



ISLAND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA
February 7, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.
BOCC HEARING ROOM, ROOM 102B, 1 NE 6TH ST COUPEVILLE, WA
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 Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93636892599?pwd=Y3NicFrc203OVZBTjBUenJyc21MQT09>

Meeting ID: 936 3689 2599

Passcode: 122086

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma, WA)

Meeting ID: 936 3689 2599

Passcode: 122086

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. Planning Commission will accept public comment for items not on the agenda. Public comments are limited to 3 minutes per person.*
5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT –
6. ELECTIONS – Chair and Vice Chair Positions
7. PUBLIC HEARING – Countywide Planning Policies
8. PRE-WORKSHOP – Vision Statement
9. 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

Mary Engle, Director

Physical Address: 1 NE 6th St, Coupeville, WA 98239 Mailing Address: 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: Island County Planning Commissioners

FROM: Emily Neff, Long Range Planning
Island County Planning & Community Development

DATE: 1/29/2024

SUBJECT: Planning Commission Meeting 2/7/2024

The Planning Commission meeting on February 7, 2024, will include the following items:

Elections: Annual election for the Planning Commission Chair and Vice Chair.

Public Hearing: To hear public input on the proposed changes to the [Countywide Planning Policies](#) including housing allocations, and make a recommendation to the Board of Island County Commissioners.

Pre-Workshop: Staff will frame the request to the Planning Commission for review of the Vision Statement and Introduction Chapter and pose discussion questions to be considered at our next meeting. This is a pre-workshop for the discussion to take place at the next Planning Commission meeting.

For more information, please contact:

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

Attachments:

- Memo
- Findings of Fact – Countywide Planning Policies
- Presentation for Countywide Planning Policies
- Presentation for Vision Statement Pre-Workshop

BEFORE THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF ISLAND COUNTY, WASHINGTON

FINDINGS OF FACT IN THE MATTER OF
ADOPTING REVISED COUNTYWIDE
PLANNING POLICIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF
COORDINATING THE 2025
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Summary

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that cities and counties adopt comprehensive plans. The GMA further requires that counties adopt Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) (RCW 36.70A.210 & WAC 365-196-305) to guide and coordinate issues of regional significance. The CPPs 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 CPPs in 1992. These CPPs were subsequently revised in 1998, 1999, 2015, and 2017. Island County, and the municipalities within Island County, are currently reviewing and updating their comprehensive plans (due in June 2025), updated CPPs have been developed to address changes to state law, areas of concern from past updates, and to facilitate countywide comprehensive planning efforts.

The development of revised CPPs was a collaborative process. A Countywide Planning Group (CPG) comprised of representatives from the planning departments of Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Langley, and Island County, along with a representative from Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI), was formed to facilitate this effort. Following RCW 36.70A.110, local tribes were invited to participate in these planning efforts. Approximately 15 CPG meetings were held between May 2023 and December 2023 to discuss revisions to the CPPs, a uniform buildable lands analysis methodology, and the creation of a new housing methodology, following the Washington State Legislature's passing of House Bill 1220 in 2021. Among CPG members, a general consensus on the changes to the CPPs was reached in November 2023. The CPG members then agreed to forward the proposed revisions to their respective planning commissions and elected bodies for further review.

The Planning Commission has reviewed the revised CPPs produced by the CPG and makes the following findings and recommendations.

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 RCW 36.70A, the Growth Management Act (GMA).
3. The GMA requires counties and cities to periodically update their comprehensive plans and development regulations (RCW 36.70A.130(5)). Island County last completed a periodic update in 2016; and Island County must complete an update by June 30, 2025.
4. The GMA requires that counties subject to GMA adopt CPPs, and further requires that these policies be developed with the cooperation of the municipalities within the county (RCW 36.70A.210(2)).
5. CPPs 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 by RCW 36.70A.100 and RCW 36.70A.210(1).
6. In order to address the requirements of the GMA, Island County and the jurisdictions within Island County adopted CPPs in 1992, which were subsequently revised in 1998, 1999, 2015, and 2017.
7. In the seven years since the CPPs were last amended, the GMA has evolved through legislative amendments, judicial interpretations, and Growth Management Hearing Board decisions.
8. The GMA does not specifically address amendments to the CPPs; however, Island County's CPPs include population projections and allocations to jurisdictions from the previous planning period. Island County's CPPs should be updated with each periodic update to properly plan for current population and housing allocations, to address countywide planning concerns, and to comply with current legal requirements.
9. The CPPs state that the document may be amended through approval by the Island County Board of County Commissioners, and ratified once the CPPs are adopted by a majority of the cities and towns within Island County.
10. To develop the revised CPPs, the CPG comprised of representatives from the planning departments of Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Langley, and Island County, along with a representative from NASWI, was formed. Following RCW 36.70A.110, local tribes were invited to participate in these planning efforts.
11. The CPG held approximately 15 meetings between May 2023 and January 2024 to discuss revisions to the CPPs, a uniform buildable lands analysis methodology, and the creation of a new housing methodology following the 2021 State Legislature's passing of House Bill 1220.

12. A draft CPP document was prepared and distributed to CPG members; changes were discussed at CPG meetings and CPG members were given ample opportunity to edit and comment on the document.
13. Among CPG members, a general consensus on the proposed changes to the CPPs was reached in November 2023.
14. On November 15, 2023, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed 2045 population projection of 102,639. The majority of the Planning Commission believed that the recommended population represents the most probable forecast based on past trends, as well as current economic and demographic conditions.
15. On December 6, 2023, and December 20, 2023, the Planning Commission reviewed the draft CPPs in a work session.
16. On February 7, 2024, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider comments on the revised CPPs for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.
17. It was the consensus of the majority of the Planning Commission on November 15, 2023, that the population projection represents the most favorable forecast. Following the public hearing on February 7, 2024, it was the consensus of the majority of the Planning Commission that the housing allocations, as presented in the CPPs, represents the most favorable outcome in meeting the State mandated housing requirements in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Conclusion

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

Respectfully submitted through the Island County Planning and Community Development Department to the Board of Island County Commissioners, pursuant to RCW 36.70.430, this _____ day of _____ 2024 by,

Steve Schwalbe
Chair, Island County Planning Commission

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE



COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

FEBRUARY 7, 2024

Summary

- The revised Countywide Planning Policies were presented at the Dec. 6, 2023, Board of Island County Commissioners (Board) and Planning Commission meetings.
- Following the discussion at the Dec. 20 Board meeting, staff were directed to convene the Countywide Planning Group (CPG) to re-evaluate the housing allocations.
- Staff completed this re-evaluation with the CPG and the following presentation was given to the Board on Jan. 10, 2024.



Reminders: Housing Allocation Considerations

In developing housing percentages, the Countywide Planning Group used the following considerations as guidance:

- Following the spirit of GMA, **growth is directed to urban areas** where jobs, infrastructure, and services exist to support diverse housing types.
- Weighting factors accounted for the location of **jobs, commute flows, transportation accessibility, and social services** across the county.
- A cap was set on the allocations to ensure that **no jurisdiction is unreasonably burdened by the growth** during the 20-year planning period.



Latest Guidance From Commerce

“Where counties and cities are able to plan for and accommodate 0-50% Area Median Income (AMI) housing:

- Typically, this housing is in the form of multifamily housing, because generally only multifamily housing can be built in housing types and arrangements that can be affordable to these incomes.
- These housing types are most appropriate in urban areas where zoning allows multifamily housing, and residents benefit from being near services, transit, and jobs.
- **Therefore, we encourage all new 0-50% AMI housing need be allocated to cities and unincorporated UGAs.”**



Latest Guidance From Commerce Cont.

Commerce has suggested two solutions for where the County could place its 0-50% AMI housing allocation:

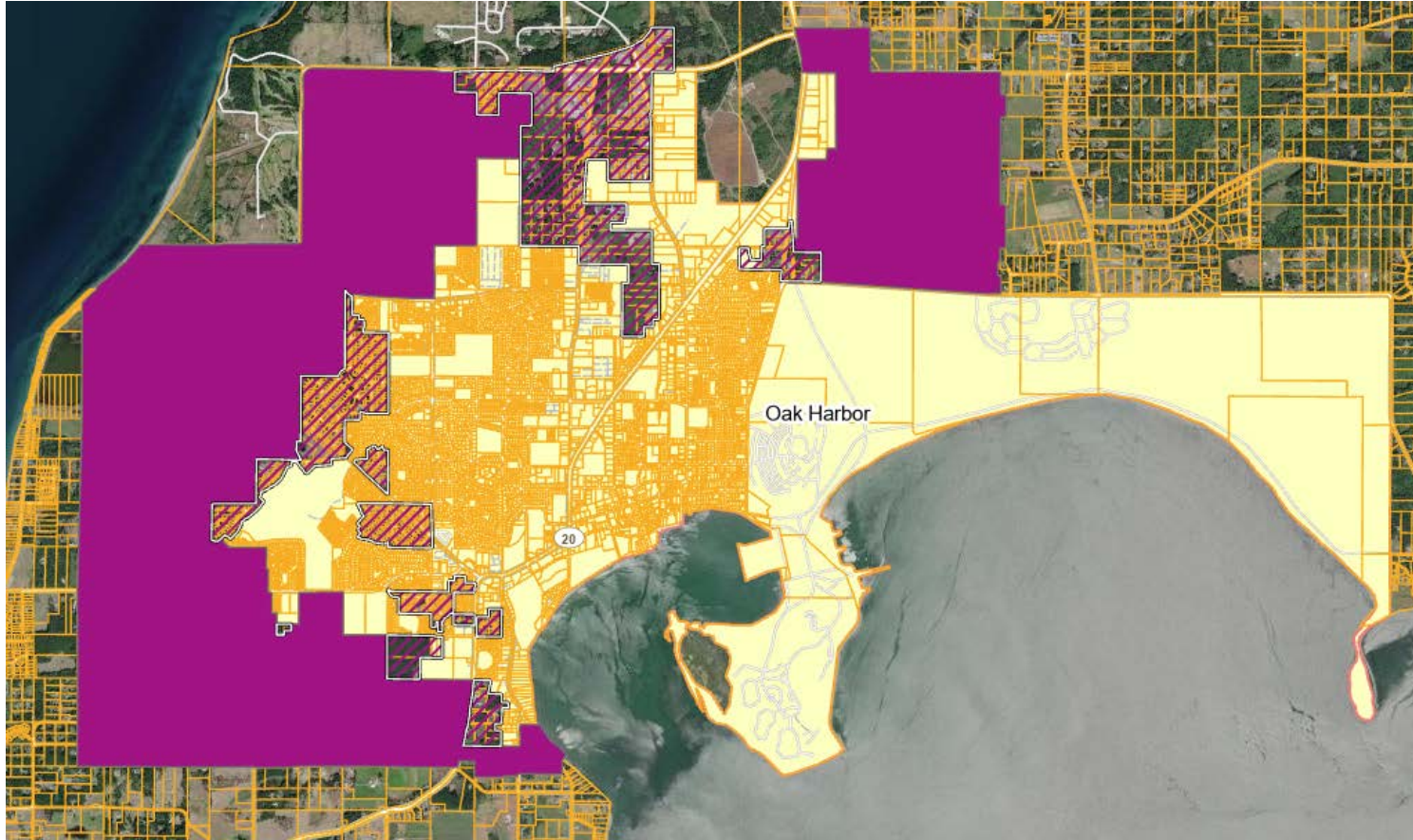
1. The County could plan for its 0-50% housing to be accommodated in jurisdictions UGAs.
2. The County could trade or transfer its 0-50% share of AMI housing to UGAs.

Neither of these scenarios was palatable to the Countywide Planning Group. Let me explain why...



UGA vs. JPA vs. City Limits

- JPA
- UGA
- City Limits



Countywide Planning Group Discussion

- The Cities are planning for the growth in their City Limits and in their UGAs.
 - Having the County plan for the UGAs would increase jurisdictions' share of 0-50% housing and is not viewed as equitable.
- The proposed housing allocations are based on a “fair share methodology” where each jurisdiction accommodates housing at all income levels – as assigned by the HAPT tool.
 - Trading shares of 0-50% housing is contradictory to this fair share approach and does not ensure that each jurisdiction has housing at all income levels.



Challenges to Locating 0-50% AMI Housing

- Existing land use code
- 0-50% housing should represent a proportion of the available housing, and not overwhelm the existing housing stock in any given area/zone
- Septic/sewer availability
- Transportation accessibility
- Availability of services
- Public acceptance



County's Strategy for Our Share of 0-50% AMI Housing

The County's ~1,000 units of 0-50% AMI housing would be spread amongst the following (as septic capacity allows):

- Freeland UGA
- Clinton
- Camano
- Mixed-Use Raids
- Rural Lands (creative potential options include: Planned Residential Developments, RVs and RV Parks, Accessory Dwelling Units, developer incentives, surplus government property, etc.)



Countywide Planning Group Take-Aways

- Continue with the housing allocations as proposed by the CPG.
- **The existing 0-50% housing will be very challenging for the County to accomplish.**
- These allocations are a **starting point for developing a housing strategy** for our Comprehensive Plan updates; there will be many chances to revisit this over the coming years as we implement the new housing laws.



QUESTIONS?



COMPPLAN@ISLANDCOUNTYWA.GOV

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE



VISION STATEMENT – PRE WORKSHOP

February 7, 2024

Reminders / Requests from Staff

- Review the 2016 Vision Statement and Introduction Chapter in advance.
- Highlight where changes may be needed or where something is missing.
- Come to work session on February 21 prepared to discuss high-level comments.



Framing the Discussion

- **Change happens.**
 - While community character is important, the GMA does not support the idea that neighborhoods will remain unchanged over time.
 - Comprehensive planning asks us not to try and stop change, but to understand the forces behind change and work with them to achieve a better future.



What Makes a Strong Vision Statement

- The Vision is the introduction to the Comp Plan, it guides the rest of our work.
- A good vision will provide:
 - A framework for determining appropriate goals and policies.
 - An explanation to the public of why the plan is the way it is.
 - A yardstick for determining the effectiveness of the plan and policies over time.



Public Input (to date)

- “Rural Character” should be defined and be consistent with WA State GMA definition. The Rural Character section should better reflect “use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat.”
- “Ecological Integrity” should specifically be addressed.
- “Marine Character” should be specifically addressed to reflect our unique island assets and vulnerabilities.
- “Climate Resilience” should be reflected.



GMA Updates

- Recommendations to reflect climate (HB 1181):
 - Recommend adding a section to address climate resilience
- Recommendations to reflect affordable housing and addressing disparities in housing (HB 1220):
 - Revise “G: Housing” to reflect new mandate for providing housing at all income levels
 - Revise “A: Allure of the County” to be more reflective of current racial disparities in housing.
 - Revise “D: Challenge” to use more inclusive language.



Discussion Questions to Consider for Feb. 21

- What do you like about the current vision statement and introduction chapter?
- What do you feel is missing?
- Where is there tension?
- Did you see anything in the other County's examples we should emulate?



Next Steps

- Review the Vision Statement and Introduction Chapter and consider the questions from today's session for discuss on Feb. 21.
- Vision Statement Survey on our new website. Encourage your friends, neighbors, colleagues to respond to the survey!
- Next Homework: Housing & Land Use Element goals and policies (Feb-March)



QUESTIONS?



SIGN UP TO RECEIVE COMP PLAN EMAILS:

CompPlan@islandcountywa.gov