



**ISLAND COUNTY  
PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
ISLAND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

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**~ FINDINGS OF FACT AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT ~**

**TO: Board of Island County Commissioners**  
**FROM: Island County Planning Commission**  
**DATE: February 8, 2021**  
**REGARDING: Amendments to Chapters 17.03, 17.04A, and 17.06 of Island County Code  
addressing standards for Accessory Dwelling Units**

**SUMMARY**

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that cities and counties adopt comprehensive plans consisting of a minimum of nine “elements” that each cover a different topic of land use. Housing is one of the nine elements that the GMA requires to be included in a comprehensive plan (RCW 36.70a.070).

During the 2016 periodic review process, Island County conducted a minor update of the Housing Element (Chapter 4 of the Island County Comprehensive Plan). In 2017 Island County began a larger update, based on a more in-depth study of the County’s existing housing conditions and a more comprehensive look at the County’s policy approach to housing. In developing proposed amendments, it was the County’s objective to: not only revise the County’s housing policies; but to also create a strategy to address the variety of housing issues through a comprehensive and consistent approach. To achieve this, a five-year implementation plan was adopted via resolution by the Board of Island County Commissioners (BOCC) on January 15, 2019.

The implementation plan for the Housing Element is intended to provide a set of discrete tasks that Island County can pursue to implement policies in the updated Housing Element and address housing issues identified in the Housing Needs Analysis, including the need for variety of housing types (particularly rental housing) and housing for low-income households. The plan includes seven implementation actions.

Action 4 of the implementation plan directed the County to conduct a review of development standards in order to identify unnecessary barriers to the development of higher density housing types such as clustered housing, planned residential developments, accessory dwelling units, guest cottages, farm labor housing and multifamily development in desired locations. Then to prepare and implement corresponding code updates.

In March of 2019, a Housing Advisory Group was formed consisting of five local subject area experts who assisted in the development of code improvements and draft code language. In April of 2019, a draft list of proposed amendments was presented to the Board of Island County Commissioners and the Planning Commission.

Due to the staffing and resource needs posed by the public health and economic recovery response to Covid-19, the scope of the proposed amendments for 2020 was reassessed. Amendments to the zoning code related to Accessory Dwelling Units was identified as the priority for 2020.

These amendments serve to promote the development of different housing types including rentals, to meet the needs of all demographic segments of the population, housing tenure choices, and income levels.

## **FINDINGS**

1. Island County conducts planning activities in accordance with RCW 36.70, the Planning Enabling Act.
2. Island County is required to plan under RCW 36.70A, the Growth Management Act (GMA).
3. State law requires periodic updates of GMA comprehensive plans.
4. RCW 36.70A.070 requires counties and cities to develop a housing element ensuring vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods.
5. On October 2, 2018, via Ordinance C-97-18, the Board of Island County Commissioners approved the Housing Element Update.
6. On January 15, 2019, via Resolution C-05-19, the Board of Island County Commissioners established the Housing Element Implementation Plan as a part of the 2018 Housing Element Update.
7. Action 4 of the Housing Element Implementation Plan states the following.
  - a. Conduct a review of development standards to identify unnecessary barriers to the development of higher density housing types such as clustered housing, planned residential developments, accessory dwelling units, guest cottages, farm labor housing and multifamily development in desired locations. Prepare and implement corresponding code updates.
8. The Planning Commission finds the proposed amendments to be consistent with the Island County Comprehensive Plan and serve to promote the development of different housing types including rentals, to meet the needs of all demographic segments of the

population, housing tenure choices, and income levels.

9. The Planning Commission finds the proposed amendments do not alter the existing housing development requirements for public health and water system compliance.

**CONCLUSION**

The Island County Planning Commission has held a public hearing to review the proposed amendments to the Island County Comprehensive Plan and hereby recommends that the Board of Island County Commissioners adopt the Amendments to Chapters 17.03, 17.04A, and 17.06 of Island County Code addressing standards for Accessory Dwelling Units enclosed hereto as Exhibit "A".

Respectfully submitted through the Island County Planning Department to the Board of Island County Commissioners, pursuant to RCW 36.70.430, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021 by,

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Darin Hand  
Chair, Island County Planning Commission

