth area.

<sup>14</sup> April 24, 2006. Ordinance #C-22-06 (PLG-003-06)

<sup>15</sup> March 5, 2007. Ordinance #C-14-07 (PLG-003-07) and Exhibit B

regulations should be developed for each category. At a minimum, these regulations will need to address the following:

- Permitted and Conditional Uses
- Prohibited Uses
- Setbacks
- Lot Coverage
- Height
- Minimum site area

In order to meet the stated goals and policies of the Sub Area Plan, it is anticipated that additional subjects should be addressed in a manner that is specific to each zoning category.

The process of developing these regulations must provide abundant opportunity for community discussion and input to ensure that the goals and objectives of the Freeland Sub Area plan are recognized and reflected.

In addition to zoning regulations, urban infrastructure standards should be developed. In UGAs that are adjacent to a municipality, the County can adopt and apply the municipality's standards for streets, sidewalks etc. through an inter-local agreement. However, because the Freeland will be a NMUGA, no such adjacent municipality exists and specific standards should be required.

As an interim measure, the County could adopt the Freeland NMUGA boundary and apply current county zoning of Rural Residential and Rural Center to areas within the boundary which conform, as much as possible, to the zoning designations of the Sub Area Plan.

## **Design Standards**

### **Goal:**

Develop design standards that ensure an organized, cohesively designed community that also encourages development.

### **Policies:**

A. Develop architectural standards that are appropriate in appearance for Freeland. This should include outside finishing, roofing, siding materials, and colors with parameters set to encourage a type of style unique to Freeland.

B. Development regulations should identify desired and discouraged design features.

C. Lighting and signage standards should address commercial and residential uses separately.

D. Lighting standards should be based on the use, type, style, and wattage of lighting as well as the time of day lighting will be used.

E. Sign regulations should be based on the size of the building; location, type, and size of signs; density of signage; and evaluations of illumination in relation to property lines.

F. Setbacks and height limitations should be specific to the commercial and residential zones due to the differences in goals.

G. Standards for landscaping should be developed as a means of improving the aesthetic character of the use.

H. A percentage of native plantings should be included in landscaping plans.

I. Stormwater runoff should be addressed through landscaping controls.

Design standards are a set of regulations promulgated to ensure that the buildings and improvements in a community meet a certain level of performance related to visual impact and other design issues. This issue is particularly important in Freeland because design standards, and the potential control of them through Sub-Area Development Regulations, are one of the major building blocks behind this plan. Locally written standards will enable the Freeland community to develop a cohesive visual motif for the sub-area that will significantly help encourage settlement within Freeland rather than in the rural areas of the County.

Like the development of Freeland-specific zoning regulations, the development of design standards will require a substantial amount of community dialogue. In the interim, the Island County Zoning contains guidelines for non-residential building design, landscaping and screening in Rural, Rural Residential, and Rural Center. These guidelines will remain in effect if the NMUGA is adopted and County zoning is applied.

Many communities adopt Design Guidelines for multi-family and commercial development which are applied through a Design Review process. Design guidelines offer a flexible tool, and alternative to prescriptive zoning requirements, which will allow new development to respond to the distinctive character of its surroundings. Elements addressed in design guidelines typically address:

- Site Planning (site orientation, access, parking location etc.)
- Height, Bulk and Scale (compatibility with surroundings, transitions etc.)
- Architectural Elements and Materials (complementary to existing character, unified design etc.)
- Pedestrian Environment (accessibility, transparency, lighting, screening etc.)
- Landscaping (reinforce neighborhood character, enhance site, screening, native materials etc.)

## ***SUMMARY***

Implementation of the Freeland Sub Area 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 in Freeland 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 should 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.

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