



**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: July 10, 2017
REGARDING: Amending the Countywide Planning Policies

SUMMARY

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that counties adopt Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs) to guide and coordinate issues of regional significance (RCW 36.70A.210 and WAC 365-196-305). The CWPPs are intended to guide intergovernmental planning efforts, fully implement the planning goals identified in the GMA, and ensure that the actions of government agencies are coordinated and consistent with one another.

Island County initially adopted CWPPs in 1992. These CWPPs were subsequently revised in 1998, 1999, and 2015. The CWPPs have been developed to address areas of concern and to facilitate countywide comprehensive planning efforts. Since the most recent adoption of the CWPPs the County, in coordination with the affected jurisdictions, has identified language that has proven problematic in the implementation of the CWPPs. Consequently, Island County has worked with the other jurisdictions to add clarity and flexibility to some of the language in the CWPPs and to make such language more consistent with the policy and regulatory requirements provided in state law. This proposed update to the Countywide Planning Policies is intended to accomplish the following goals.

- To align language, JPA expansion criteria, JPA designations, and the protection of resource lands of long term commercial significance more closely with RCW and WACs with particular attention to the following state regulations.
 - WAC 365-196-310 Urban Growth Areas – which provides guidance about designating urban growth areas (UGA) and the sequencing of land into the UGA

- WAC 365-196-815 (1)(a) Conservation of Natural Resource Lands – which provides requirements to counties for the protection of natural resource lands (per RCW 36.70A.170 and RCW 36.70A.050)
- RCW 36.70A.210 Countywide Planning Policies – which provides policy guidance governing the purpose and essential components of the Countywide planning policies
- To modify the designation scheme of the JPA overlays to take into account logical expansion of the UGA and balance that logical extension with the protection of critical areas and resource lands of long term commercial significance by adding content and clarity to the existing text, which states:

Joint Planning Area designations shall not be assigned in such a way that future UGA expansions are completely precluded, forestalled, or rendered impractical; areas must be provided to allow for future UGA expansions.
- Eliminate language that directs or mandates changes to the development regulations and eliminate zoning references. Countywide Planning Policies are intended to guide Interlocal Agreements and the Comprehensive Plan, both of which inform changes to development regulations where prescriptive language is appropriate.
- To allow for certain conditions on the ground to be more accurately reflected in population projection methodology and Buildable Lands Analysis and capture lessons learned from the recent analysis associated with the 2016 Comprehensive Plan periodic update.

The development of revised CWPPs was a collaborative process. An Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) comprised of representatives from the planning departments of Coupeville, Island County, Langley, and Oak Harbor met to review and provide input on proposed draft revisions. Formal comments were invited from the affected jurisdictions; the County received and responded to all formal comments. Additionally, the Planning Commission and the Board of Island County Commissioners met to review the draft documents at multiple public meetings where public input was provided in addition to input from elected and appointed public officials.

FINDINGS

1. Island County conducts planning activities in accordance with Chapter 36.70 RCW (The Planning Enabling Act).
2. The planning activities of Island County, and the planning activities of municipalities within Island County, are further regulated by the provisions of Chapter 36.70A RCW (The Growth Management Act).
3. The GMA requires that counties subject to the GMA adopt County Wide Planning Policies (CWPPs), and further requires that these policies be developed with the cooperation of the municipalities within the county in accordance with RCW 36.70A.210(2).
4. CWPPs are written policy statements used to establish a countywide framework from which county and municipal comprehensive plans are developed and adopted to ensure consistency between plans as required in RCW 36.70A.100 and RCW 36.70A.210(1).

5. In order to address the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act, Island County and the jurisdictions within Island County, adopted Countywide Planning Policies in 1992, which were subsequently revised in 1998, 1999, and 2015.
6. In order to address the requirements of RCW 36.70A.210, Island County's CWPPs provide policies that promote contiguous and orderly development and provision of urban services to such development.
7. In order to address the requirements of RCW 36.70A.210 and WAC 365-196-310, Island County's CWPPs establish policies to implement RCW 36.70A.110 through the designation of Urban Growth Areas and Joint Planning Areas.
8. Since the most recent revisions to the CWPPs were adopted, implementation challenges have necessitated updates to the CWPPs to better provide for logical extension of UGA boundaries in conformance with the RCW 36.70A.110 and to revisit the true intent of the CWPPs established in RCW.70A.210 which provides that CWPPs are a written policy statement or statements used solely for establishing a countywide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted.
9. Additionally, recent comments provided by affected jurisdictions and elected officials called for adjustments to the Buildable Lands Analysis and population projection methodology that reflect lessons learned in the most recent Comprehensive Plan periodic update and allow for local conditions to be more accurately reflected.
10. The Growth Management Act does not specifically address amendments to CWPPs, however, the Island County CWPPs provide procedures for amending the CWPPs to include coordination with and approval from Island County jurisdictions.
11. To develop the revised CWPPs an Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) comprised of representatives from the planning departments of Coupeville, Island County, Langley, and Oak Harbor met to identify and review potential updates to the CWPPs.
12. To ensure further intergovernmental coordination, Island County staff met with affected jurisdictions individually to elicit input.
13. Draft documents were prepared and on April 21, 2017 were distributed to all affected jurisdictions and formal comments were invited.
14. Island County has received and responded to formal comments submitted by the all affected jurisdictions.
15. Among IWG members a general consensus on the proposed changes to the CWPPs was reached in June 2017.
16. The Coupeville Town Council passed a resolution on June 13, 2017 supporting the revised Countywide Planning Policies with no changes.
17. The Island County Planning Commission has reviewed the revised and updated draft of the Countywide Planning Policies prepared by the Island County Planning Department, and finds that these policies will address a pressing need to better coordinate regional planning efforts and the actions of government agencies within Island County.

18. The Island County Planning Commission further finds that the revised CWPPs are consistent with all applicable Washington State Planning laws and regulations, particularly RCW 36.70A.210, WAC 365-196-305, and WAC 365-196-310.
19. Island County Code (ICC 16.26) generally specifies that amendments to the Comprehensive Plan may not be considered more than once a year and that all proposed amendments should be considered concurrently. The Planning Commission finds that since Countywide Planning Policies are not part of the Island County Comprehensive Plan, the provisions of ICC 16.26 are not applicable to this action.

CONCLUSION

The Island County Planning Commission has reviewed the revised Countywide Planning Policies and hereby recommends that the Board of Island County Commissioners adopt, by ordinance, the revised and updated Countywide Planning Policies included as Exhibit A. The Planning Commissioner further recommends that the revised Countywide Planning Policies replace and supersede all previous Countywide Planning Policies.

Respectfully submitted through the Island County Planning Department to the Board of Island County Commissioners, pursuant to RCW 36.70.430, this _____ day of _____, 2017 by,

Darin Hand
Chair, Island County Planning Commission