



ISLAND COUNTY HOUSING ELEMENT

SUMMARY OF PROCESS AND REVIEW OF GOALS & POLICIES

**Planning Commission Special Session
July 02, 2018**

WASHINGTON STATE GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT (GMA)

- Provides the context for modern planning in WA
- Passed in 1990
- Response to:
 - Rapid population growth
 - Concern with suburban sprawl
 - Environmental and natural resource protection
 - Quality of life etc.
- 1998 Island County adoption of first Comprehensive Plan under GMA



COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING UNDER GMA

- **GMA establishes the primacy of the Comp Plan**
- **Comp Plan = Centerpiece of local planning**
- **Development Regulations must be consistent with Comp Plan**
- **Updated on 8 year cycle**
- **Last updated Dec 2016**

Land Use

Housing

Capital Facilities

Utilities

Transportation

Parks

Shoreline Master Program

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT INTENT

Concentrate intensive development and people in areas where services and infrastructure can be provided in an efficient manner

Urban Growth Areas (UGA)

RCW 36.70A

- Sized to accommodate 20 years population and employment growth
- Can include cities/towns and areas just outside of city/town
 - Intended for future annexation
- Can also include unincorporated urban centers (Freeland)
- Cannot be larger than necessary
- Limits *urban* growth to within UGAs

Examples:

- Oak Harbor
- Coupeville
- Langley
- Freeland
(Non Municipal)

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT INTENT

Concentrate intensive development and people in areas where services and infrastructure can be provided in an efficient manner

Rural Areas of More Intensive Development (RAIDs)

RCW 36.70A.070 (5d)

- Meant to recognize past development patterns
 - Slightly higher density and intensity than surrounding rural lands
- Must have set boundaries– not to be adjusted over time
- To provide services and economic opportunities to rural communities

Examples:

- Clinton
- Ken's Korner
- Bayview
- Useless Bay
- Saratoga
- Bailey's Corner Store
- Goss Lake

THE HOUSING ELEMENT UNDER GMA

The Primary Goal for Housing Under the GMA

- 1) Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all segments of the population of this state,
- 2) promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and
- 3) encourage the preservation of existing neighborhoods.

THE HOUSING ELEMENT UNDER GMA

Housing Element Requirements

- ***Inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs*** that identifies the number of housing units necessary to manage projected growth.
- ***Statement of goals, policies, objectives, and mandatory provisions*** for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing, including single family residences;
- ***Identification of sufficient land for housing***, including, but not limited to, government-assisted housing, housing for low income families, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, and group homes and foster care facilities;
- Adequate provisions for existing and projected ***housing needs of all economic segments of the community.***

HOUSING ELEMENT PROCESS SO FAR

October 2017



July 2018



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SUMMARY

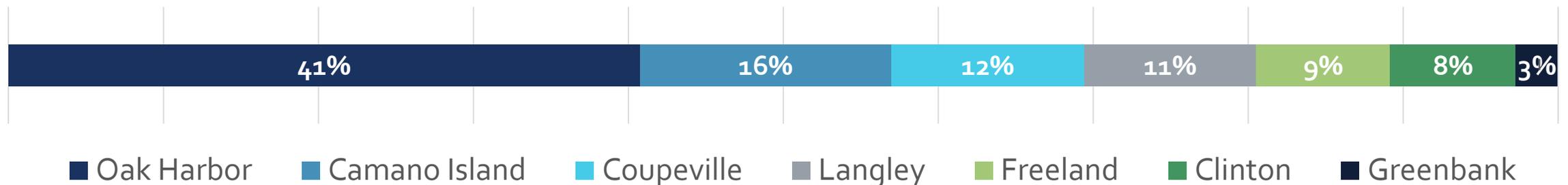
- Housing/Community Service Providers
- Commissioners
- NAS Whidbey
- Whidbey Conservation District
- School Districts
- Realtors/Builders/Lenders
- Senior Services and Camano Center

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SUMMARY

- Many eager for **greater variety in housing types** appropriate for all residents and all income levels. Few options between large-scale apartment complexes or single-family homes. Relatively little development of townhouses, co-housing, duplexes, triplexes, etc.
- Balancing any new housing strategies with Island County's desirable **rural character is a priority**.
- Booming housing market for both renting and purchasing a home. Both appear to be in **short supply and prices have escalated** sharply in recent years.
- Housing opportunities for people who want to downsize, particularly **seniors who want to age in place and stay in this community**, are in short supply. This is also relevant for **farmers looking to pass on operations** (not just the land) to the next generation.
- Island County's **permitting process is perceived as difficult, confusing**, and a barrier to building new homes.
- **Navy personnel moving into the County** is perceived to be negatively impacting housing affordability and availability.
- Many existing **accessory dwelling units** that were once long-term rentals have been **converted to vacation rentals**.
- **Infrastructure poses issues** (what seems like an affordable home may have underlying septic issues requiring an upgrade, etc)
- **Oak Harbor, Freeland, Clinton, and Langley** all present opportunities for **more interesting, dense housing options**.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

- **2,644 respondents participated in the survey**
- Reached a broad geographic range of the county
- Among survey respondents, renters are significantly more likely to feel cost-burdened by their house payments than owners.
- Across all income levels, at least 68% of renters who faced challenges finding their homes indicate that availability was a “significant challenge.” The same pattern does not hold true for cost, where those with higher household income are much less likely to report cost as a significant challenge when finding their home.
- Suggesting both the rental and buying markets have changed in recent years, respondents who have lived in IC for 3 years or less were more likely to report facing challenges when looking for their homes.



SUMMARY OF HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS

- Demographic changes suggest moderate increases in demand for both attached single-family housing and multifamily housing. The key demographic trends that will affect Island County's future housing needs are:
 - (1) the aging of the Baby Boomers,
 - (2) Millennials having families, and
 - (3) continued growth in Hispanic and Latino populations
- The number of cost-burdened households indicates more affordable housing is needed.
- **36%** of Island County's households have affordability problems.
- **50%** of Island County's renters have affordability problems.
- In 2016 through mid-2017, about **80%** of housing sales were to households with income above **120% of Median Family Income**.
- A household earning a median household income (about **\$66,000**) could afford a home valued up to about **\$250,000**, which is below the median sales price for single-family housing of about **\$320,000** in Island County.
- In addition, Island County has a very small supply of multifamily housing, which accounts for **11%** of the County's housing stock. The majority of Island County's multifamily buildings are in the City of Oak Harbor.

SUMMARY OF HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS

- **Overall, these findings suggest that the County needs a broader range of housing types than are currently available.**
- **The types of housing that Island County will need to provide developmental opportunities for over the next twenty years include:**
 - Smaller single-family detached housing (e.g., cottages or small single-family detached units),
 - manufactured housing,
 - “traditional” single-family detached housing,
 - townhouses,
 - Duplexes, tri-plexes, and quad-plexes,
 - accessory dwelling units, and
 - apartment buildings.

Forecast of demand for housing units based on population target, 2017-2036

Change in persons	5,047	
Assumed Household Size	2.33	
Total new dwelling units	2,174	
Single-family units	1,522	70%
Multifamily units	435	20%
Manufactured homes	217	10%

FINAL OUTREACH SUMMARY

Presentations and Events

- City of Langley Planning Commission
- Coupeville Lion's Club
- District I Officials
- Stanwood/Camano Rotary
- Whidbey Island Association of Realtors
- Camano Library Drop-in Day
- Coupeville Farmers Market
- Bayview Farmers Market
- Community Open House at the Oak Harbor Senior Center

Key Themes

- Lack of diversity of housing types
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are a compelling housing option
- Questions on data in Needs Analysis
- Questions on who was reached through community engagement
- Renters are particularly cost burdened and struggle to find available housing
- As the County prioritizes more housing and a diversity of housing options, it must also continue to develop infrastructure to accommodate more people
- Workforce housing, particularly farmworker housing requires specific strategies
- Policies to explore subsidized affordable housing are encouraged
- Not a challenge Island County can tackle alone, collaborative approach will be necessary

PROPOSED TEXT CHANGES

4.1 Introduction

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The need for housing over the 20-year planning period will likely include more rental options, smaller units, and senior housing than the current share of this type of housing. However, the rural nature of much of Island County presents challenges for developing new housing.

The County should balance the vitality of existing housing stock and neighborhood character with the changing housing needs of Island residents. In order to accomplish this goal, Island County must promote safe and high quality residential areas while capitalizing on opportunities to increase the supply and diversity of housing.

The Housing Element provides policy direction for Island County to address these challenges.

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PROPOSED TEXT CHANGES

Proposed New Paragraph at end of section

4.2.4 Housing Affordability

When speaking on housing affordability and the inventory of housing units, it is important to address available subsidized, low cost, short-term, and transitional housing options. The Island County Human Services Department manages the County's Housing Support Center, which coordinates the entry of low-income individuals into housing that suits their specific needs, and maintains an inventory of these types of housing units (outlined in the tables below).

Number of Subsidized and Low Cost Housing Units in Island County	
For Seniors and People with Disabilities Total	236
Oak Harbor Total	126
Studio Apts	6
1 Bedroom	110
2 Bedroom	10
3 Bedroom	0
Coupeville Total	70
Studio Apts	4
1 Bedroom	65
2 Bedroom	1
3 Bedroom	0
Langley Total	40
Studio Apts	12
1 Bedroom	27
2 Bedroom	1
3 Bedroom	0
For Families and Seniors	
Oak Harbor Total	393
Studio Apts	0
1 Bedroom	68
2 Bedroom	220
3 Bedroom	58
Coupeville Total	24
Studio Apts	0
1 Bedroom	6
2 Bedroom	14
3 Bedroom	4
Langley Total	22
Studio Apts	0
1 Bedroom	8
2 Bedroom	12
3 Bedroom	2
Freeland Total	25
Studio Apts	0
1 Bedroom	5
2 Bedroom	15
3 Bedroom	5

Short Term and Transitional Housing in Island County

Night to Night Shelter	30 beds
Short Term Stay Shelters (up to 90 days)	12 bedrooms
Transitional Housing (up to 2 years)	17 bedrooms
Permanent Supportive Housing	18 bedrooms
Housing for 18-24 year olds	30 beds
Emergency Shelter	12 beds
Transitional housing	18 beds

PROPOSED TEXT CHANGES

4.4.2 Housing Capacity

The County conducted a Buildable Lands Analysis (BLA) as a part of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update.

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The rural analysis stopped at this point. Within UGAs, land was removed to account for critical areas and land needed for public purposes (see Appendix B for further details on this process).

Although the BLA is typically only evaluated during the Periodic Review (every 8 years), the Countywide Planning Policies (CWPP 3.3.3) outlines population and employment conditions where the County may choose to reevaluate the BLA mid-cycle. If the County chooses to undertake a new BLA, and the results indicate a potential deficiency in residential capacity, the Housing Element should also be evaluated for potential updates at that time.

PROPOSED TEXT CHANGES

4.4.2 Housing Capacity

Missing Chart

Area	Land Capacity (Measured in Housing Units)	Additional Housing Units Needed	Excess Land Capacity (Measured in Housing Units)
Oak Harbor	1,985	1,588	397
North Whidbey Rural	848	1,058	-211
Coupeville	298	61	237
Central Whidbey Rural	1,775	347	1,428
Langley	899	39	860
South Whidbey Rural	2,145	425	1,720
Freeland	850	61	789
Camano Rural	1,353	408	945

PROPOSED TEXT CHANGES

Proposed New Paragraph after Housing Capacity

4.4.3 Character and Vitality

As the County takes steps to accommodate the changing housing needs of residents outlined above in Section 4.3, the vitality of existing housing stock and neighborhood character also needs to be considered. One of the County's roles in promoting neighborhood quality is to facilitate healthy change within neighborhoods by providing for development that is compatible in quality and character to the existing land uses, traffic patterns, public facilities, and sensitive environmental features.

Neighborhood character differs throughout the Island and particularly between the rural areas, RAIDs, and the Freeland NMUGA, but generally speaking Island County neighborhoods pride themselves on their rural, scenic, and quiet nature. The County protects these neighborhoods through development regulations and other County codes which provide minimum standards for site coverage, open space, height, minimize the impact of non-residential uses, and help preserve the natural environment. Parks, open spaces, and trails also contribute to the rural character of these neighborhoods.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Proposal: Switch the order of Goal 1 (and all associated policies) w/ Goal 3

Goal 31. Encourage preservation of existing housing stock capacity, subsidized affordable housing units, and the character of existing communities.

Goal +3. Promote fair access to housing and shelter for all persons.

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now Goal 1)

Goal 3. Encourage preservation of existing housing stock capacity, subsidized affordable housing units, and the character of existing communities.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Proposed new policy

(Now H 1.1)

H 3.1 - Sustain and enhance the vitality, diversity, and quality of life within existing neighborhoods through the promotion of development that is sensitive to the quality, design, and character of those neighborhoods.

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now H 1.2)

H 3.1 - Preserve the existing housing stock to meet the changing needs of residents by maintaining a streamlined permitting process for remodels/additions, accessory dwelling units, and guest cottages.

Proposed edit that was missed, to be integrated:

Preserve the existing housing stock to meet the changing needs of residents by ~~maintaining a streamlined~~ continuing to improve the permitting process for remodels/additions, accessory dwelling units, and guest cottages.

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now H 1.3)

H 3.2 - Monitor properties with expiring subsidies and identify strategies and resources to preserve their affordability.

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now H 1.4)

H 3.3 - Identify and promote awareness of resources and programs available for housing repair and rehabilitation for homeowners with low incomes; examples may include, weatherization, septic repair or compliance with flood hazard regulations.

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now H 1.5)

H 3.4 - Support the preservation of manufactured home parks in Island County as a component of the County's affordable housing stock.

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now H 1.6)

H ~~3.5~~ - Develop strategies to encourage the re-use of existing housing structures in rural areas including potential incentives for relocation to other sites.

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now H 1.7)

H 3.6 - Monitor the impacts of short-term rentals on housing availability in the County.

Proposed edit that was missed, to be integrated:

Monitor the impacts of ~~short-term~~ vacation rentals on housing availability in the County.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Proposed new policy

(Now H 1.8)

H 3.7 - Provide development and design standards for the RAIDS and UGAs that contribute to, and are compatible with, the existing community character and that ensure the long term vitality of Island County neighborhoods.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 2. Promote the development of different workforce housing types, such as rentals and manufactured homes, to meet the needs of all demographic segments of the population, housing tenure choices, and income levels, in appropriate locations where infrastructure, public transit, and community services are readily accessible or planned in the near future.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.1 - Encourage the construction of multi-family units, primarily rentals, in areas where higher densities are permitted and where infrastructure, including public transportation, is already available.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.2 - Encourage housing suitable to the needs of older adults, including independent and assisted living housing, in Mixed Use RAIDs and UGAs.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.3 - Encourage the siting of duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in Rural Residential zones that are adjacent to Rural Center zones.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.4 - Identify innovative housing approaches for Camano Island where the predominance of rural zones and lack of a UGA presents challenges for affordable housing.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.5 - Evaluate and modify as needed, Planned Residential Developments and clustered housing code provisions to ensure that they provide adequate incentives to achieve desired densities.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.6 - Evaluate and modify as needed, regulatory barriers to building permanent and seasonal farm worker housing.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.7 - Encourage infill development in RAIDs and UGAs through zoning regulations and incentives.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.8 - Evaluate and modify as needed barriers to the development of accessory dwelling units and guest cottages.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.9 - Explore options to allow temporary housing structures to accommodate short-term housing needs related to limited-term employment and the homeless population.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.10 - Explore further ways to accommodate small housing types, and determine the appropriate location for these units.

Proposal:

Explore further ways to accommodate small housing types (for purchase, rental, temporary, or long term arrangements) such as workforce housing, guest houses, cottage-size homes, small multi-unit structures, manufactured homes, and tiny homes; as well as determine the appropriate locations for these various home types.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.11 Remove barriers for the siting of low-cost housing options such as manufactured housing communities and manufactured homes on fee simple land.

Proposal:

~~Remove~~ Evaluate and where appropriate remove barriers for the siting of low-cost housing options such as manufactured housing communities and manufactured homes on fee simple land.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.12 - Review code regulations for housing types, minimum dwelling unit size, minimum number of rooms, and other potential barriers to ensure they do not conflict with affordable housing goals and the development of workforce housing options.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 2.13 - Monitor Island County's housing development and periodically compare to housing development targets in the Comprehensive Plan and buildable land supply.



(Now Goal 3)

Goal 4. Promote fair access to housing and shelter for all persons.

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now H 3.1)

H 3.1 - Identify appropriate locations to support and facilitate transitional housing, coordinated with critical support services, for youth, adults, seniors, families, and those with disabilities

Definition of Transitional Housing: a project that is designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to homeless persons to facilitate movement to independent living within 24 months, or a longer period

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now H 3.2)

H 1.2 - Identify appropriate locations to support and facilitate the development of emergency shelters and short-term housing for those in need.

Definition of Emergency Shelter: any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements.

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now H 3.3)

H 1.3 - Ensure that any unique housing and shelter needs are considered and addressed in county housing policies, programs, funding, and local zoning regulations

*Request was to **REPLACE** this with a new policy:*

Ensure that innovative housing options are considered and addressed in county housing policies, programs, funding, and local zoning regulations.

*Staff proposes adding as **NEW** policy under Goal 2 (**H 2.14**) and keeping the existing policy as-is*

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now H 3.4)

H 1.4 - Evaluate and consider implementing the recommendations of the Tri-County Consortium's 2018 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice and successor Fair Housing Plans to affirmatively further Fair Housing in Island County.

Tri-counties: Whatcom, Skagit, & Island

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now H 3.5)

H ~~1.5~~ - Promote community and landlord awareness of and compliance with federal and state Fair Housing laws.

GOALS AND POLICIES

(Now H 3.6)

H ~~1.6~~ - Promote diverse representation on boards and committees that make recommendations concerning housing-related policies, programs or funding.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 4. Promote policies that facilitate the reduction in the share of cost burdened households by increasing the supply of subsidized affordable housing.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 4.1 - Define affordable and low-income housing needs and establish measurable affordable and low-income housing targets relative to those needs.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 4.2 - Encourage a range of permanent subsidized affordable housing options through small project-based structures, administration of rental assistance, and supportive housing.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 4.3 - Ensure publicly-funded, low-income housing is located in appropriate locations where infrastructure, public transit, and community services are readily accessible or planned in the near future.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 4.4 - Identify opportunities to lower labor and materials costs by supporting and encouraging alternative housing designs, materials and construction, such as self-help/sweat-equity housing, owner-built housing, and the use of existing or reclaimed building materials.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 4.5 - Review existing surplus public land owned by Island County and other public agencies to determine if any such lands are appropriate to be transferred to a non-profit housing agency for affordable or low-income housing.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 4.6 - Develop and allow “pre-approved” or “permit ready” house plans for accessory dwelling units, guest cottages, cottage housing and other potential housing types in appropriate locations.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 4.7 - Evaluate opportunities to reduce or eliminate permit fees for affordable and low-income housing.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 4.8 - Implement incentives for affordable housing projects within non-municipal urban growth areas and mixed use RAIDs.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 4.9 - Ensure coordination between the policies addressed in the Comprehensive Plan and those outlined in Island County's Homeless Housing Plan.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 4.10 - Collaborate with municipal jurisdictions to develop mutual policies and agreements that facilitate the siting and subsequent annexation of affordable housing in unincorporated urban growth areas.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Proposed new policy

H 4.11 - Consider acquisition of available land for the purposes of affordable housing development in RAIDS or the Freeland NMUGA.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 5. Collaborate with other jurisdictions and housing organizations to address county-wide housing issues.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 5.1 - Actively convene committees to coordinate county-wide housing issues.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 5.2 - Evaluate the potential for a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program for the Freeland NMUGA, or in conjunction with incorporated communities, that allows higher densities within city boundaries and urban growth areas.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 5.3 - Continue to maintain partnerships and support collaboration with the Housing Authority of Island County, the Opportunity Council and different groups including nonprofit, faith-based, public, and private interests in ongoing efforts to fund and sustain existing low-income housing projects in Island County.

Proposed edit that was missed, to be integrated:

Continue to maintain partnerships and support collaboration with the Housing Authority of Island County, the Opportunity Council, local industries, major employers, and different groups including nonprofit, faith-based, public, and private interests in ongoing efforts to fund and sustain existing low-income housing projects in Island County.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 5.4 - Support collaboration between private developers, public agencies, and non-profit organizations so that a variety of housing options are dispersed throughout the county and leverage these partnerships to collaboratively advocate for more financial resources from the federal and state government for subsidized, low-income housing.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 5.5 - Continue to provide staff support for the Housing Provider Network and other committees.

Proposal:

Continue to coordinate with, and provide staff support for, the Housing Provider Network and other housing-related committees.

GOALS AND POLICIES

H 5.6 - Support applications for federal, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing targeted to lower-income households.

Proposal:

Support applications for federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and other available incentives for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing targeted to lower-income households.