



ISLAND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA
January 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
ONLINE VIA ZOOM

Meeting to be held in the Board of Island County Commissioners Hearing Room, Room 102B, 1NE 6th St., Coupeville, WA and online. Interested parties can attend or join remotely at the link or via phone number listed below:

Join Zoom Webinar

<https://zoom.us/j/97877856809?pwd=Naz7gsObqb7D6vh2jwrYuPXgpU5GED.1>

Webinar ID: 978 7785 6809

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1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES –
4. PUBLIC COMMENT – *Submittal of written comments are encouraged prior to the day of the meeting. Public Comment may be submitted via email to PlanningCommission@IslandCountyWA.gov. Please state your name and address when giving public testimony. Public comments are limited to 3 minutes per person.*
5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT –
6. WORK SESSION – Planning staff have released the draft elements, development regulations, and SEPA documents for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update. Planning will present an overview of Environment related changes in the draft Natural Resources and Climate Elements.
7. ADJOURN

Please visit our website for related documents: <https://www.islandcountywa.gov/235/Planning-Commission>

The public may submit comments in writing to Planning & Community Development at 1 NE 7th St., Coupeville, WA 98239 or PlanningCommission@IslandCountyWA.gov.



Island County Planning and Community Development

Jonathan Lange, AICP, CFM
Director

1 NE 7th St., Coupeville, WA 98239

Ph: Whidbey 360-679-7339 | Camano 360-387-3443 | Fax: 360-679-7306

Email: PlanningDept@islandcountywa.gov | <https://www.islandcountywa.gov/207/Planning-Community-Development>

~ MEMORANDUM ~

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Long Range Planning
DATE: January 14, 2026
SUBJECT: 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update – Environment Work Session

Planning and Community Development released the draft comprehensive plan and development regulation updates in December 2025. At this work session, Planning will discuss all environment related changes in the Natural Resources and Climate Elements.

Documents related to this discussion:

- [Draft Climate Element](#)
- [Island County Climate Resiliency Explorer](#)
- [Draft Natural Resources Element](#)

Attachment: Presentation.

For more information, please contact:

Emily Neff (360) 678 - 7807 or e.neff@islandcountywa.gov



Island County 2045 Comprehensive Plan Environment

**Long Range Planning
January 14, 2026**

Purpose of Work Session

Goal – Hear Input on Natural Resources and Climate elements and policies

Reminders:

- Goals and Policies are guiding principals that will frame current and future code updates.
- Focus on the “what” not the “how” during these conversations.
- Keep in mind the need to balance competing priorities.
- Consider what our future communities could look like and how to support growth in ways that reflect our unique islands.

What topic lives where?

Climate

- Framework for climate resiliency.
- Climate hazards & vulnerability analysis.
- Goals & Policies.

Natural Resources

- Background on Critical Areas, Groundwater, and Natural Resources lands.
- Conservation and Tax Benefit Programs.
- Goals & Policies.

Critical Areas Ordinance (To be updated in 2026)

- Land Use and Development standards to protect streams, wetlands, Frequently Flooded Areas, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas, and Steep Slopes.

Approach to Environment Updates

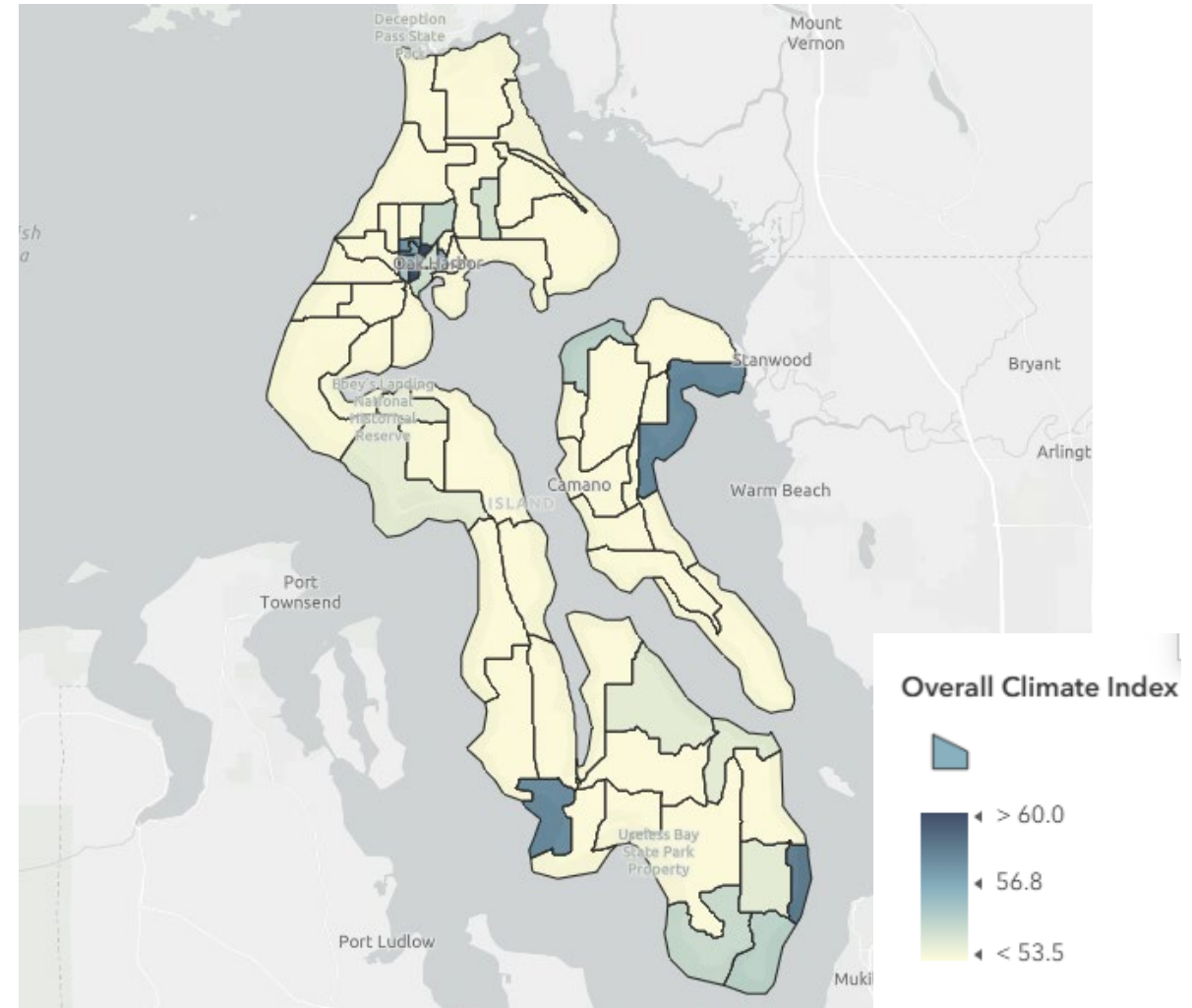
- Balance environmental protections with housing and economic growth.
- Address and enhance community and ecosystem resiliency to a changing climate.
- Continue efforts to conserve, protect, and enhance critical areas, groundwater, farms, and forests.

Required Updates

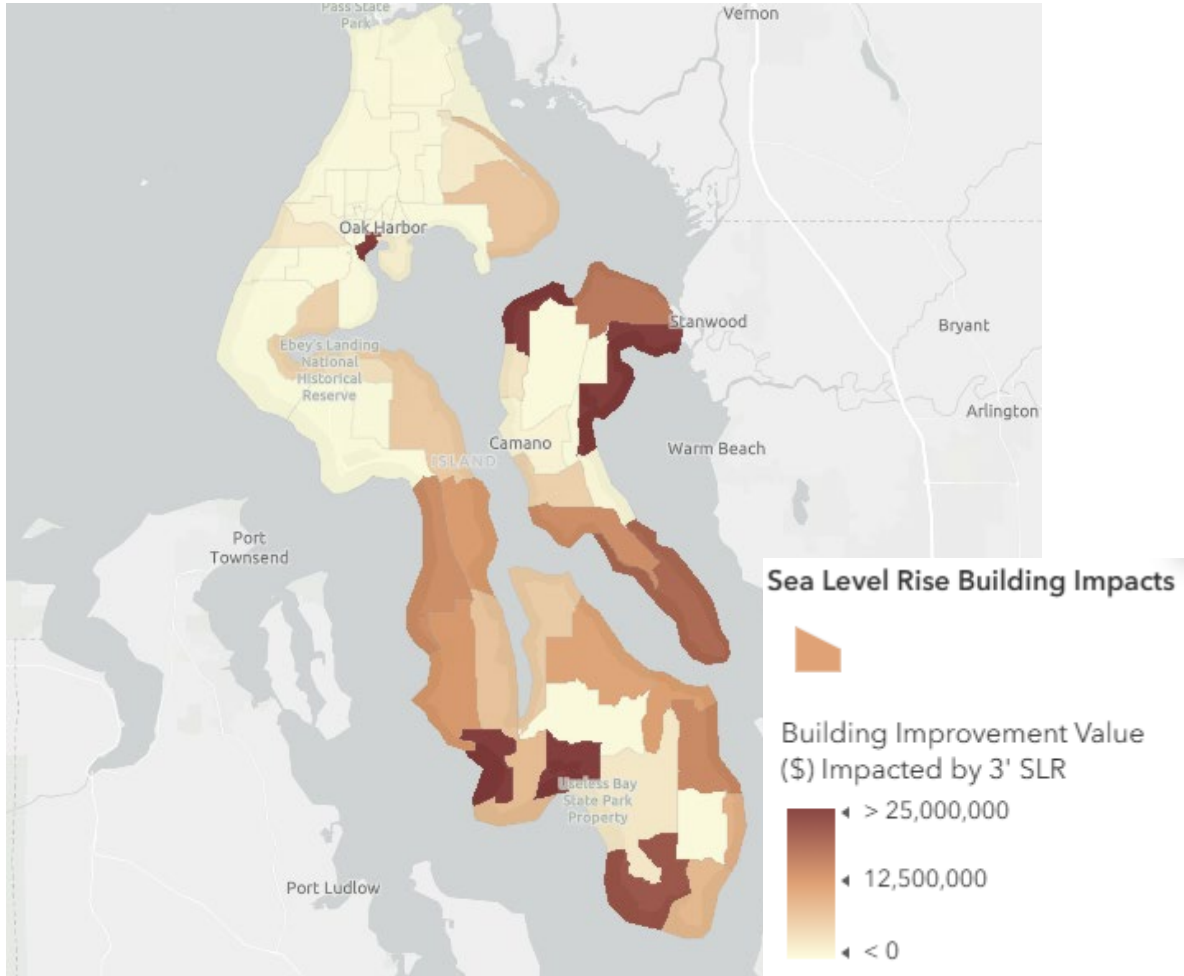
- New Climate Element, required by the Climate Commitment Act, House Bill 1181
- Address *natural hazards* created or aggravated by climate change.
- Identify, protect, and enhance *natural areas* to foster climate resilience.
- Identify, protect, and enhance *community resilience* to climate impacts.
- Incorporate best available science and no-net-loss into critical areas policies.

Climate – Heat Vulnerability Index

- Darker colors represent communities at higher risk of heat related impacts.
- People of color, lower income households, and people with mobility issues have increased risks.
- Areas in NE Camano and SE Whidbey have increased risk from heat and poor air quality.



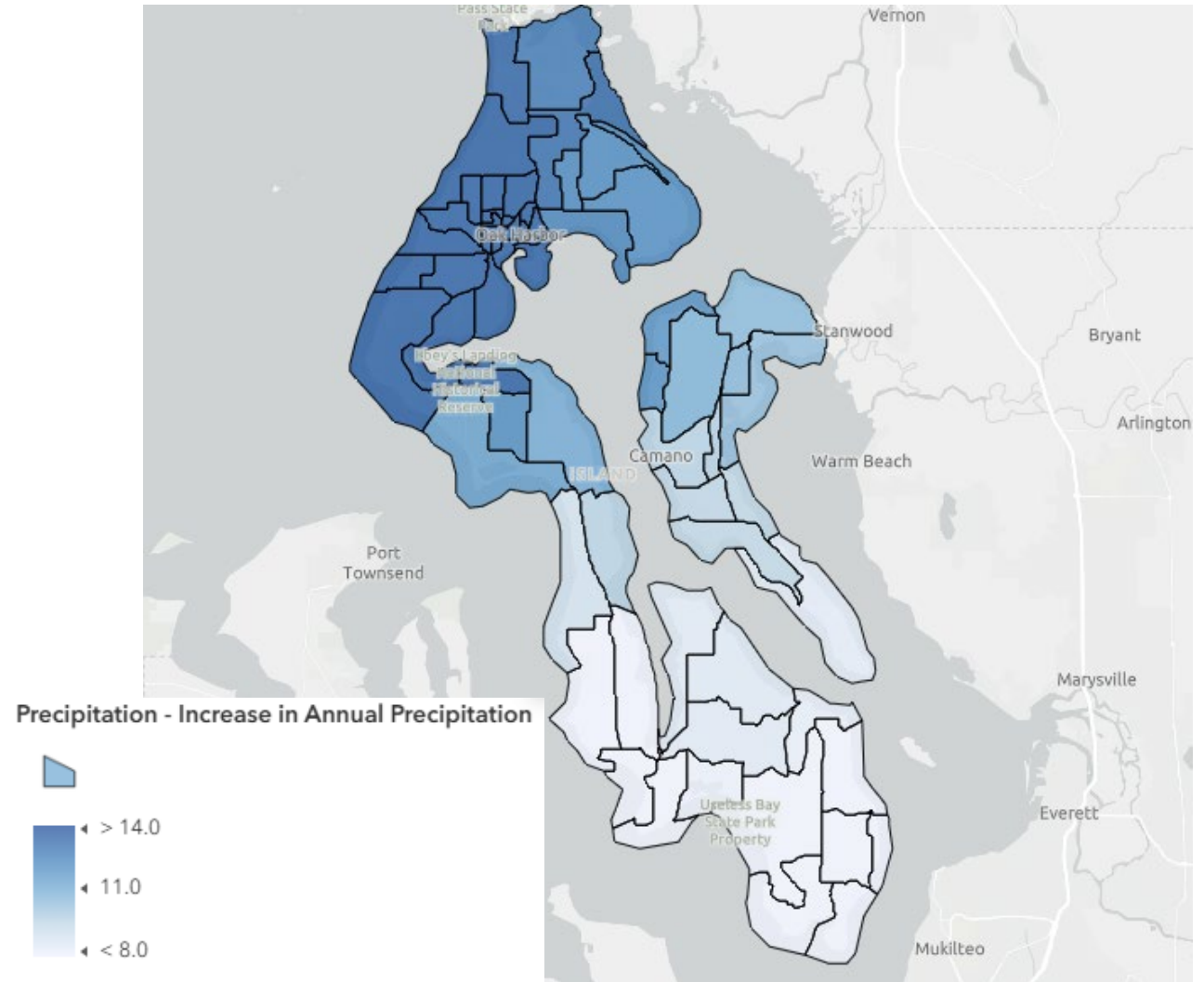
Climate – Sea Level Rise



- Darker colors represent more impacts from sea level rise.
- Low lying areas on Camano and South Whidbey are at highest risk for sea level rise.
- Sea Level Rise combined with heat and drought increases the risk for these communities.

Climate – Changing Precipitation

- Darker colors represent increased precipitation.
- Areas with higher rates of rainfall may experience increased flooding.
- Areas with lower rates of rainfall may experience increased drought.
- Changing precipitation patterns will affect the entire County due to our reliance on groundwater.



Policy Changes

Summary of Policy Changes for Natural Resources and Climate

Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policies to encourage the conservation of land, wildlife corridors, and resources (NR 1.3 and sub policies, NR 1.4, NR 1.5, NR Goals 8 and 9 and sub policies).• Policies to encourage the protection and restoration of undeveloped coastal ecosystems (CL Goal 2 and sub policies).
Critical Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policies to continue to protect, preserve and enhance critical areas (NR Goals 2, 3, 4 and 5 and sub policies, CL Goal 6 and sub policies).
Groundwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policies to protect groundwater quality and quantity (NR Goals 6 and 7 and sub policies, CL Goal 3 and sub policies).

Policy Changes

Summary of Policy Changes for Natural Resources and Climate

Resiliency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policies to ensure transportation infrastructure can withstand climate related events (CL Goal 5 and sub policies).• Policies to support emergency preparedness in response to extreme weather (CL Goal 7 and sub policies).• Policies to ensure buildings and infrastructure are sited with respect to climate change (CL Goal 9 and sub policies).• Policies to protect our communities most vulnerable populations from climate related impacts (Goal 10 and sub policies).
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy to ensure farmland is not converted to other land uses, consistent with state requirements (NR 11.16).• Policy to support development that protects agricultural lands (NR 11.18, NR 11.26).• Policies to support resiliency of the agricultural economy (CL Goal 8 and sub policies).
Forests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policies to promote sustainable forest management (NR 11.7 and 11.8, CL Goal 11 and sub policies).

Decisions Needed

- Confirm that these elements reflect the priorities of Health, Equity, and Climate Resiliency.
- Confirm the balance between the Housing and Land Use elements, and the Natural Resources and Climate elements, meets the needs and demands of our residents.
- Confirm whether commitments in the Climate Element feel achievable in the next 10-20 years.

Next Steps



Goals and
Policies text
changes

Revisions to
Development
Regulations

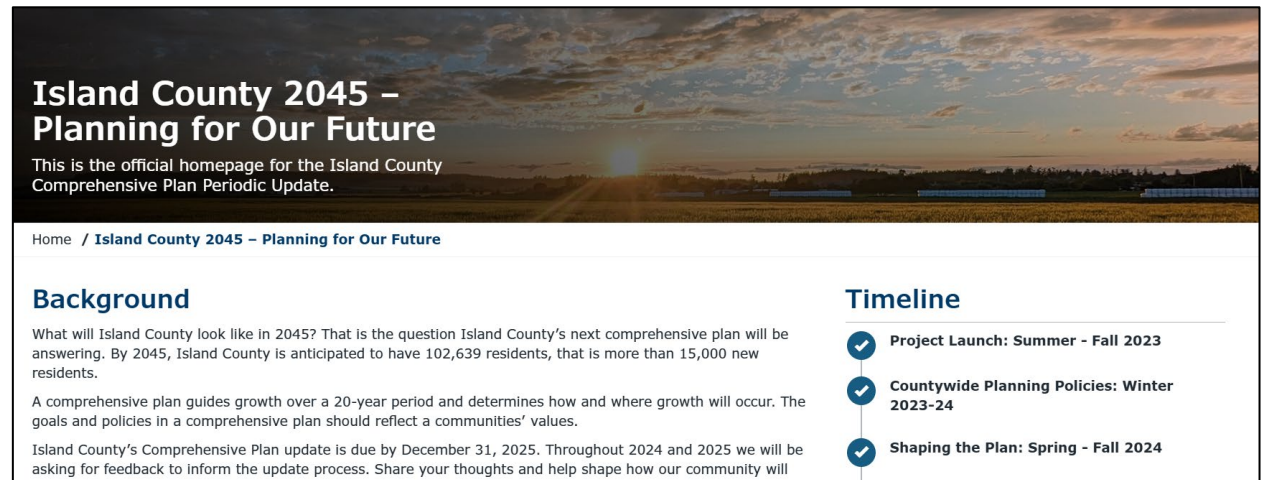
Comp Plan
Adoption
(Spring
2026)

Public Engagement Reminders

Comment Period: Dec. 10 to Feb. 9

How to Comment:

- **Website:**
www.islandcounty2045.com
- **Email:**
CompPlan@islandcountywa.gov
- **Snail Mail:** Attn PCD, 1 NE 7th Street, Coupeville, WA 98239
- **In Person:** at Board or Planning Commission meeting



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Meeting Opportunities

Public Meetings:

- **Oak Harbor – The Center:**
Thursday, January 15, 5 to 6:30 pm
- **South Whidbey – Clinton Comm Hall:** Tuesday, January 20, 5 to 6:30 pm
- **Camano – County Annex Bldg:**
Saturday, January 24, 10 to 11:30 am

Board and Planning Commission Mtgs:

Coupeville:

- Wednesday, January 7 (Housing)
- Wednesday, January 14 (Environment)
- Wednesday, January 21 (Infrastructure)
- Wednesday, February 4 (Econ Development & Clinton)



Questions?

Long Range Planning

CompPlan@islandcountywa.gov

www.islandcounty2045.com