



ISLAND COUNTY PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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~ MEMORANDUM ~

TO: Planning Commissioners

FROM: Island County Planning & Community Development

DATE: November 6, 2017

SUBJECT: Workshop Items - Staff will brief the Commission on projects and initiatives:

- Housing Element update
- Draft Freeland Design Standards
- Rural Lands project update

WORKSHOP ITEMS

HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE

Review and discuss Housing Element Baseline Review and Stakeholder Input

ECONorthwest, the project consultant, reviewed and summarized Island County's current Housing Element and existing programs and efforts. Based on the review, they developed preliminary recommendations for updates and changes to the current Housing Element. A summary of their main recommendations include:

- Utilizing more detailed breakdown of housing stock by type, using Assessor data;
- Using other sources for home value data such as Property Radar to provide more recent trends on listings and sales;
- Adding a longer term look at historical population growth;
- Expanding upon current demographic information
 - Historical change in age distribution,
 - OFM's forecast of age change,
 - Changes in ethnic diversity,
 - Changes in household size/composition;
- Providing more detail on new units needed by type, and comparing the housing demand directly to our capacity;
- Updating data on cost burden, financially attainable housing, affordable housing units, and costs by income levels;
- Revising goals and policies to provide the right level of specificity; and
- Including specific implementation strategies, potentially as an attachment to the Element.

FREELAND CODE UPDATE

Draft Freeland Design Standards

Staff and the consultant team from MAKERS, LLC, will present sections of the new Freeland code related to development standards. The design standards were drafted based on the Freeland Subarea Plan and previous code work and public outreach efforts related to developing an urban code for Freeland. Specific topics of focus for this meeting will be block frontages (**section 310**), building type standards for guest cottages and cottage housing (**section 320**), commercial & MF design standards (**section 330**). The draft design standards were developed to:

- Reinforce and enhance Freeland's unique small town character;
- Enhance the village core as a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use district with a diversity of shops, attractive landscaping, and welcoming public spaces;
- Provide for a greater diversity of housing types, most notably the "missing middle" (i.e., a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family homes that help meet the growing demand for walkable urban living);
- Offer flexibility in the design of village developments while maintaining compatibility with the village's small town scale and enhancing the pedestrian environment;
- Maintain and enhance public water views; and
- Maintain and enhance a rural village character along the highway as Freeland grows.

The preliminary draft (version 1.0) has been posted online to the project web page, at www.islandcountywa.gov/Planning/Pages/WP17_FreelandRegs.aspx.

Flexibility - The code includes a number of provisions to allow for flexibility. In some places, this is added into the code through a list of options (i.e. a minimum of three from a list of ten options). In a number of other places, the code allows for design alternatives that are not specified. This provision provides applicants with the option of proposing alternative design treatments provided such alternatives meet the "purpose" of the particular standard. Design alternatives are optional (and must be approved by the Director) but allow, as an example, for newer technologies to be utilized without needing a code update.

The workshop will provide an overview of these specific sections of code and highlight where the draft Freeland code differs from the Island County Code. In addition, staff and the consultant will seek input on specific code options and provisions.

RURAL LANDS REGULATORY REVIEW

Review and discuss the Rural Lands Regulatory Report / receive project update

The Rural Lands Regulatory Subcommittee met on November 1, 2017 to review the Rural Lands Regulatory Report and to draft goals and objectives for the anticipated regulatory updates. The report focused on home industries and commercial, temporary, and special events with some attention to the regulatory inconsistencies related to wineries. The document, enclosed here, provided information related to the following topics.

- Public input provided in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update
- Growth Management Act and Comprehensive Plan Guidance
- The Island County Zoning Code and related Policy Statements

- A summary and evaluation of existing code/ practices and current implementation challenges

The Subcommittee drafted goals and objectives for the regulatory updates, also enclosed here. Future steps will include a benchmark study evaluating codes from multiple jurisdictions, which will assist with the drafting of regulatory alternatives.

ENCLOSURES:

- GMA #13105 – Rural Lands Regulatory Report
- GMA #13111 – Rural Lands Regulatory Subcommittee Draft Goals and Objectives