



# **Island County Comprehensive Plan**

## **2025 Periodic Update**

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## GLOSSARY

“Accessory dwelling unit, attached” means separate living quarters contained within, or connected by an enclosed and conditioned passageway no longer than 16 feet in length to, the primary residence which include provisions for sleeping, cooking (including an oven, range, or stovetop), and sanitation. An attached ADU is subject to the requirements and conditions provided in ICC 17.03.180.

“Accessory dwelling unit, detached” means a dwelling unit, situated on the same parcel as a single family dwelling and shares a common access point with the single family dwelling. Detached ADUs do not include recreational vehicles, travel trailers, park model homes, or tiny homes on wheels. A detached ADU is subject to the requirements and conditions provided in ICC 17.03.180.

“Act” means the Growth Management Act.

“Adequate public facilities” means facilities that have the capacity to serve development without decreasing levels of service below locally established minimums.

“Affordable housing” means housing that is reserved for a household that earns up to 80 percent of the area median income, adjusted for household size; to be considered “affordable,” the monthly housing costs, including utilities other than telephone, must not exceed thirty percent of the household’s income. See: Extremely Low-Income Housing, Very Low-Income Housing, Low-Income Housing and Moderate-Income Housing.

“Agriculture” means the use of land for commercial production of horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, dairy, apiary, vegetable, or animal products or of berries, grain, hay, straw, turf, seed, Christmas trees (not subject to the state excise tax on timber harvest), or livestock.

“Agricultural land” means land primarily devoted to the commercial production of horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, dairy, apiary, vegetable, or animal products or of berries, grain, hay, straw, turf, seed, Christmas trees (not subject to the state excise tax on timber harvest), or livestock and that has long-term commercial significance for agricultural production.

“Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)” means the act that ensures access for the disabled for publicly used facilities, employment, public transportation and public communication.

“Anti-displacement” means policies meant to prevent or reduce displacement of the historical or current residents. See also Displacement.

“Aquifer” means any geologic formation that will yield water to a well or other withdrawal works in sufficient quantity for beneficial use.

“Aquifer recharge areas” mean areas where an aquifer that is a source of drinking water is vulnerable to contamination that would affect the potability of the water.

“Area median income” means annual household income for Island County as published on an annual basis by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

“Arterial roadways” means a class of roadway serving major movements of traffic not served by freeways. Arterial roadways are functionally classed depending on the degree to which they serve through traffic movements versus access to land.

“Available public facilities” means that facilities or services are in place or that a financial commitment is in place to provide the facilities or services within a specified time. In the case of transportation facilities and services, the specified time is six years from the time of development.

“Best available science” means scientific information such as research, inventory, monitoring, surveys, modeling, synthesis, expert opinion, or assessment that is used to designate, protect, or restore critical areas. As defined by WAC 365-195-900 through 365-195-925, best available science is derived from a process that includes peer-reviewed literature, standard methods, logical conclusions, and reasonable inferences, quantitative analysis, and documented references to produce reliable information.

“Best management practices (BMP)” means practices or structures designed to reduce the quantities of pollutants - such as sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, and animal wastes - that are washed by rain and snow melt into nearby surface waters, such as lakes, creeks, streams, rivers, and estuaries.

“Board of Island County Commissioners (Board)” means the elected representative governing body of Island County, providing both legislative and executive functions.

“Buffer” means an area contiguous with a critical area, natural resource land, or urban growth area that is required for the integrity, maintenance, function, and stability of the area or land.

“Business park” means a development providing for a mix of light industrial distribution and related commercial retail, office, and service uses.

“Capacity” means the maximum number of vehicles that can pass over a given section of a lane or roadway in one direction (or in both direction for a two- or three-lane facility) during a given time period under prevailing roadway and traffic conditions. It is the maximum rate of flow that has a reasonable expectation of occurring.

“Capital cost” means costs of building, improving, or acquiring long term assets or infrastructure such as purchase of land, construction of roadways and sewage treatment facilities, and acquisition of buildings. Distinguished from operating costs.

“Capital facilities” means public structures, improvements, pieces of equipment or other major assets, including land, that have a useful life of at least 10 years and cost over \$25,000. Capital facilities are provided by and for public purposes and services. For the purposes of the Capital Facilities Element, capital facilities include surface water management, solid waste disposal, law and justice, general government, parks and recreation facilities, airport, transportation, education, fire protection, sanitary sewer, and public water supply systems.

“Capital improvement program (CIP)” means a plan that matches the costs of capital improvements to anticipated revenue and a timeline. CIPs are usually prepared for six or more years, updated annually, and coordinated with the comprehensive planning process.

“Capital improvement” means land, improvements to land, structures (including design, permitting, and construction), initial furnishings and selected equipment. Other capital costs, such as motor vehicles and motorized equipment, computers and office equipment, office furnishings, and small tools are considered to be minor capital expenses in the County’s annual budget, are not generally considered capital improvements for the purposes of this

Comprehensive Plan, or the issuance of development permits. For the purposes of the Capital Facilities Element and Plan, a Capital Improvement includes any costs over \$25,000.

“Category of capital facilities” means a specific group of capital facilities, as follows:

A. Category A capital facilities are facilities owned or operated by Island County and subject to the requirement for concurrency as follows:

- Arterials;
- Transit routes;
- Intersections of transit routes/arterials and other county roads.

(Category A facilities do not include the intersection of county arterials, county transit routes and state facilities nor county transit routes on state facilities. Public road intersections with SR 20 and SR 525 are included in the Washington State Transportation Plan's Travel Delay Methodology which is the basis of defining levels of service on highways of statewide significance.)

B. Category B capital facilities are facilities owned or operated by federal, state, or city governments, independent districts, or individuals/private/community organizations and which are subject to the requirement for concurrency.

C. Category C capital facilities are facilities owned or operated by Island County but not subject to the requirement for concurrency.

D. Category D capital facilities are facilities owned or operated by federal, state, or city governments, independent districts, or private organizations but not subject to the requirement for concurrency.

“City” means any city or town within Island County.

“Climate friendly food” means produced in resilient food systems with either benefits, or no negative impacts, on the local environment.

“Compatible” means capable of existing together without discord or in a state of mutual tolerance.

“Concurrency” means that adequate capital facilities are available when the impacts of development occur, except that in the case of transit routes and county/city/town arterial roads and their intersections, and highways of statewide significance. This definition includes the two concepts of "adequate public facilities" and of "available public facilities" as defined above.

Concurrent with development shall mean:

- A. That the capacity of an affected transit route/arterial or arterial intersection(s), and/or highways of statewide significance, is sufficient to accommodate the projected transportation impacts of a proposed development; or
- B. That improvements, strategies, or other mitigation measures which will achieve or maintain an operating level at or above the level of service standard established for the affected transit route/arterial or arterial intersection(s), and/or highways of statewide significance:

1. Are in place, planned, reasonably funded, and scheduled for completion no later six (6) years after development approval as reflected in the most recent version of the adopted county or state Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); or
2. Will be available and complete no later than six (6) years after development approval, as provided where appropriate by the applicant's voluntary financial commitment/agreement (that is in place at the time of the development's approval).

"Condominium" means real property, portions of which are designated for separate ownership and the remainder of which is designated for common ownership solely by the owners of those portions. Real property is not a condominium unless the undivided interest in the common elements is vested in the unit owners, and unless a declaration and a survey map and plans have been recorded. Condominiums must meet all provisions of Chapter 64.34 RCW.

"Contiguous development" means development of areas immediately adjacent to one another.

"Coordination" means consultation and cooperation among jurisdictions.

"Co-living housing" means a residential development with sleeping units that are independently rented and lockable and provide living and sleeping space, and residents share kitchen facilities with other sleeping units in the building.

"Correction" means a project(s) or strategy(ies) to correct existing or projected Level of Service (LOS) deficiencies.

"Cottage housing" means a development of smaller detached homes that share common areas.

"County-owned parks" means parks owned and operated by the County as defined by the Parks and Recreation Element.

"Countywide planning policies" means the countywide growth management policy plan required by the state Growth Management Act that promotes regional cooperation and specifies the roles and responsibilities of cities and the county. (RCW 36.70A.210).

"Courtyard apartment" means attached dwelling units arranged on two or three sides of a yard or court.

"Covenants" means private restrictions placed on land regulating land use activities.

"Critical areas" means areas of environmental sensitivity, which include the following areas and ecosystems (a) wetlands; (b) areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water; (c) fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas; (d) frequently flooded areas; and (e) geologically hazardous areas.

"Current use open space taxation" means tax reduction programs for properties utilized for agriculture, timber and open space uses as provided in RCW 84.34. Island County's Public Benefit Rating System is utilized for open space tax reduction.

"Development activity" means any proposal that will result in construction, development, earth movement, clearing, or other site disturbance which generates new traffic demands following completion of the proposal and which requires a permit, approval, or authorization from the county, except that single family residential building permits, proposals governed by Chapter

58.17 RCW as explained in the footnoted court cases (ICC 11.04.020) or any proposed activity by a public or private utility or service, are not considered a development activity for the purposes of concurrency.

“Displacement” means when a household is forced or pressured to move from their home or neighborhood by factors outside of their control. Displacement can be physical, economic, or cultural.

- Physical displacement typically occurs with an eviction or lease termination, or the expiration of covenants on rent- or income-restricted housing.
- Economic displacement occurs when pressures of increased housing costs compel a household to relocate.
- Cultural displacement occurs when people choose to move because their neighbors and culturally related businesses and institutions have left the area.

“Duplex” means a dwelling unit designed exclusively for occupancy by two (2) families living independently of each other, doing their own cooking, and containing two (2) dwelling units. Such dwelling units have a common roof or the dwelling units are joined by a common roof. A single family dwelling unit with an attached guest cottage is not considered a duplex.

“Dwelling unit” means any building, or portion thereof that includes provisions for sleeping, cooking, and sanitation, as required by Island County code. Dwelling units include site-built homes, mobile/manufactured homes, modular homes, tiny homes, or one unit in a duplex, triplex, fourplex or multifamily apartment.

“Emergency housing” means temporary indoor accommodations for individuals or families who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless that is intended to address the basic health, food, clothing, and personal hygiene needs of individuals or families. Emergency housing may or may not require occupants to enter into a lease or an occupancy agreement.

“Emergency shelter” means a facility that provides a temporary shelter for individuals or families who are currently homeless. Emergency shelter may not require occupants to enter into a lease or an occupancy agreement. Emergency shelter facilities may include day and warming centers that do not provide overnight accommodations. Emergency shelters may include overnight shelters which provide safe and dry conditions which save lives.

“Environmental harm” means the individual or cumulative environmental health impacts and risks to communities caused by historic, current, or projected:

- Exposure to pollution, conventional or toxic pollutants, environmental hazards, or other contamination in the air, water, and land;
- Adverse environmental effects, including exposure to contamination, hazardous substances, or pollution that increase the risk of adverse environmental health outcomes or create vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change;
- Loss or impairment of ecosystem functions or traditional food resources or loss of access to gather cultural resources or harvest traditional foods; or
- Health and economic impacts from climate change.

“Environmental justice” means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

“Essential public facilities” means those facilities that provide a service to the public and are required to support basic social needs in the community, region and state and to implement the comprehensive plan but are typically difficult to site because they may require an extremely large amount of acreage, and additionally may have aesthetic issues that may not meet standards for rural character; and may create exceptionally high impacts from the amounts and type of transportation, excessive noise, odor, lighting and glare, and may involve unusually high security measures. Essential public facilities include, but are not limited to, airports, military installations, state educational facilities, state or regional transportation facilities, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste-handling facilities, and large in-patient facilities including substance-abuse facilities, mental health facilities, group homes, septage collection and treatment, public school facilities, and sewage treatment facilities. Throughput transmission facilities, major utilities, and communication towers are not essential public facilities. Essential public facilities fall into the two (2) following classifications:

- a) *Class A facilities*. These facilities serve a large region or the state and generally must locate in the rural area because they require extremely large sites and must be located away from centers of population due to their associated impacts and required security measures. They will likely have major impacts on the site and surrounding area due to changes to the natural landscape and vegetation at the time of site development and from the associated size of the use, and levels of traffic, noise, odors, lighting, and other factors during operation. These facilities include, but are not limited to regional transportation facilities, such as regional airports, state correction facilities, and state educational facilities.
- b) *Class B facilities*. These facilities serve the county, a small region, or a neighborhood and generally need to be located near the populations they serve. These facilities include but are not limited to solid waste-handling facilities, septage collection and treatment, public school facilities, sewage treatment facilities, group homes, including assisted living facilities, and large inpatient facilities (e.g., substance abuse facilities, and mental health facilities).

“Extremely low-income housing” means housing that is affordable to a household that earns less than 30 percent of the area median income, adjusted for household size. (see also “Low-income Housing” and “Very Low-income Housing”).

“Facilities” means the physical structure or structures in which a service is provided.

“Farm-worker housing” means permanent housing for seasonal and year around farm workers and their families.

“Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (FWHCA)” means areas that serve a critical role in sustaining needed habitats and species for the functional integrity of the ecosystem, and which, if altered, may reduce the likelihood that the species will persist over the long term. These areas may include, but are not limited to, rare or vulnerable ecological systems, communities, and habitat or habitat elements including seasonal ranges, breeding habitat, winter range, and movement corridors; and areas with high relative population density or species richness. In Island County, FWHCA also include locally important and designated habitats and species (WAC 365-190-030(6)).

“Fourplex” means a dwelling unit, or portion thereof, designed for occupancy by four (4) families living independently of each other, doing their own cooking and containing four (4) dwelling

units. Such dwelling units have a common roof or the dwelling units are joined by a common roof.

“Frequently flooded areas” means all areas of special flood hazard as mapped within the County, and other areas that could be threatened by flooding or areas subject to flooding due to high groundwater. Frequently flooded areas perform important hydrologic functions and may present a risk to persons and property. These areas include, but are not limited to, streams, rivers, lakes, coastal areas, wetlands, and areas where high groundwater forms ponds on the ground surface. Classifications of frequently flooded areas include, at a minimum, the 100-year floodplain designations of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Flood Insurance Program. Frequently flooded areas under shoreline jurisdiction are subject to the provisions of Chapter 90.58 RCW (Shoreline Management Act) and Chapter 17.05A ICC.

“Geologically hazardous area” means areas that because of their susceptibility to erosion, sliding, or other geologic events, are generally not suited to the siting of commercial, residential, or industrial development consistent with public health or safety concerns. Areas susceptible to one (1) or more of the following types of hazards shall be classified as a geologically hazardous area: erosion hazard; landslide hazard; and seismic hazard.

“Goal” means a statement in the Comprehensive Plan that acts as a direction setter. It is an ideal future end, condition, or state related to the public health, safety, or general welfare toward which planning and implementation measures are directed. A goal is a general expression of community values and, therefore, is abstract in nature. Consequently, a goal is generally not quantifiable, time-dependent, or suggestive of specific actions for its achievement.

“Green infrastructure” means a wide array of natural assets and built structures, including parks, stormwater management facilities at multiple scales that manage wet weather and that maintain and restore natural hydrology through storage, infiltration, evapotranspiration, and harvesting and using stormwater.

“Habitat” means the physical location or type of environment in which an organism or biological population lives or occurs.

“Highly impacted community” means a community designated by the department of health based on cumulative impact analyses in RCW 19.405.140 or a community located in census tracts that are fully or partially on tribal lands.

“Incorporated” means any lands that are within the jurisdictional boundaries of a city.

“IRTPO (Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization)” means the organization that carries out joint transportation planning efforts by Island County, cities, ports, Island Transit, major employers, and the Washington State Department of Transportation (DOT).

“Limited area of more intensive development (LAMIRD)” means an area of existing density in the Rural Lands with a logical outer boundary, established by ordinance with Island County’s first Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan update.

“Level of service (LOS) standard” means an established minimum capacity of capital facilities that must be provided per unit of demand or other appropriate measure of need. See section 10.3 for more details on LOS Standards.

“Lot, parent” means a lot which is subdivided into unit lots through the unit lot subdivision process. See also lot, unit and unit lot subdivision.

“Lot, unit” means a lot created from a parent lot and approved through the unit lot subdivision process. See also lot, parent, and unit lot subdivision.

“Low impact development” means a site design and/or structures that incorporate specific measures to reduce and compensate for adverse water quality or quantity impacts to critical areas or critical area buffers. Land use intensity may be reduced by incorporating low impact development techniques into a development proposal. See "Land use intensity." Low impact development techniques include measures that reduce the quantity and improve the quality of storm water runoff. Specific suggested techniques are described in more detail in the Rural Stewardship Guide.

“Low-income housing” means housing that is affordable to a household that earns between 50 and 80 percent of the area median income, adjusted for household size. (see also “Extremely Low-income Housing” and “Very Low-income Housing”).

“Lower-carbon materials” means materials that simultaneously lower embodied and operational carbon emissions, reduce carbon footprint and enhance the materials’ circularity, compared to the conventional material choices without compromising the end product’s functional requirements and performance properties.

“Middle housing” means buildings that are compatible in scale, form, and character with single-family houses and contain two or more attached, stacked, or clustered homes including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, stacked flats, courtyard apartments, and/or cottage housing.

“Mitigation” means avoiding, minimizing, or compensating for adverse impacts.

“Moderate-income housing” means housing that is affordable to a household that earns between 80 percent and 100 percent of the area median income, adjusted for household size.

“Non-municipal urban growth area (NMUGA)” means an Urban Growth Area that is not associated with an incorporated city or town. See also Urban Growth Area (UGA).

“No net loss” means the maintenance of the aggregate total of the county shoreline ecological functions over time. The no net loss standard contained in WAC 173-26-186 requires that the impacts of shoreline use or development, whether permitted or exempt from permit requirements, be identified and mitigated such that there are no resulting adverse impacts on ecological functions or processes.

“Overburdened communities” means a geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and includes, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities as defined in RCW 19.405.020.

“Passive survivability” means the ability of a building to maintain critical life-support conditions for its occupants if services such as power, heating fuel, or water are lost for an extended period.

“Permanent supportive housing” means subsidized, leased housing with no limit on length of stay that prioritizes people who need comprehensive support services to retain tenancy and

utilizes admissions practices designed to use lower barriers to entry than would be typical for other subsidized or unsubsidized rental housing, especially related to rental history, criminal history, and personal behaviors. Permanent supportive housing is paired with on-site or off-site voluntary services designed to support a person living with a complex and disabling behavioral health or physical health condition who was experiencing homelessness or was at imminent risk of homelessness prior to moving into housing to retain their housing and be a successful tenant in a housing arrangement, improve the resident's health status, and connect the resident of the housing with community-based health care, treatment, or employment services. Permanent supportive housing is subject to all the rights and responsibilities defined in Chapter 59.18 RCW.

“Policy” means a specific statement in the Comprehensive Plan that guides decision-making. It indicates a clear commitment of the Board. A policy is based on a comprehensive plan's goals and objectives as well as the analysis of data. A policy is carried out by implementation measures (such as zoning, land division, and environmental ordinances).

“Prescriptive regulations” means development regulations that provide specific standards.

“Public facilities” means facilities owned and/or maintained by the County, including streets, roads, highways, sidewalks, street and road lighting systems, traffic signals, domestic water systems, storm and sanitary sewer systems, parks and recreational facilities, and schools.

“Public services” means services provided by the County, including fire protection and suppression, law enforcement, public health, education, recreation, environmental protection, and other governmental services.

“Public transportation” means a wide variety of passenger transportation services available to the public including buses, ferries, rideshare, and rail transit.

“Public water” means any system providing water intended for, or used for, human consumption or other domestic uses. It includes, but is not limited to, facilities where water is furnished to any community, or number of individuals, or is made available to the public for human consumption or domestic use, excluding water systems serving one single family residence (RCW 70A.100).

“Publicly accessible” means open to the general public for passage, recreation, or shopping.

“Reasonably funded” means a mitigation measure or other transportation improvement that is scheduled for completion and is designated as funded in the current version of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) of the County or City/Town.

“Religious organization” means the federally protected practice of a recognized religious assembly, school, or institution that owns or controls real property.

“Rural character” means the patterns of land use and development established by a county in the rural element of its comprehensive plan:

- a) In which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment;
- b) That foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas;
- c) That provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities;

- d) That are compatible with the use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat;
- e) That reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;
- f) That generally do not require the extension of urban governmental services; and
- g) That are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and groundwater and surface water recharge and discharge areas.

“Rural development” means development outside the urban growth area and outside agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands designated pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170. Rural development can consist of a variety of uses and residential densities, including clustered residential development, at levels that are consistent with the preservation of rural character and the requirements of the rural element. Rural development does not refer to agriculture or forestry activities that may be conducted in rural areas.

“Rural government services” means those public services and public facilities historically and typically delivered at an intensity usually found in rural areas, and may include domestic water systems, fire and police protection services, transportation and public transit services, and other public utilities associated with rural development and normally not associated with urban areas. Rural services do not include storm or sanitary sewers, except as otherwise authorized by RCW 36.70A.110(4).

“Rural lands” means all lands which are not within an urban growth area and are not designated as natural resource lands having long term commercial significance for production of agricultural products, timber, or the extraction of minerals.

“Rural sprawl” means low-density residential development that is scattered outside LAMIRDs and UGAs or commercial strip development along arterial highways leading into and out of LAMIRDs and UGAs.

“Sanitary sewer systems” means all facilities, including approved on-site disposal facilities, used in the collection, transmission, storage, treatment of discharge of any waterborne waste, whether domestic in origin or a combination of domestic, commercial or industrial waste.

“Scenic highways” means a Washington State designation for highways that have particular scenic characteristics. This designation was originally initiated to control billboards.

“Seismic hazard areas” means areas subject to severe risk of damage as a result of earthquake induced ground shaking, slope failure, settlement, or soil liquefaction.

“Sensitive species” means a species native to the State of Washington, that is vulnerable or declining and is likely to become endangered or threatened in a significant portion of its range within the State without cooperative management or the removal of threats as designated by WAC 232-12-011.

“Single-family residence” means a building designed or used for residential purposes by not more than one (1) family and containing one (1) dwelling unit. A mobile home or mobile/manufactured home, including a modular home, shall be considered a single-family dwelling. See also "Accessory dwelling unit (ADU), detached, duplex and triplex" and the definition of "Attached." Unless otherwise specified, all single-family residences are detached dwellings units.

“Short-term rental” means a type of lodging, that is not a hotel or motel, in which a dwelling unit, or portion of a dwelling unit, that is offered or provided to a guest(s) by the owner of the dwelling unit or portion of the dwelling unit for a fee for fewer than 30 consecutive nights.

“Species of local importance” means those species that may not be endangered, threatened or sensitive from a statewide perspective, but are of local concern due to their population status, sensitivity to habitat manipulation, or other educational, cultural or historic attributes.

“Stacked flat” means dwelling units in a residential building of no more than three stories on a residential zoned lot in which each floor may be separately rented or owned.

“Suburban” means blending or characterized by the blending of the urban and the rural. A land use development pattern that is dispersed as opposed to decentralized.

“Subarea” means a detailed plan for a small geographic area within the county, focused on local issues, problems, and opportunities, and may address land use, economic, social, and other issues of local concern at a finer level of detail than in the general policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

“Tiny home” means a site-built, or approved by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries if factory-built, residence including provisions for sleeping, cooking, and sanitation with under 400 square feet of conditioned space not including any loft space.

“Townhouse” means a row of three (3) or more attached single family dwellings. Each unit has its own front entryway.

“Transit” means passenger bus service available for the use by the public and generally operated on fixed routes with fixed schedules.

“Transit routes” means county roads identified in the adopted transportation elements of the respective political subdivision used by Island Transit. Those roads used by Island Transit that are not identified in the referenced transportation elements will be considered for inclusion in the plans as transit routes during updates of the transportation elements and are not considered transit routes until they are so identified. For the purposes of this chapter, transit routes do not include state facilities nor the intersection of state and county arterials/transit routes.

“Transitional housing” means a project that provides housing and supportive services to homeless persons or families for up to two years and that has as its purpose facilitating the movement of homeless persons and families into independent living.

“Transportation demand management” means managing transportation demand, usually to reduce it or to shift it to different times, locations, routes, or modes all designed to increase the number of person-trips which can be carried on the highway system without significantly increasing the design capacity of the highway system and without increasing the number of through traffic lanes.

“Transportation improvement program (TIP)” means a plan or schedule showing specific expenditures for transportation capital projects over a specific time period, often for six years.

“Transportation facilities” means capital facilities related to air, water, or land transportation.

“Transportation level of service standards” means a measure that describes the operational condition of the travel stream and acceptable adequacy requirements. Such standards may be

expressed in terms such as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, convenience, geographic accessibility, and safety.

“Tribal lands” means sacred sites, traditional cultural properties, burial grounds, and other tribal sites protected by federal or state law.

“Trip” means a one-direction movement, which begins at the origin at the start time, ends at the destination at the arrival time, and is conducted for a specific purpose.

“Trip generation” means the analysis and application of the relationships between the trip makers, the urban area, and the trip making.

“Triplex” means a dwelling unit, or portion thereof, designed for occupancy by three (3) families living independently of each other, doing their own cooking and containing three (3) dwelling units. Such dwelling units have a common roof or the dwelling units are joined by a common roof.

“Unincorporated” means the communities and areas outside the jurisdictional boundaries of incorporated cities.

“Urban governmental services” means those governmental services historically and typically delivered by cities, and include storm and sanitary sewer systems, domestic water systems, street cleaning services, fire and police protection services, public transit services, and other public utilities associated with urban areas and normally not associated with rural areas.

“Urban growth” means growth (commercial, industrial, and residential) that makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures, and impermeable surfaces to such a degree as to be incompatible with the primary use of such land for the production of food, other agricultural products, or fiber, or the extraction of mineral resources, rural uses, rural development, and natural resource lands designated pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170. A pattern of more intensive rural development, as provided in RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d), is not urban growth. When allowed to spread over wide areas, urban growth typically requires urban governmental services.

“Characterized by urban growth” refers to land having urban growth located on it, or to land located in relationship to an area with urban growth on it as to be appropriate for urban growth.

“Urban growth area (UGA)” means an area designated by the County pursuant to RCW 36.70A.110 within which most new growth is planned for and encouraged to locate. Urban Growth Areas include incorporated cities and towns (municipalities) along with any unincorporated area designated for future urban growth and annexation into the municipality’s corporate limits. Urban Growth Areas also may be non-municipal, such as the Freeland NMUGA. Regulatory control of land within unincorporated Urban Growth Areas remains with the County until annexed into a city. The land and development controls within unincorporated Urban Growth Areas, however, may be subject to joint county/city or tribal interlocal planning agreements and concurrency.

“Urban sprawl” means development which manifests itself in one or more of the following patterns (a) Leapfrog development which bypasses vacant parcels located closer to the urban area that are suitable for development and instead locates away from existing urban areas; (b) strip development which allows commercial, retail, and multi-family residential developments to locate in a linear pattern along both sides of a major arterial; and (c) large expanses of low density, single-family dwelling development.

“Unit lot subdivision” means the division of a parent lot into two or more unit lots within a development and approved through the unit lot subdivision process. See also lot, unit and lot, parent.

“Very low-income housing” means housing that is affordable to a household that earns between 30 and 50 percent of the area median income, adjusted for household size. (see also “Extremely Low-income Housing” and “Low-income Housing”).

“Vulnerable populations” means communities that experience a disproportionate cumulative risk from environmental burdens due to:

- Adverse socioeconomic factors, including unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, access to food and health care, and linguistic isolation; and
- Sensitivity factors, such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization.

“Water residence time” means the length of time water spends in the groundwater portion of the hydrologic cycle.

“Wildlife corridors” means the pathways or linkages between habitats. For most large and highly mobile species, wildlife corridors provide habitat sufficient to facilitate movement but are not usually the primary habitat. Species with limited mobility may need to reside within wildlife corridors and only achieve migration over multiple generations.

“Wildland urban interface (WUI)” means the geographical area where structures and other human development meets or intermingles with wildland vegetative fuels.

“Zone” means a legislatively designed and enacted policy, including standards, a detailed map, and other criteria, all of which control and define areas of physical development of the county or any part thereof and which are classified by the zoning ordinance as available for certain uses and unavailable for other certain uses.

“Zoning” means the demarcation of an area by ordinance into zones and the establishment of regulations to govern the uses within those zones and the location, bulk, height, shape, and coverage of structures within each zone.

## INTRODUCTION

### I.I COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The Island County Comprehensive Plan is the document that provides the broad policy basis for Island County's land use planning program and sets the framework to guide land use decisions within the county. The plan identifies ways that the County's land use planning efforts will implement state and regional requirements, including the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) and administrative codes. Equally important, the plan acts to coordinate actions with local jurisdictions, service providers, and state and federal agencies that may have a stake in Island County's land use policies and implementing regulations and actions.

In addition to its legislative and coordination roles, the comprehensive plan also reflects community values and aspirations about the county's future. The plan aims to organize county actions and programs that define relationships between land use goals and policies and community livability, economic vitality, provision of needed public facilities, and environmental stewardship.

### I.II REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The GMA was passed in 1990 in response to rapid population growth, concerns with suburban sprawl, environmental protection, and quality of life. It provides direction regarding:

- Jurisdictions must create a comprehensive plan consistent with the goals of the GMA
- The plan must account for the next 20 years of population growth
- Plans are reviewed every 10 years and updated if necessary; this review will be for years 2025 - 2045
- Must include public participation early and often
- Plans are implemented through capital investment and development regulations

#### **Key Considerations:**

##### **A. Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)**

1. Counties, in consultation with municipalities, must designate UGAs to accommodate population growth and development.
2. UGAs are places within which urban growth shall be encouraged, and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not urban in nature.

##### **B. Resource Lands & Critical Areas**

1. Counties must designate and regulate Resource Lands such as agricultural lands, forest lands, and mineral resources. Counties must also designate Critical Areas such

as wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazard areas.

**C. Public Facilities**

1. Each jurisdiction must identify lands useful for public purposes and allow for essential public facilities.
2. Some rural governmental services and urban services, such as transportation infrastructure, must be in place at the time development is completed (these terms are defined in RCW 36.70A.030(40) through (48)).

**I.II.I STATE PLANNING GOALS**

The GMA sets forth statutory goals for the guidance of the cities and counties required to plan under the act in RCW 36.70A.020. In addition, RCW 36.70A.480 states that the goals and policies of the state Shoreline Management Act, as set forth in RCW 90.58.020, are added as one of the goals as presented in RCW 36.70A.020.

The GMA goals as presented in RCW 36.70A.020 and RCW 36.70A.480 are outlined below.

- **Urban Growth:** Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- **Reduce Sprawl:** Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low density development.
- **Transportation:** Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
- **Housing:** Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of the existing housing stock.
- **Economic Development:** Encourage economic development that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunities for all citizens, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of natural resources, public services, and public facilities.
- **Property Rights:** Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
- **Permits:** Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.

- **Natural Resource Industries:** Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands and discourage incompatible uses.
- **Open Space and Recreation:** Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.
- **Environment:** Protect the environment and enhance the state's quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
- **Citizen Participation and Coordination:** Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.
- **Public Facilities and Services:** Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.
- **Historic Preservation:** Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.
- **Climate Change and Resiliency.** Ensure that comprehensive plans, development regulations, and regional policies, plans, and strategies under RCW 36.70A.210 and chapter 47.80 RCW adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate; support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advance environmental justice.
- **Shorelines of the State:** For shorelines of the state, the goals and policies of the shoreline management act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020 shall be considered an element of the county's or city's comprehensive plan.

## **I.III ISLAND COUNTY VISION STATEMENT**

Island County strives to grow our communities in ways that respect the people who lived here in the past, that responds to those who live here today and accommodates those desiring to live here in the future. We will protect our vital natural resources, our wild and natural places, our working farms and forests, and our shorelines that contribute to our unique island life. We strive to create capacity for all our residents and meet their needs equitably, in pursuit of a thriving economy and resilient community.

### **I.III.I PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF ISLAND COUNTY**

Island County is primarily made up of two unique islands: Whidbey and Camano. Our islands

are host to small towns, rural residences, large and small farms, sizable forests, and shorelines dotted with homes that allow residents and visitors alike to enjoy the marine environment. As islands, we have finite resources. Our drinking water comes from sole source aquifers, we have constrained amounts of prime farmland with soils sufficient to grow our food, and we have limited land to support dense development. Comprehensive planning on islands requires that we keep these constraints at the forefront, and plan for growth in a thoughtful and measured way that centers conservation of resources and resiliency.

People live in Island County for many reasons - to be close to family, for a job or deployment, to move away from the city, or to retire. They stay because of a quieter way of life with a strong sense of community, access to open space and recreation, and beautiful views of rural lands, mountain ranges, and shorelines. Many island families have resided here for generations, contributing to the cultural and living history.

Our communities change and grow over time. Communities are framed by the people who live and work here. As residents age, babies are born, and new residents move here our communities adapt and start to look and feel different. The people who live here shape our stories - they bring new ideas, open stores and restaurants, work the farms that provide our food, and build the houses we live in. Over generations, people inevitably leave their mark on our islands in ways big and small.

Key to building a thriving economy and healthy community is ensuring businesses have housing for their employees, school enrollment is growing, healthcare and services are readily available, and our population represents generations of people at different stages of their lives. The County's last comprehensive plan under-planned the amount of growth that would occur over the 20-year planning period. The effect of underestimating growth is clear, we continue to lack a variety of housing types across our communities to support residents at all ages and income levels.

The state mandated housing changes for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan will challenge us to meet the needs of all members of our communities, at all income levels. It's our statutory duty to create places in our communities for everyone to live and thrive. The resounding input from residents is that they want the physical mark left on this place by growth over the next 20 years to be small, and we should protect our rural lands from too much growth.

Comprehensive planning presents an opportunity to prepare for the change that will happen in our communities over the next 20 years in ways that protect our unique island life. There will be tensions and compromises to be made. Change will happen whether we plan for it or whether we do nothing at all. We cannot stop it, though we can guide it in ways that are adaptive and responsive to our vision and values.

Our aim with this comprehensive plan update is to protect rural lands, and encourage urban areas to look, feel, and function more like small and medium sized cities. We must plan for the infrastructure and services needed to support new housing types where density already exists. We must be creative and consider new and innovative ways to meet the needs of our residents today, and 20 years into the future.

### I.III.II VALUE STATEMENTS

#### In Island County We Value:

- **Economic vibrancy** through a diverse and resilient economy that supports small and large businesses, the Navy, local government, healthcare employers, tourism, a vibrant arts community, and local agriculture that supports all sizes of farms.
- **Protection of natural resources**, including our aquifers, farms, forests, wetlands, shorelines, and marine environment in support of residents for generations to come.
- **Equal access to housing** through slow and thoughtful planned density with accompanying infrastructure and services for all ages and incomes.
- **Reliable utilities and infrastructure** including multi-modal transportation that allows us to travel with ease across both islands, water and wastewater solutions that protect the environment, and access to technology that connects us to the rest of the world.
- **Access to the outdoors** and all the beauty and diversity of our islands with healthy activity options for all ages.
- **Health equity** and access to robust and affordable healthcare, human services, and food security to support our resident's ability to stay healthy at all stages of their lives.
- **Emergency preparedness and climate resilience** to ensure our residents have safe access to food, water, and shelter as we plan for, adapt, and respond to a changing world.
- **Community** and a sense of connectedness through walkable towns, historic places, gathering spaces, safe neighborhoods, and a commitment to keeping this place special.

### I.IV PURPOSE AND COMPONENTS OF THIS PLAN

This comprehensive plan has been developed in accordance with the GMA, chapter 36.70A RCW, to address growth issues in Island County. It represents the community's policy plan for growth through the year 2045 (a 20-year planning period). The essence of policy planning is that it provides the community with an expressed set of statements defining the direction and character of future development, which clearly integrate the goals and objectives of the GMA.

**Table I-1. Plan Chapter Contents**

Plan Chapter	Description of Contents
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>1. Land Use</b></p> <p>Establishes the land use designations and general policy framework for the land use planning program that seeks to establish the desired character and pattern of development, while protecting the quality of life, economic opportunities, and natural environment of the community. Included in this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population and Employment Projections</li> <li>• Buildable Lands Analysis</li> <li>• Land Use Designations for Urban, Rural, and Resource Lands</li> </ul> <p>Also includes the Rural Lands element - Addressing the necessary strategies and programs to ensure land uses outside of areas designated for urban growth are compatible with traditional rural uses and economic activities.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>2. Economic Development</b></p> <p>Establishes goals, policies, objectives, and provisions for economic growth and vitality and a high quality of life.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>3. Shoreline Management</b></p> <p>RESERVED – Not Updated in 2025</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>4. Housing</b></p> <p>Establishes requirements to develop a variety of housing types to meet the needs, of present and future residents at all income levels.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>5. Historic Preservation</b></p> <p>RESERVED – Not Updated in 2025</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>6. Natural Resources</b></p> <p>Establishes the framework for designating and regulating land uses to preserve areas critical to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Included in this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wetlands</li> <li>• Aquifer Recharge Areas</li> <li>• Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas</li> <li>• Frequently Flooded Areas</li> <li>• Geologically Hazardous Areas</li> <li>• Water Quality &amp; Quantity</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>7. Parks &amp; Recreation</b></p> <p>Provides the framework and coordination necessary for the retention and possible expansion of open space and the provision of a wide variety of parks and recreational opportunities.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>8. Transportation</b></p> <p>Outlines improvements or strategies to accommodate existing and proposed land uses, while encouraging efficient multi-modal transportation systems to support the community and region.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>9. Utilities</b></p> <p>RESERVED – Combined with Capital Facilities</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>10. Capital Facilities / Utilities (combined)</b></p> <p>Addresses the appropriate coordination, location, and delivery of adequate public facilities and services to support existing and proposed land uses, including a funding plan. Establishes the preferred siting of and coordination necessary to ensure utilities are available for existing and proposed land uses.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>11. Climate</b></p> <p>NEW – Addresses planning and preparation for resilience to climate related changes including extreme heat, drought, and sea level rise.</p>

**The benefits of a policy plan are as follows:**

- Public understanding and participation in the planning process are facilitated by the uncomplicated character of the policy statements.
- Elected officials become closely involved in the planning process through definition of explicit policy statements.
- Several diverse agencies and interests making development decisions in the community may utilize the policy plan as a coordinating device.
- Policy planning provides stability and consistency in the planning program notwithstanding changes in conditions of a community.

**The guiding functions of the policy plan are:**

- Useful in the adoption of land use codes by legislative bodies.
- Applicable in the administration of development controls and incentives by responsible officials.
- Necessary to provide a reasonable and fair means of amending the comprehensive plan and development regulations with a supporting record that will withstand challenge.

**The role of this plan is:**

- To set goals and policies to guide growth in the County through the year 2045.
- To develop future land use patterns and maps.
- To establish a specific program for plan implementation.

**I.IV.I CENTRAL THEMES**

- The Board of Island County Commissioners set three priorities for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update: Health, Equity, and Climate Resilience. Staff used these priorities to inform updates to elements.
- Citizen input is an essential part of the comprehensive planning process. The process of publicly debating sensitive issues is valuable in forming a viable outcome. Citizen involvement engenders commitment and willingness to find solutions.
- Housing and land prices have continued to rise in Island County and affordable housing has created inequity and displacement throughout the county. Providing incentives for the development of affordable housing for all county residents is a priority of this plan.
- Farm and forest lands are a valued resource for the county. The County is committed to provide planning options and incentives to help sustain the productivity and economic viability of farms and forests.
- Meeting the new requirements of planning for and accommodating housing at all income levels in unincorporated Island County is going to take creativity and

flexibility. Growth should be directed to areas that are already designated for higher densities first, like non-municipal urban growth areas (NMUGA) and Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRDs). In rural areas, clustering is the preferred alternative to large lot development to preserve open space.

- Job opportunities in the county are limited in many areas. Providing employment opportunities for an increasing population, which will also allow an increased percentage of residents to work in the county and not have to commute, is of great importance in this planning effort.
- The Navy is a very large part of the County's economic, social, and cultural make up. The County established goals, policies, and development regulations to ensure that land use decisions will be compatible with current and future naval operations.
- As outlined in the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), it is essential to successful plan implementation that the County continue to work closely with all jurisdictions and districts within its boundaries. Close coordination and cooperation is necessary to ensure effective land use planning and ensure full and efficient use of UGAs.
- The CPPs establish the framework from which county, town and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted. The CPPs provide the foundation for assuring that consistency criteria, required between county and city planning under the GMA, are fulfilled. The CPPs were jointly and collaboratively developed and adopted by Island County and the jurisdictions of Coupeville, Oak Harbor, and Langley on June 22, 1992, and most recently updated in 2023 (a major update). The CPPs provided guidance in development of this Comprehensive Plan.

## **I.V PLAN UPDATES**

### **I.V.I ANNUAL DOCKET PROCESS**

To be responsive to changing conditions, Island County updates this plan through the annual docket process, ensuring that the plan remains a viable tool for decision-makers and citizens to use when seeking policy direction regarding land use and Island County's future. Timely and thorough review of the plan will assist in keeping it responsive to the needs of local citizens.

Amendments may be made to the comprehensive plan once a year only after careful analysis of cumulative impact of proposals and developing trends and a finding that the proposed amendment is in the common interest of the people of Island County. The GMA directs the creation of a process and procedures for plan amendments and establishes the annual "docket" process (RCW 36.70A.130(4)), but the specific processes and procedures are left to the County to determine. For Island County, the process of amending the comprehensive plan and related development regulations, including the annual docket process, timing, and application requirements, are located in Chapter 16.10 ICC.

The 2025 update included a new process for amendments and includes a multi-year work plan to be reviewed annually to determine which elements will be updated each year, based on

staffing and resources available, legal need, and competing priorities. Annual docket items will create the annual work plan for the Long Range Planning team, and will include:

- Each of the plan chapters
- Related updates and implementation programs
- Subarea planning efforts
- Annual documentation, reporting and cleanup efforts
- Ongoing intergovernmental coordination; and
- Additional major projects (i.e. decennial census, etc.).

## **I.V.II PERIODIC UPDATE**

For the comprehensive plan to remain current, it needs to be reviewed and updated periodically. State law requires jurisdictions to periodically conduct a thorough review of their plan and regulations to bring them up to date with any relevant changes in the GMA and to respond to changes in land use or population growth.

The plan shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission at least every periodic update, based on the schedule identified by the GMA as found in RCW 36.70A.130(5), making recommendations to improve the entire plan. When preparing periodic updates to the comprehensive plan, all comprehensive plan elements shall utilize most current data available from local, state, federal sources.

## **I.V.III OVERVIEW OF 2025 UPDATE**

House Bill 1220 (Housing): The Housing Element of Island County's 2025 Comprehensive Plan update must comply with HB 1220 passed in 2021 by the Washington Legislature, which mandates that jurisdictions plan for and accommodate housing at all income levels. Under HB 1220, jurisdictions are required to evaluate whether they have sufficient land capacity to allow for the housing types and amounts identified at all income levels. If there is insufficient capacity, the jurisdiction must identify and implement zoning changes and land use allowances that provide enough capacity prior to adoption of the comprehensive plan.

House Bill 1181 (Climate): In 2023 the Washington State Legislature passed HB 1181, requiring local governments across the state to plan for climate impacts as part of their comprehensive plan processes. The bill added a fourteenth goal to the GMA to address climate resilience and required a Climate Resiliency Sub-Element for all fully planning counties and cities. The focus of the resilience sub-element is to assess how climate change is impacting our communities, highlight communities that may be more vulnerable to local impacts, and identify strategies that support adaptation and increase community resilience.

Growth Projections: To comply with the GMA requirements and calculate a population projection for the 20-year planning period, Island County reviewed the County demographic characteristics, economic conditions, and past growth trends, as well as data from the State of Washington and the U.S. Census Bureau. Based on this research, the County arrived at the

following conclusions:

- In the year 2045, Island County is projected to have a population of 99,202. The 2020 census determined that Island County had a population of 86,857; this represents a total projected increase of 12,345 people over a 25-year period.
- The median age of Island County is higher than the state as a whole and is increasing at a faster rate.
- Island County's 1998 and 2005 comprehensive plan population projections significantly overestimated future population growth, while the 2016 population projection significantly underestimated future population growth.
- NASWI indicates that at the time of this report, there are no plans to add additional personnel in the next 20-year period.

## **I.VI IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

Implementation of the comprehensive plan is an ongoing process involving all sectors of the community and all departments in the County. Code amendments, capital improvements, and everyday permitting and land use decisions, which affect the quality of life on the Islands will greatly depend on the desires and level of citizen support given to the planning effort. The effectiveness and value of this plan will only be measured over an extended period of time when citizens and local officials have an opportunity to achieve common objectives.

The general goals and policies should first be viewed as an overall framework for future decision making. Public and private interests must carefully examine this statement of comprehensive planning policy to ensure cooperation and coordination in meeting common objectives.

Beyond revisions to development regulations, it is necessary for public and private interests to work in a spirit of cooperation to implement the plan. Policies within the plan provide overall guidance for decision making, offering flexibility to developments and innovations which achieve common objectives. The plan has been intentionally formulated to provide guidelines for future development, which foster a high-quality living environment for all citizens at the lowest possible public cost.

The following is an outline of general areas of implementation strategies. For this comprehensive plan to succeed, it is of utmost importance to proceed on schedule to accomplish all of these items. Specific implementation strategies are located within the goals and policies section of each chapter.

### **I.VI.I SUBAREA PLANNING**

#### **Clinton**

A subarea plan was completed for the Clinton LAMIRDs as part of the County's 2025 Comprehensive Plan update. Further studies will be needed to determine if Clinton can transition into a NMUGA before the next comprehensive plan update to support more housing and commercial growth.

### **Camano Island**

The County may also explore the viability of creating a subarea plan for Camano Island at a future date, to be determined via the annual docket process.

## **I.VI.II PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Interlocal Agreements**

- A. The County will work with Oak Harbor to update the interlocal agreements to assist in guiding development in the unincorporated portions of the UGAs.
- B. The County will work with the Town of Coupeville and the City of Langley to update the interlocal agreements regarding the JPA and the joint planning processes.
- C. Working with the municipalities, the County will establish procedures to assist in coordinated review of land use and capital projects in JPAs.

### **Countywide Planning Policies**

The Countywide Planning Policies are updated before each periodic update to ensure jurisdictions are working together to accomplish shared goals for population growth, housing and employment projections, and development in UGAs.

## **I.VI.III OTHER RELEVANT COUNTY PLANS AND DOCUMENTS**

### **Homeless Housing Plan**

Island County Human Services is updating the 5-year Homeless Housing Plan which outlines objectives and actions to meet the emergency housing and needs of individuals in crisis in our community. This plan is updated every five years and will serve as an implementation tool for achieving the emergency shelter requirements of our comprehensive plan housing allocations.

### **Capital Facilities Plan / Capital Improvement Plan**

The 20-year Capital Facilities Plan, and 6-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) are implementation tools the County uses to prioritize capital expenditures and projects. The Public Works Department leads the CIP process annually and Planning will continue to work collaboratively with Public Works to ensure comprehensive plan items are included and addressed.

**Department Work Plans**

Every year each department in the County prepares an annual work plan which can include implementation measures from the comprehensive plan update. Different departments may take on different implementation items such as code updates, mapping updates, process improvements, etc. Coordination between departments in developing the annual work plans to include comprehensive plan implementation will be an ongoing effort.

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## **ELEMENT 01 – LAND USE**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Land Use Element is the cornerstone of the Island County Comprehensive Plan. Its purpose is to ensure that an adequate supply of land and a desired mix of uses are available for projected growth andCPPCPP the successful implementation of the other comprehensive plan elements. This nexus is established through the Future Land Use Map and the adopted goals and policies.

Guided by the County’s vision statement, the Land Use goals and policies allow for Island County’s growth and development over the next 20 years while protecting its one-of-a-kind landscape, unique ecology, and natural resources. Island County’s exceptional features attract residents and visitors from around the world. As the county grows, it strives to maintain those special characteristics that make it a great place to live, work, farm, fish, recreate, and visit.

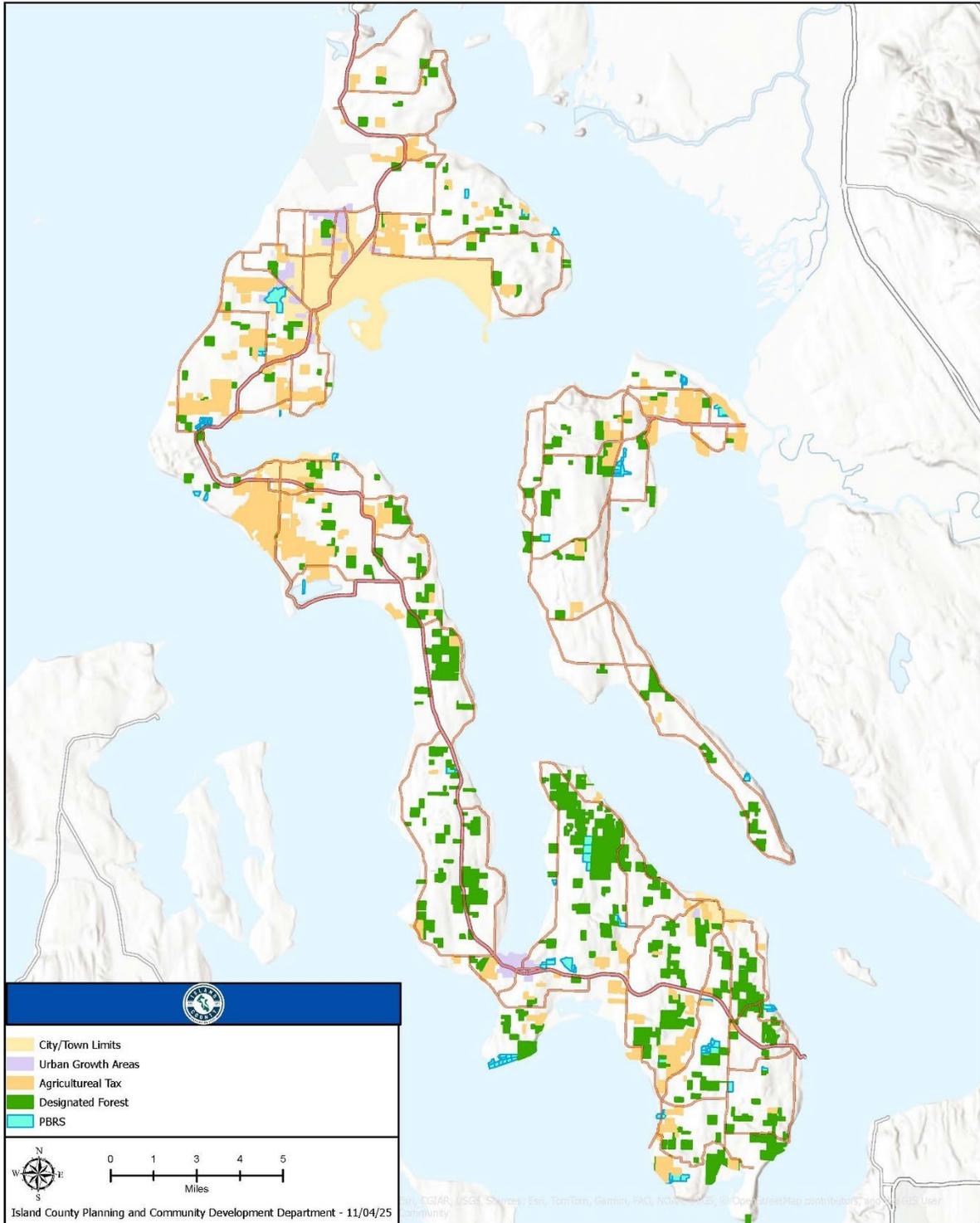
The goals and policies in the Land Use Element reflect the County’s values and form the basis of its land use strategy. Through its goals and policies, the County aims to reduce development pressures and patterns of sprawl within rural areas, agricultural lands, and other areas of long-term significance. At the same time, the County seeks to reduce land-consuming development patterns and provide a framework for urban development within existing neighborhoods and areas with more intensive development. These goals and policies provide a land use foundation to develop a healthy, diverse economy where employment, housing, and retail opportunities abound. They also preserve open space, shorelines, scenery, and cultural resources, while balancing public with private interests in the development and protection of Island County’s resources. As such, the Land Use Element represents Island County’s policy plan for growth and directs future land use and conservation decisions.

The County is responsible for setting goals and polices for its unincorporated areas, which are comprised of the unincorporated portions of municipal urban growth areas (UGAs), non-municipal UGAs (NMUGAs), rural lands, resource lands, special review districts, master planned resorts, and limited areas of more intensive rural development (LAMIRDs). UGAs are the areas in which urban growth is most suitable and appropriate. The County has three municipal UGAs and one NMUGA. Rural lands are lands not included in urban growth designations, or lands designated as agricultural, forest, or mineral resource lands. LAMIRDs permit the infill, development, or redevelopment of pre-existing rural communities outside of UGAs at a density greater than typical rural development.

The following sections provide detailed information about Island County’s land use conditions and overall development strategy. For additional information about the comprehensive plan’s regulatory framework, implementation strategies, and data regarding population, housing, or economic conditions and projections, refer to the plan’s Introduction Section and Appendix B.

# DRAFT Island County 2025 Comprehensive Plan – LAND USE ELEMENT

## MAP 1A Designated Forest, Agriculture Tax, and PBRs Properties



## **1.2 GROWTH ACCOMMODATIONS**

Island County's population increased from 4,704 people in 1910 to 86,857 people by 2020, representing a compound annual growth rate of 2.68%.

The county's 2045 projected population is 99,202, based on the Office of Financial Management (OFM) mid-range projection adjusted down for infrastructure concerns on North Whidbey Island. This projects a total increase of 12,345 people, with 4,107 of those in the unincorporated county, over the 20-year planning period. This total population is less than previously projected in earlier environmental documentation, and more in line with observed growth in Island County (a population of 118,800 was projected for 2020 during the 1998 update, a population of 110,050 was projected for 2025 in the 2005 update, and a population of 87,917 was projected for 2036 in the 2016 update). Revised projections correspond to a minor reduction in anticipated impacts and a slight decrease in needed housing. (see Appendix B).

## **1.3 FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPTS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

Island County proposes a definitive, effective growth management strategy that will fully implement all of the goals and policies set forth in the Growth Management Act (GMA) (RCW 36.70A) as well as respond to citizens' unique preferences and needs while also protecting resource lands. The County recognizes that the future well-being of its citizens and the conservation of the county's resources depends on an effective land use strategy.

### **1.3.1 MEASURES TO PROTECT RURAL CHARACTER**

Rural character is one of the county's most valued assets, providing the quality of life desired by many Island County residents. Low density developments foster privacy, individuality, and a sense of personal freedom. Community centers, such as shops and convenience stores, provide needed services and places for spontaneous or planned socialization with neighbors and friends. People in rural areas expect, tolerate, and prepare for the minor inconveniences that come with living in widely scattered and sparsely developed areas (e.g., many homes use alternative heat sources such as wood stoves and propane heating) and understand that infrastructure may be limited.

Transportation patterns in rural areas are characterized by meandering two-lane roads that offer pleasant views of forests, farms, fields, and the water. Travelers typically experience only short waits at stop signs with very few (or no) stop lights; traffic flows smoothly with few delays and pedestrians often walk on shoulders beside the road, rather than sidewalks.

Scattered convenience stores and small commercial centers serve small clusters of rural residents. Small towns or cities exist nearby, and the attractions of metropolitan areas generally are within a 1½ hour drive or less. Although these compact settlements are moderately dense in scale, the surrounding rural areas dominate the landscape.

Wildlife sightings are common in rural areas. Large, undeveloped areas provide habitat and assist with aquifer recharge. Lakes, ponds, wetlands, and streams are critical habitat areas as well as recreational amenities. There are more natural, informal recreation areas than formal

## DRAFT Island County 2025 Comprehensive Plan – LAND USE ELEMENT

recreational facilities, such as ball fields, bowling alleys, pickle ball courts, and golf courses. Passive recreation takes the form of pedestrian and equestrian trails winding through lands both private and public, and beaches.

Agricultural and forest lands, as well as undeveloped open space, contribute to rural character. This environment provides diverse and significant cultural/natural amenities. Views of old farmhouses and barns, historic buildings, and the cultural landscape attract many tourists and adds to the enjoyment of Whidbey and Camano Island residents. Island County's heritage is important and remains evident even as new development mixes with existing homes.

The historical pattern of growth in Island County has led to very few remaining large parcels of land. Since 1984, the minimum lot size has been five-acres for new development in rural areas, much of the County was subdivided into much smaller parcels prior to 1984 (note: there is a code provision for parcels less than 5 acres using lot size averaging to protect critical areas and open space without increasing density). Communities comprising small lots are interspersed with rural lots of 5, 10, and 20 acres. Residential development encompasses much of the county's shoreline; although parcel sizes vary in the county, many smaller lots are found in shoreline areas. This historical pattern allows many to live along the shoreline while preserving a degree of rural character for the majority of the county.

Rural areas provide an opportunity for different lifestyles to exist side-by-side. Diversity in lifestyles and land uses is part of the rural character. Each landowner uses their property differently. Driving down a road, one might see vast farmlands or forests, hobby farms with large gardens and several animals (cows, horses, and goats), as well as home industries, residential estates, and commercial areas.

Island County's historic development patterns, particularly along shorelines and other water bodies, are a product of local circumstance. Previous comprehensive planning efforts have characterized rural area development in Island County as traditional rural pattern, in which concentrations of population are surrounded by working or natural open spaces. Towns and commercial centers have emerged at significant crossroads along highway corridors and shorelines. These centers are interspersed with areas of farming and forestry activities. Long established businesses in isolated areas serve the outlying population. More concentrated nodes of residential subdivisions occur on the shorelines. Within the island interior, a patchwork of open agricultural fields and forested hinterlands is occasioned by areas of more intensive development.

Island County faces the challenge of balancing the demands of population growth while protecting rural character.

### **1.3.1.1 AGRICULTURE**

Agriculture is an important part of life in Island County, providing jobs, preserving open space, contributing to local food production, and drawing business, residents, and tourists to the area. According to the USDA's profile for Island County, in 2022 there were 377 farms in Island County, totally over 17,000 acres, with the average farm size of 45 acres. However, there are 22 large farms ranging in size from 180 to 1,000+ acres, which provide a significant agricultural

economic base and contribute to the rural character valued by county residents. Agricultural lands are an important component of Island County's rural atmosphere, which attracts residents and tourists and can also play an important role in improving air and water quality, and wildlife habitat. County residents strongly support the continued existence and maintenance of these uses.

Both commercial and non-commercial farming play important roles in preserving the rural character of Island County. Commercial farming provides income and local produce to residents. Non-commercial, or hobby farming, including growing fruits and vegetables, and raising of livestock for personal consumption, continues to be a wide-spread activity of local importance in the rural area of the county, providing a cultural connection to both the past and the future of Island County.

Conserving productive agricultural soils and encouraging farming operations as economically viable activities (and as an accepted way of life) is a major challenge in Island County. Significant efforts have been made to preserve agricultural lands of key aesthetic and historical significance, and where farming continues today, through public purchase of easements or of the land itself. Farmland is also preserved as agricultural open space through an array of regulations and programs, such as zoning for agricultural use and beneficial tax programs.

### **1.3.1.2 RURAL CLUSTERS**

Clustered development is one tool that allows higher rural densities while preserving rural character. Developers or homeowners' associations generally own the protected land. For these reasons, clustering has been more successful in preserving open space and creating transitional areas between farms and residential areas than in protecting farmland.

Rural Clusters (RCs) and Rural Affordable Clusters (RACs) are replacing what is currently known as Planned Residential Developments (PRDs). RCs are different than PRDs as subdivision of land is not required, and there will be options for affordable, permanent supportive, or market rate housing, and with units being offered as both rental and ownership models.

The overall intent of the RCs process is to provide a pattern of development that does not detract from the rural character. Higher rural densities through diverse housing options and clustered development are buffered by open space areas in ways that are compatible with surrounding rural housing, agricultural, and forestry uses. The County continues to improve clustered development by connecting open space tracts and allowing open space uses, protecting wildlife, and encouraging affordable housing for all income levels in rural areas.

### **1.3.1.3 RURAL TO URBAN SHIFT**

In Island County, past development trends and land use regulations fostered a dispersed pattern of land use development. The County must now plan for growth in the context of a largely fragmented and dispersed land use and ownership pattern, which does not align with the philosophy of growth established under the GMA. A key concept is directing future growth and development within existing dense areas (i.e. LAMIRDs, UGAs) to conserve Island County's

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natural resources, critical areas, open space, and rural characteristics. Major steps were taken during this Comprehensive Plan to overcome these past challenges.

The County's objective is to create efficient and attractive urban and rural communities while adhering to the goals and guidelines of the GMA. Joint planning efforts with municipalities are required to successfully shift growth to urban areas throughout the county. The Freeland area is the only urbanized area within the County's jurisdiction and is empowered to help shape the rural/urban split of development. This rural-to-urban shift will be a consideration during the development of each comprehensive plan element.

In the Clinton Subarea Plan, the County proposes a study to explore the possibility of Clinton becoming a NMUGA, which will also support dense growth similar to the Freeland NMUGA. If Clinton becomes a NMUGA, it will allow more growth to be allocated to Clinton in future planning periods.

Camano Island does not have any urban areas. The County will be conducting a subarea plan with the community to help shape future development on Camano and how growth will be accommodated accordingly.

In this comprehensive plan, the municipalities of Coupeville, Langley, and Oak Harbor accepted 66.73 percent of the growth. In future comprehensive plans, Island County and the municipalities should expect at least 85 percent of the growth to occur within municipal UGAs. The County is ready to support municipalities as growth expectations shift towards urban areas.

Island County will continue to monitor the percentage of growth occurring in the rural areas and explore strategies to continue to avoid sprawl, preserve open space, and encourage growth in developed and urban areas.

### **1.3.2 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **1.3.2.1 PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Island County recognizes that physical activity is essential to maintaining good health and reducing the rates of chronic diseases. Opportunities for physical activity are provided throughout the County through compact urban growth patterns, public beaches (see the Shoreline Management Element), parks and recreation amenities (see the Parks and Recreation Element) and bicycle and pedestrian- friendly infrastructure (see the Transportation Element). Goals and policies included in this plan further Island County's commitment to creating healthy and active communities.

#### **1.3.2.2 PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE**

At its core, the Land Use Element should support development that provides for the health, safety, and welfare of County residents. This is achieved by discouraging inappropriate siting of uses (e.g., placing development in geologically hazardous areas) and through land use regulations (e.g., Airport and Aviation Safety Overlay).

#### **1.3.2.3 HOME OCCUPATION AND HOME INDUSTRY**

Home Occupations and Home Industries are an essential piece of the rural economy of Island County. The convenience and sometimes necessity of working from home can be ideal for those living in a rural area without large job centers. Home Occupations are intended to operate on a fairly small scale, incidental and secondary to the residential use and conducted on the parcel owned by the operator, either within the dwelling unit or in an accessory structure. Home Industries are on a slightly greater scale than Home Occupations but are still incidental and secondary to the residential use and require land use review.

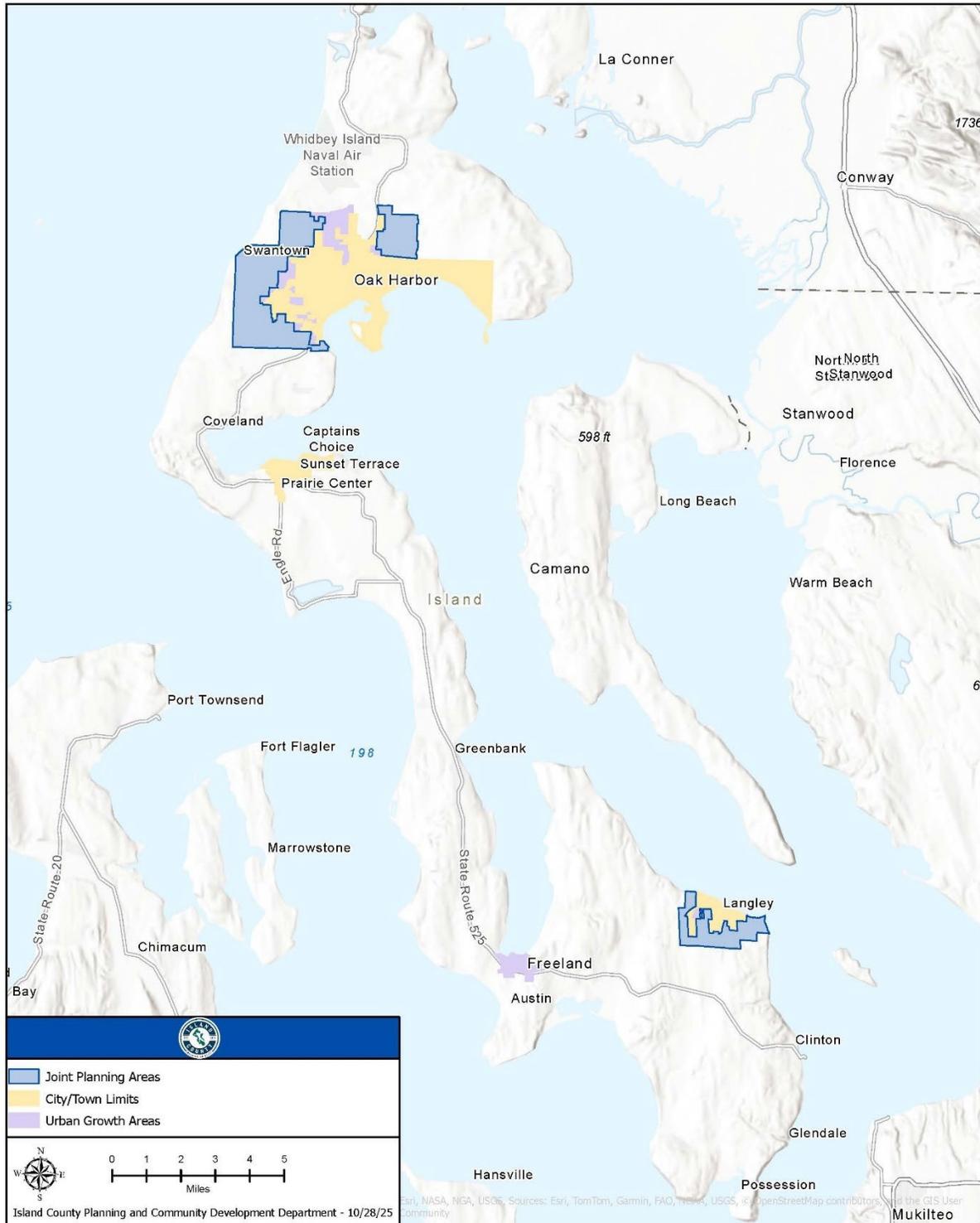
#### **1.3.2.4 SMALL-SCALE RECREATION AND TOURISM**

Small-scale recreation and tourist uses include things such as golf courses, equestrian centers, wineries, tasting rooms, parks, rural event centers, and restaurants. These uses can provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy the benefits of the rural atmosphere while also providing an economic benefit to Island County's rural areas.

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## MAP 1B Island County Urban Growth Areas and Joint Planning Areas



## 1.4 FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND OVERLAYS

The County structures land use designations and policies around the following concepts.

### A. Urban Elements

1. UGAs - municipal and non-municipal
2. Potential Expansion of UGAs - Joint Planning Areas & Future Growth Areas

### B. Rural Elements

1. LAMIRDs
2. General Rural Designations

### C. Resource Lands

### D. Critical Areas

### E. General Land Use Designations & Overlays

1. Aviation
2. Archaeologically Significant Areas
3. Parks
4. Public/Federal Lands

### 1.4.1 URBAN ELEMENT DESIGNATIONS

Urban Development shall take place only within municipalities and UGAs; urban designations in Island County includes the municipal UGAs of Oak Harbor, Langley, and Coupeville, and the NMUGA of Freeland. The UGAs include areas and densities sufficient to permit urban growth projected through 2045 (Appendix B).

### 1.4.2 URBAN GROWTH AREAS (UGAS)

In collaboration with the associated municipalities, Island County designates UGAs that include areas and densities sufficient to permit 20 years of projected future urban growth. The GMA requires that urban growth be directed to these areas, and that a UGA's size is based on population projections, land capacity, fiscal impacts, and the availability of public facilities to sufficiently serve those areas. The UGA must contain no more land than necessary to accommodate 20 years of population growth.

The Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) contain a coordinated, long range process for managing the County's UGAs and the lands surrounding them. The UGAs and associated overlays are discussed in detail in CPP Section 3.

#### **1.4.2.1 MUNICIPAL URBAN GROWTH AREAS (UGAs)**

The County is responsible for regulating land use and development activities within unincorporated portions of municipal UGAs; however, the County must coordinate with the associated municipality to ensure that any new uses authorized by a County permit or Development Regulations are consistent with the municipality's Planning Goals and Policies, as well as any applicable CPPs.

Each municipal UGA includes both the incorporated area plus adjacent, unincorporated areas. Land use designations, densities, and regulations for all types of development are in place for the unincorporated areas within the UGAs; the Oak Harbor, Langley, and Coupeville comprehensive plans contain proposed land uses and densities within these unincorporated areas. The CPPs ensure that the County and the associated municipality will jointly review development proposed within the unincorporated areas of municipal UGAs, with the County making the ultimate decision. The municipalities are exclusively responsible for regulating land use and development within the incorporated portions of their UGA.

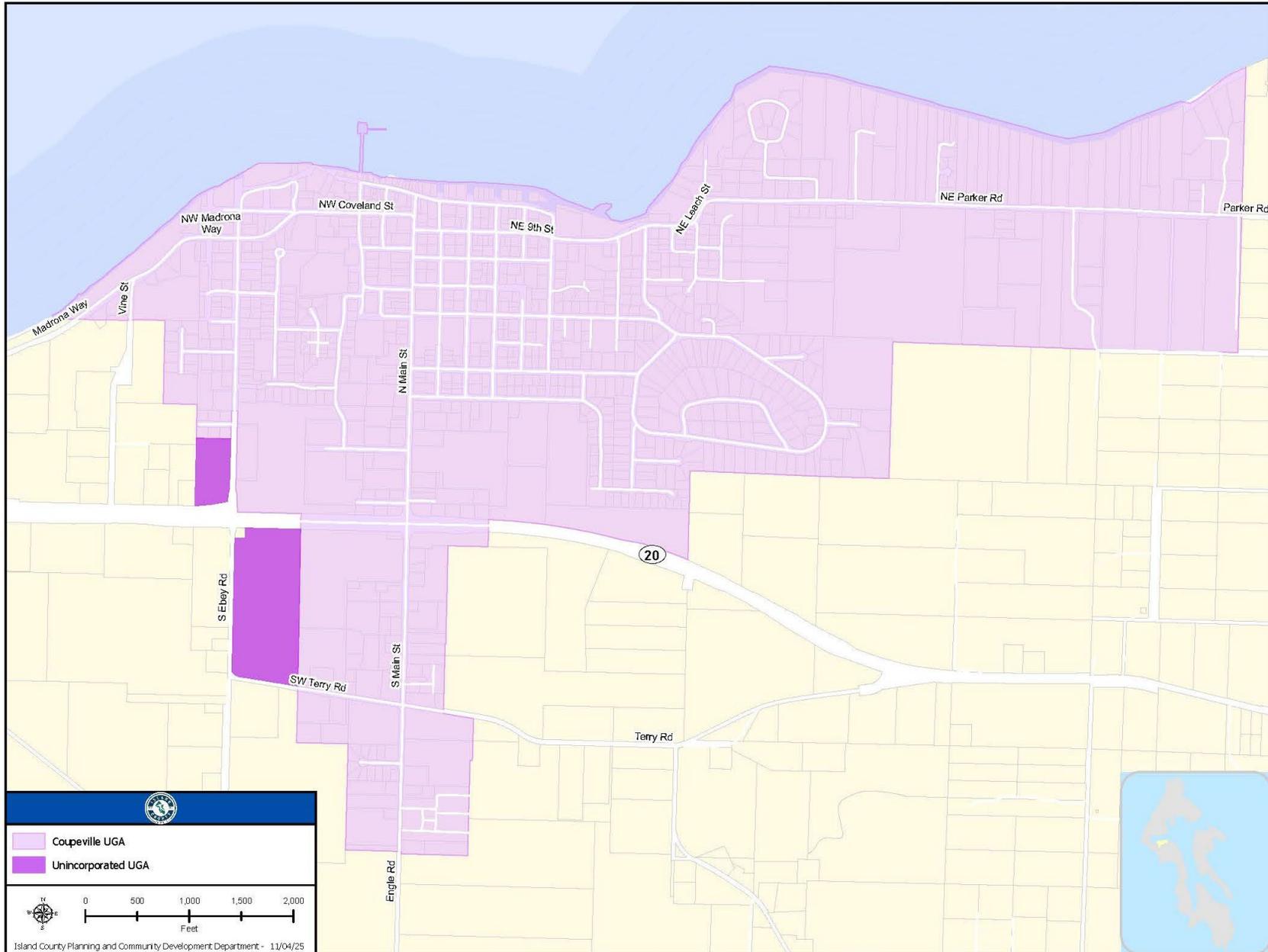
The City of Oak Harbor is planning annexation of a portion of their UGA, as shown on Map 1C, at the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, but no additional UGA expansion at this time. Oak Harbor and Island County are working together to plan for future annexations, infrastructure, and growth in the Oak Harbor JPA.

During the 2025 update, the Town of Coupeville requested the formation of an unincorporated UGA containing two parcels, a total of 26.27 acres, that are of special interest to the Town. One parcel is owned by the Coupeville School District and bringing said parcel into Town limits in a future annexation would allow all District owned properties to have the same development regulations during the permitting process. The other parcel is an open space parcel owned and maintained by the Town; bringing that parcel into a UGA would allow for the Town to facilitate property management and oversee future uses. The Town expects to annex these two properties soon after UGA formation.

The City of Langley did not propose any alteration to their UGA boundary during this periodic update, see section below regarding JPA for further information.

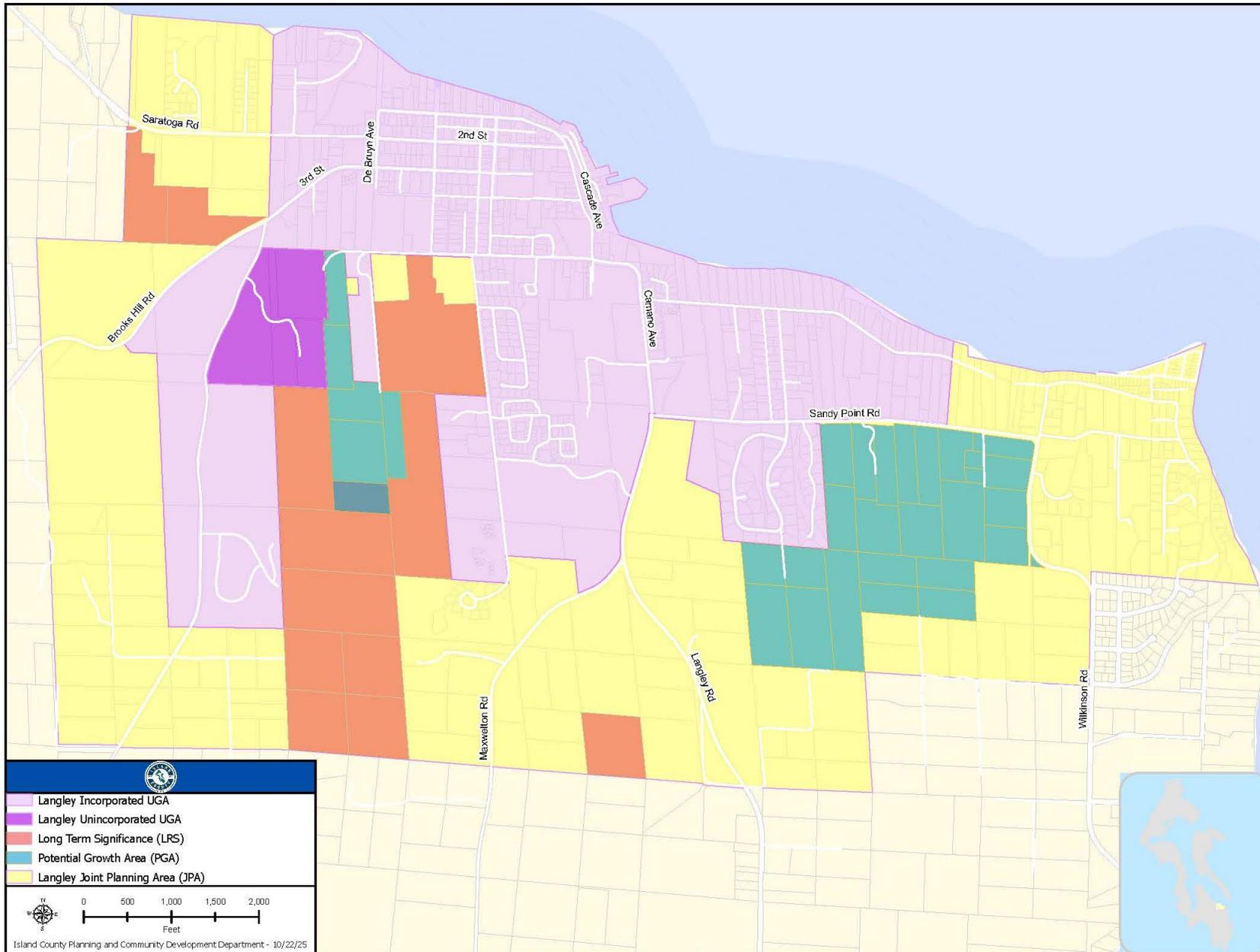


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MAP 1D Coupeville UGA

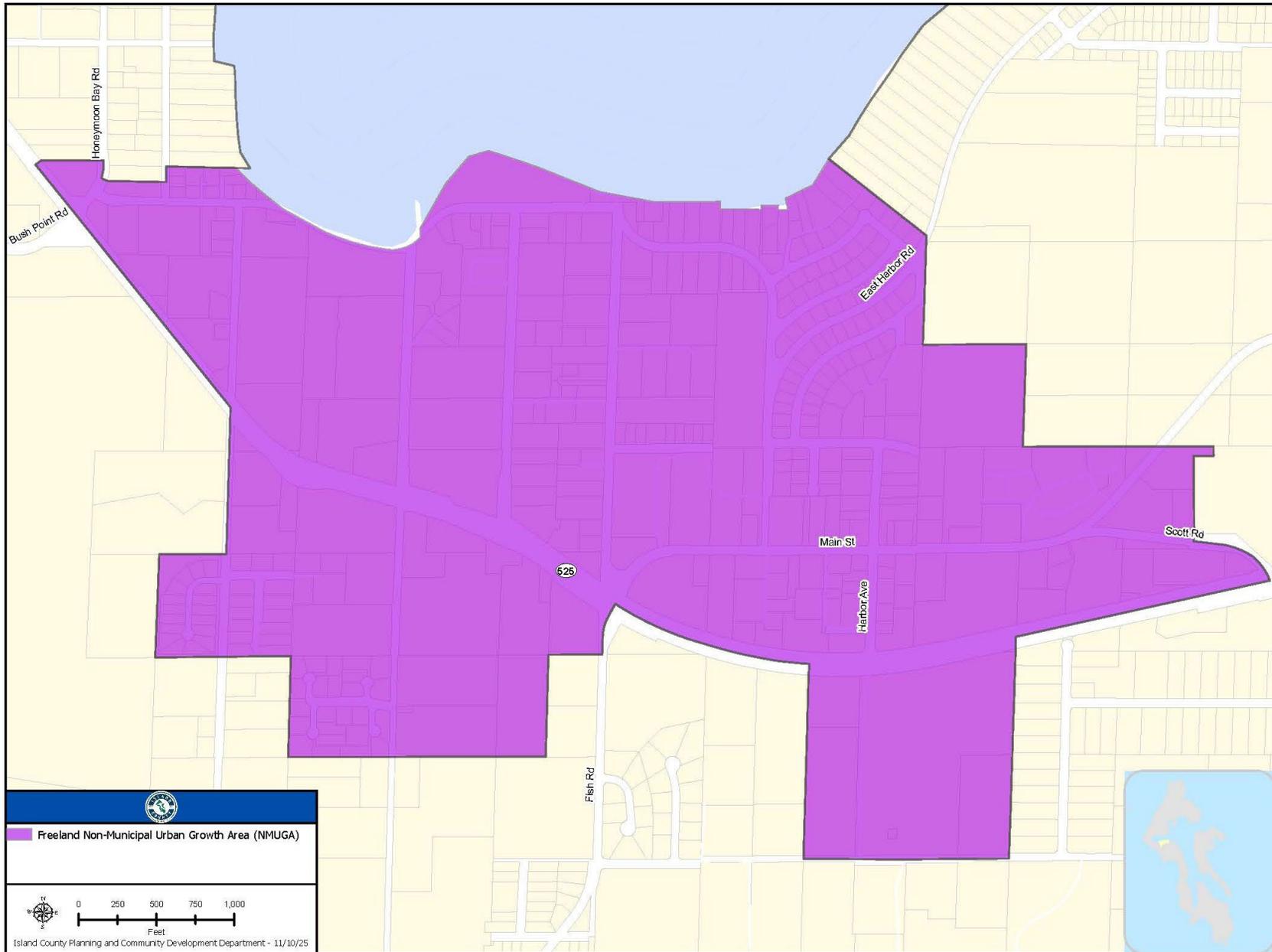


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## MAP 1E Langley UGA/JPA



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MAP 1F Freeland NMUGA



### **1.4.2.2 FREELAND NON-MUNICIPAL URBAN GROWTH AREA (NMUGA)**

Freeland is Island County’s only NMUGA. It developed as an unincorporated community with a full range of land uses but lacks extensive urban infrastructure, specifically public sewer and urban stormwater systems. When these urban services are installed, Freeland will have the capacity to accommodate additional residents and employment. Freeland has therefore been assigned a NMUGA where new development characteristic of urban growth is encouraged to the extent that it can be supported by related infrastructure. Freeland’s NMUGA operates similar to a municipal UGA, but is administered by Island County.

Issues related to Freeland’s NMUGA include determining how large its NMUGA should be, the logical boundaries for the NMUGA designation, appropriating an adequate mix of commercial, residential, and other uses, and the degree of autonomy Freeland has in making local land use decisions. The key issue in answering these questions is the availability of basic infrastructure, particularly sewer and stormwater systems. This is particularly true since many areas in Freeland do not percolate well and without a public sewer are undevelopable at urban densities. The County recognizes that a sewer system and systems to manage stormwater are needed if this area is to achieve the densities associated with the NMUGA. Freeland currently has a Public Water and Sewer District with the authority to annex and create Utility Local Improvement Districts (ULIDs). The Capital Facilities Plan outlines the next steps towards determining a wastewater solution for the Freeland NMUGA.

The Freeland NMUGA has land use designations specific to Freeland (see the Freeland Subarea Plan).

### **1.4.2.3 POTENTIAL FUTURE EXPANSION OF URBAN GROWTH AREAS**

#### **1.4.2.3.1 JOINT PLANNING AREAS**

Joint Planning Areas (JPAs) include land that may be suitable for future urban growth, as well as land that should be protected from development. JPAs are jointly designated by the county and municipalities to reserve areas which may be necessary for future urban growth and to protect land which has been identified as resource land of long-term commercial significance, land extensively constrained with critical areas, key entrance roads, and areas of historical significance. Broadly, such areas are intended to provide an opportunity for long-term planning beyond the normal twenty-year planning horizon. As outlined in the CPPs, a new process has been put into place for long term planning within the JPAs, to govern the potential expansion of the UGAs. The first step to this process, as outlined in the CPPs (3.2.1), involves applying the following overlay designations within the JPAs.

- Potential Growth Areas (PGA) - areas that are to be considered first for any potential future UGA expansions.

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- Areas of Long Term Rural Significance (LRS) - areas which will be considered last for potential future UGA expansions.

Not all of the land within the JPA needs to be given a designation. The overlays will be utilized to prioritize potential future expansions of the UGA (assuming the criteria for an expansion are met). Areas without a JPA overlay will be considered after PGA areas and before LRS areas. The JPA designations may be reviewed periodically in the same manner as the UGAs. JPAs acknowledge that the UGAs may expand in the future and that development in these areas should reflect that possibility. The JPAs are reinforced through cooperative development of associated jurisdictions' comprehensive plan updates, CPPs, and Interlocal Agreements for joint planning processes and procedures.

Immediately outside of, and directly adjacent to, the municipal UGAs for Oak Harbor and Langley, the associated city and County jointly designated a JPA. Oak Harbor's JPA did not change during the 2025 update. The City of Langley did request changes to which lands within their JPA were designated as PGA and LRS during the 2025 update (see Map 1L for changes). The City states that the newly designated PGA lands are located in proximity to urban services that could easily be extended if that land is brought into the UGA. The City also expanded which lands are designated LRS, removing some parcels from the designation and adding additional parcels as shown in Map 1L.

The JPA around the Town of Coupeville was removed during the 2016 update; other land use review mechanisms, including the Ebey's National Historic Preserve joint planning process, are in place for those areas. The County and the Town have agreed to update the Interlocal Agreement governing joint planning process to include a provision to revisit the boundaries of the JPA at a future date and provide a process for reinstating the JPA if deemed necessary and beneficial.

### **1.5 RURAL ELEMENT DESIGNATIONS**

The GMA requires that counties include a Rural Element that addresses lands that are not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest, or mineral resources. Island County includes all Rural Element requirements and information within this subsection of the Land Use Element. The Rural Element ensures that land uses that are compatible with the rural character and preserve open space, agricultural opportunities, recreational opportunities, and protection of natural resources.

Island County values its rural character and seeks to foster land use patterns that support traditional rural lifestyles; provide rural landscapes; are compatible with the use of the land by wildlife; reduce inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development; do not require the extension of urban governmental services; and are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and groundwater and surface water recharge and discharge areas.

Rural land uses consist of both dispersed and clustered residential developments, farms, wooded lots, and small and moderate-scale commercial and industrial uses that serve rural residents as their primary client. Rural landscapes encompass a full range of natural features

including forests, streams and wetlands, pastures and cropland, prairies, shorelines, and other sensitive areas.

The rural element of Island County contains LAMIRDs and general rural land use designations. These include areas of rural development and lands that are not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest, or mineral resources. Together these designations support a variety of rural densities, uses, essential public facilities, and rural governmental services needed to serve the permitted densities and uses.

### **1.5.1 LIMITED AREAS OF MORE INTENSIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENTS**

LAMIRDs are allowed for the purpose of recognizing existing areas of more intensive or dense rural development, and to contain these areas from sprawling. The GMA requires the County adopt measures to minimize and contain existing areas or uses of more intensive rural development. Lands included in existing areas of more intensive rural development or uses associated with more intensive rural development shall not extend beyond the logical outer boundary of the existing area or use in order to prevent new patterns of low-density sprawl. These existing areas are those that are clearly identifiable and contained, and where there is a logical boundary delineated predominantly by the built environment but that may also include limited undeveloped lands, within established boundaries.

WAC 365-196-425 recognizes three types of LAMIRDs that permit the infill, development, or redevelopment of existing rural areas outside of UGAs at a density greater than typical rural development. The three types of LAMIRDs are:

- Type 1 LAMIRDs consist of commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use areas.
- Type 2 LAMIRDs contain small-scale recreational or tourist uses, including commercial facilities to serve those recreational or tourist uses, that rely on a rural location and setting, but that do not include new residential development. Island County does not have any Type 2 LAMIRDs.
- Type 3 LAMIRDs contain isolated nonresidential uses, cottage industries, and small-scale businesses that provide job opportunities for rural residents.

Island County primarily has Type 1 LAMIRDs, split into three sub-categories of Mixed-Use, Residential, and Industrial LAMIRDs.

#### **1.5.1.1 Type 1 LAMIRDs.**

This designation is characterized as infill, development, or redevelopment of existing commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use areas, whether as shoreline development, villages, hamlets, rural activity centers, or crossroads. Any development or redevelopment other than an industrial area or use within a Type 1 LAMIRD must be principally designed to serve the rural population.

Any new development or redevelopment must be consistent with the pre-existing character of the area with respect to building size, scale, use, or intensity. Type 1 LAMIRDs must have been

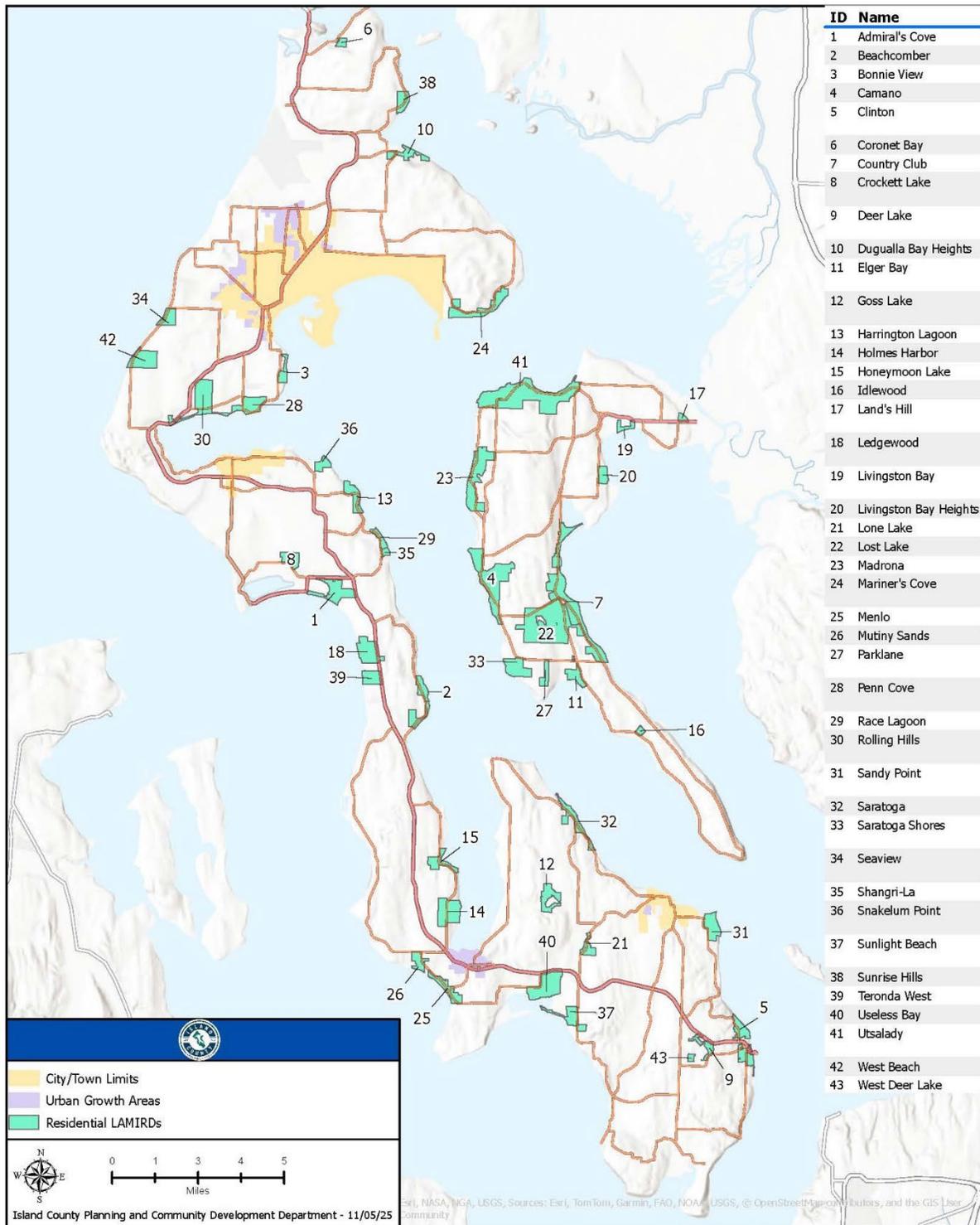
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established as more densely developed areas as of July 1990, and they must include pre-GMA existing development. Type 1 LAMIRDs also must be bounded by a logical outer boundary that reflects the limits of the pre-existing development.

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## MAP 1G Residential LAMIRDs



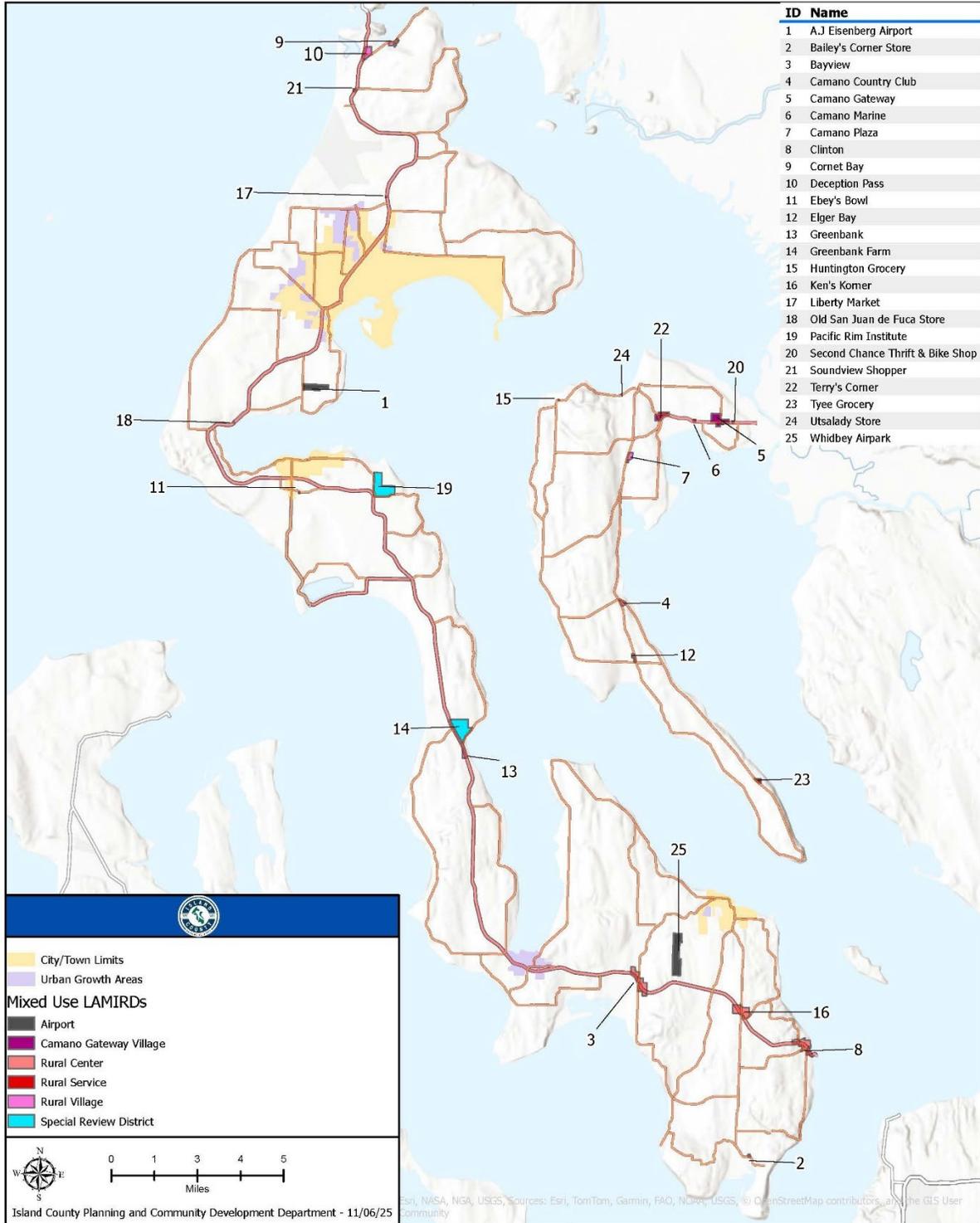
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Zoning Districts within the Type 1 LAMIRDs include:

- Rural Residential
- Rural Center (Mixed-Use)
- Rural Village (Mixed-Use)
- Camano Gateway Village (Mixed-Use)

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MAP 1H Mixed-Use LAMIRDs



### **1.5.1.2 Type 3 LAMIRDs.**

These LAMIRDs are meant for the intensification of, or new development of, lots for isolated nonresidential uses, isolated cottage industries, and isolated small-scale businesses. Residential development is prohibited. Type 3 LAMIRDs are not designed to principally serve the rural population but should provide job opportunities for rural residents. Expansion or new development must conform with the rural character of the area. Public services and public facilities shall be limited to those necessary to serve the isolated use and shall be provided in a manner that does not permit low-density sprawl.

Zoning Districts within the Type 3 LAMIRDs include:

- Rural Service

### **1.5.2 CLINTON**

Although Clinton is presently comprised of both a Rural Residential LAMIRD and a Mixed-Use LAMIRD, it is possible that the County may change the designation of the area to a NMUGA at some point in the future. Clinton, similar to Freeland, developed as an unincorporated community, generally with a full range of land uses. As such, the area is a logical choice for further growth and to accommodate some of the county's projected population and employment for the county as a whole. During this comprehensive plan update, the County developed a Clinton Subarea Plan to study the Clinton Residential and Rural Center LAMIRDs. More information can be found in Clinton Subarea Plan.

### **1.5.3 SPECIAL REVIEW DISTRICTS**

Special Review Districts are areas that need special consideration for future development, in the form of a master plan. The Special Review District classification is applied to large properties (at least 150 acres in size) that are owned by a single public agency or a non-profit organization. These areas are typically designated as Special Review Districts because the site is unique or the use characteristics make it hard to classify. Special Review Districts are often used to establish special standards to protect lands and structures that have historical, archaeological, or environmental significance while allowing a unique combination of uses that enhance, conserve, or highlight these features of significance. Island County's three existing Special Review Districts are the Pacific Rim Institute, the Keystone Preserve, and Greenbank Farm (Port Tract).

### **1.6 RURAL AREAS**

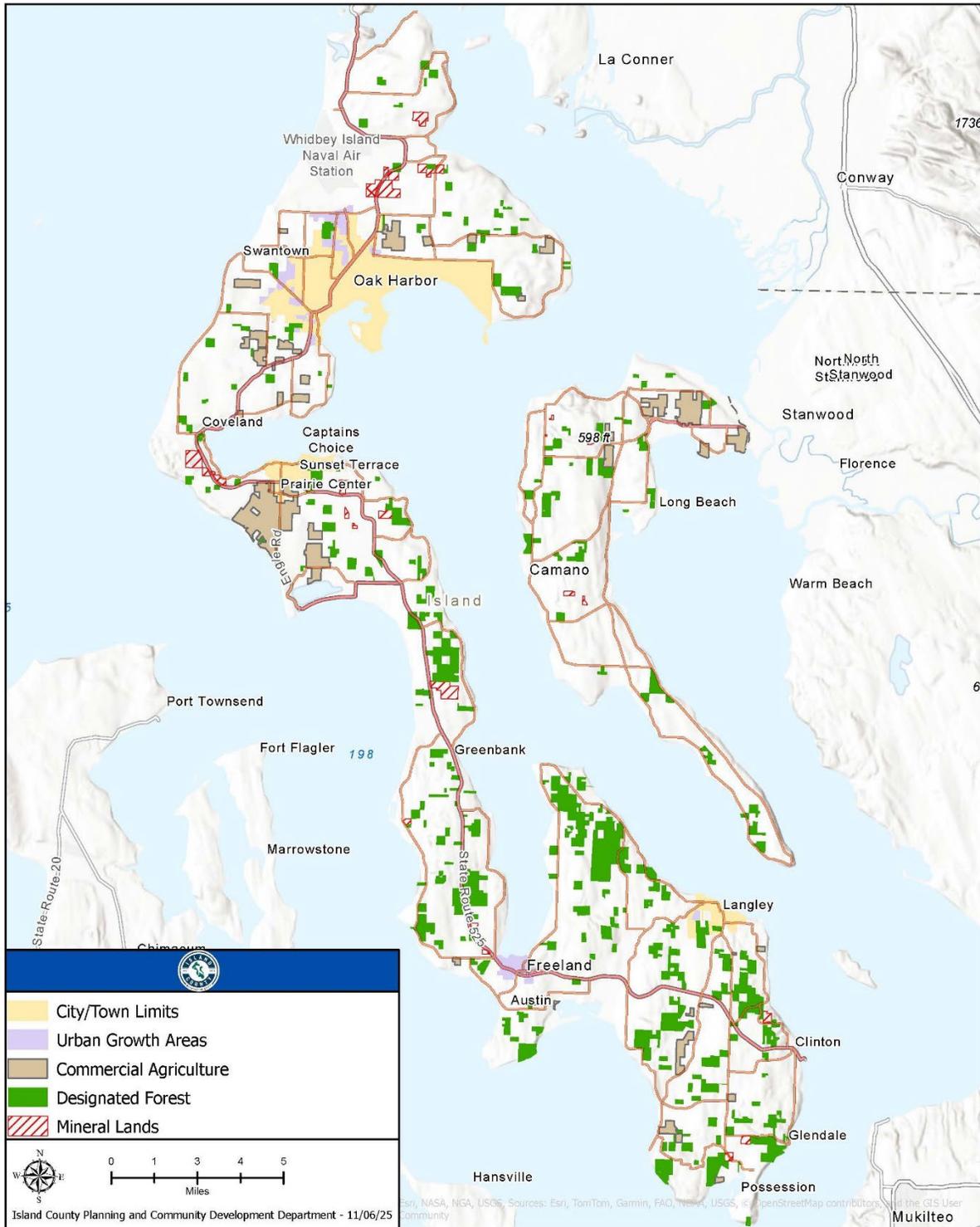
Rural lands are lands located outside of UGAs, and lands designated as agricultural, forest, or mineral resource lands. Rural development, forestry, and agriculture are generally permitted in Island County's rural areas. The GMA allows counties to use clustering, density transfer, design guidelines, conservation easements, and other innovative techniques to achieve a variety of rural densities and uses which are not characterized by urban growth and consistent with rural character.

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In the past, Growth Management Hearings Board (GMHB) decisions dictated that lots smaller than 10 acres in the rural area should be scrutinized to assure that they do not constitute urban growth, do not unduly threaten large scale natural resources or critical areas, will not thwart the long term flexibility to expand the UGA, and are consistent with the goals and requirements of the GMA. Lot sizes shall be an appropriate minimum density as provided by the GMA.

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MAP 1 | Commercial Agriculture, designated Forest, and Mineral Lands



## **1.7 RESOURCE LANDS**

The resource lands of Island County are defined by the Commercial Agriculture land use designation and the Mineral Lands Overlay. Minerals include sand, gravel, and valuable metallic substances.

Island County designates mineral resource lands in accordance with RCW 36.70A.131 and considers new information, including data available from the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the United States Geological Survey (USGS), relating to mineral resource deposits.

## **1.8 CRITICAL AREAS**

Under the GMA, the County is required to adopt and implement regulations that protect the functions and values of critical areas. Critical areas include the following areas and ecosystems: (a) Wetlands; (b) areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water; (c) Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas; (d) frequently flooded areas; and (e) geologically hazardous areas [RCW 36.70A.030(12)].

Island County's Critical Areas maps, provide generalized locations of critical areas based on studies conducted by local, state, and federal agencies. The County is ultimately responsible for updating and maintaining the maps on a regular basis, as additional information becomes available through studies and subsequent determinations. However, precisely accurate critical area boundaries will be determined on a site-by-site basis.

Critical areas are protected through land use designations and use standards in Island County Code Chapters 17.02B, Critical Areas Regulations, and 17.05A, Shoreline Master Program (for more information see the Natural Resources Element).

## **1.9 GENERAL LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND OVERLAYS**

### **1.9.1 AVIATION**

Airports and related support facilities are an important part of the transportation network serving uses in Island County. Island County aviation facilities represent a significant capital investment, and provide economic benefits. However, airports can cause negative impacts on surrounding uses. Likewise, incompatible surrounding uses may negatively impact airport operations. As such, airport expansion and surrounding land development have compatibility as their goal (RCW 36.70.547). Compatibility measures for airports and surrounding uses are instituted depending upon the degree and nature of potential conflict between the airport and surrounding uses. The aim behind compatibility measures is to mitigate adverse noise and safety issues, including prohibiting the siting of incompatible uses adjacent to general aviation airports and military bases.

There are several classifications of airports and aviation facilities recognized by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The ones currently sited in Island County include private, limited, commercial, and military. Private and limited facilities are generally intended for private use,

while commercial facilities are privately owned but intended for general use by the public. They include DeLaurentis Airport, Whidbey Airpark, and Camano Island Airfield. Military airports in the County are discussed in more detail below.

### **1.9.2 MILITARY AIRPORTS**

Military airports in the County include the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI) and the Naval Outlying Field Coupeville (OLF), which vary in size and use. These airports are owned or operated by the Federal Government, and general use by the public is prohibited unless there is an emergency, or specific authorization is granted. The high sound levels generated by aircraft using these airports and the frequency of use requires unique consideration for implementation of compatibility measures.

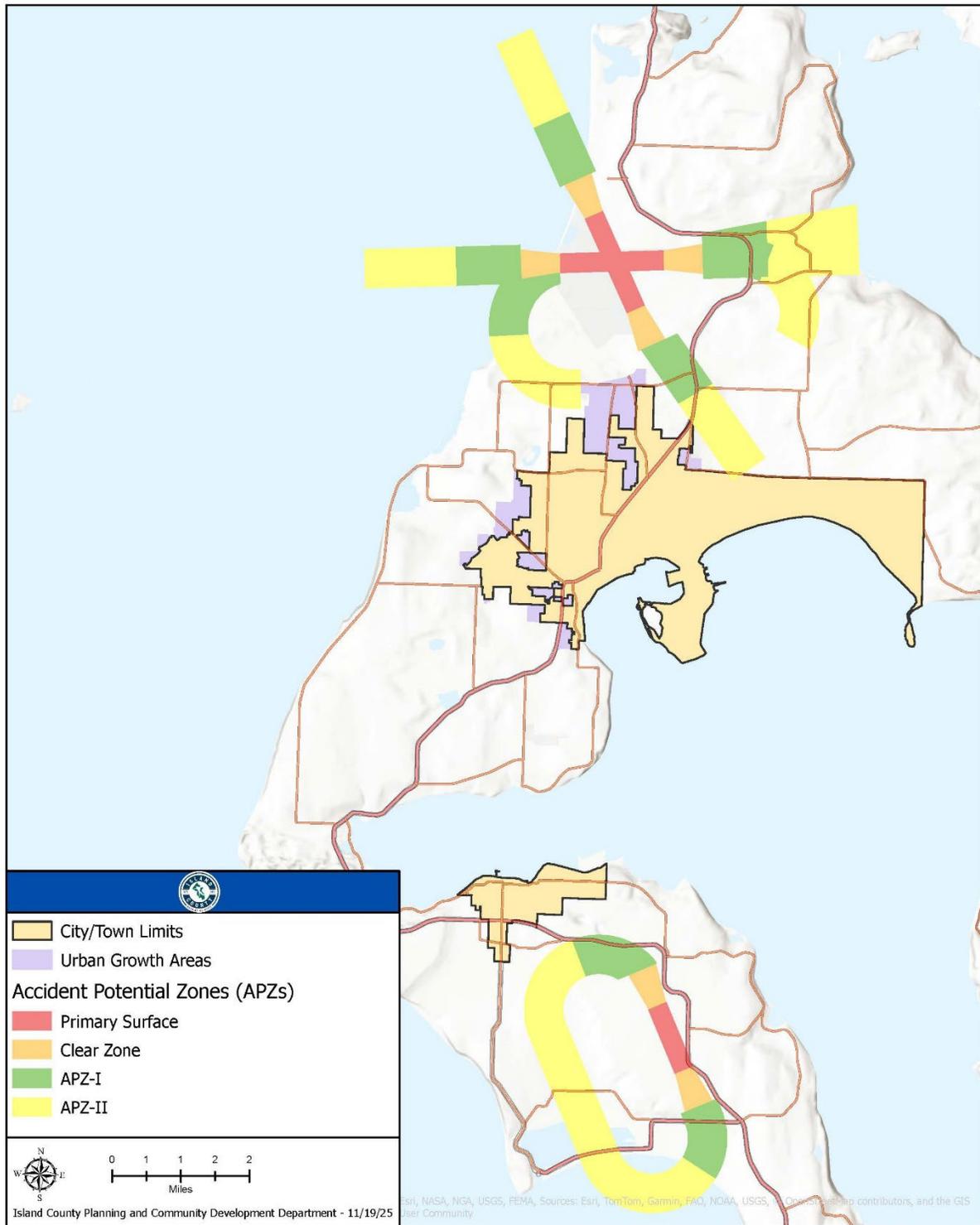
NASWI, including OLF, represents the dominant economic force in Island County. They are a strategically located national asset and constitute a significant capital investment in our region by the federal government. The closure of these facilities would result in extreme population and economic loss for the county. As such, the County's land use decisions support the retention and future use of these facilities. Uses incompatible with the current and future projected missions of the base shall not be sited adjacent to the NASWI and the OLF (RCW 36.70A.530).

Designated Accident Potential Zones (APZs) surround both military and other airports to support public health, safety, and welfare, as well as continued military operation. Island County ensures that development in APZs is at the lowest possible density consistent with the underlying land use designation.

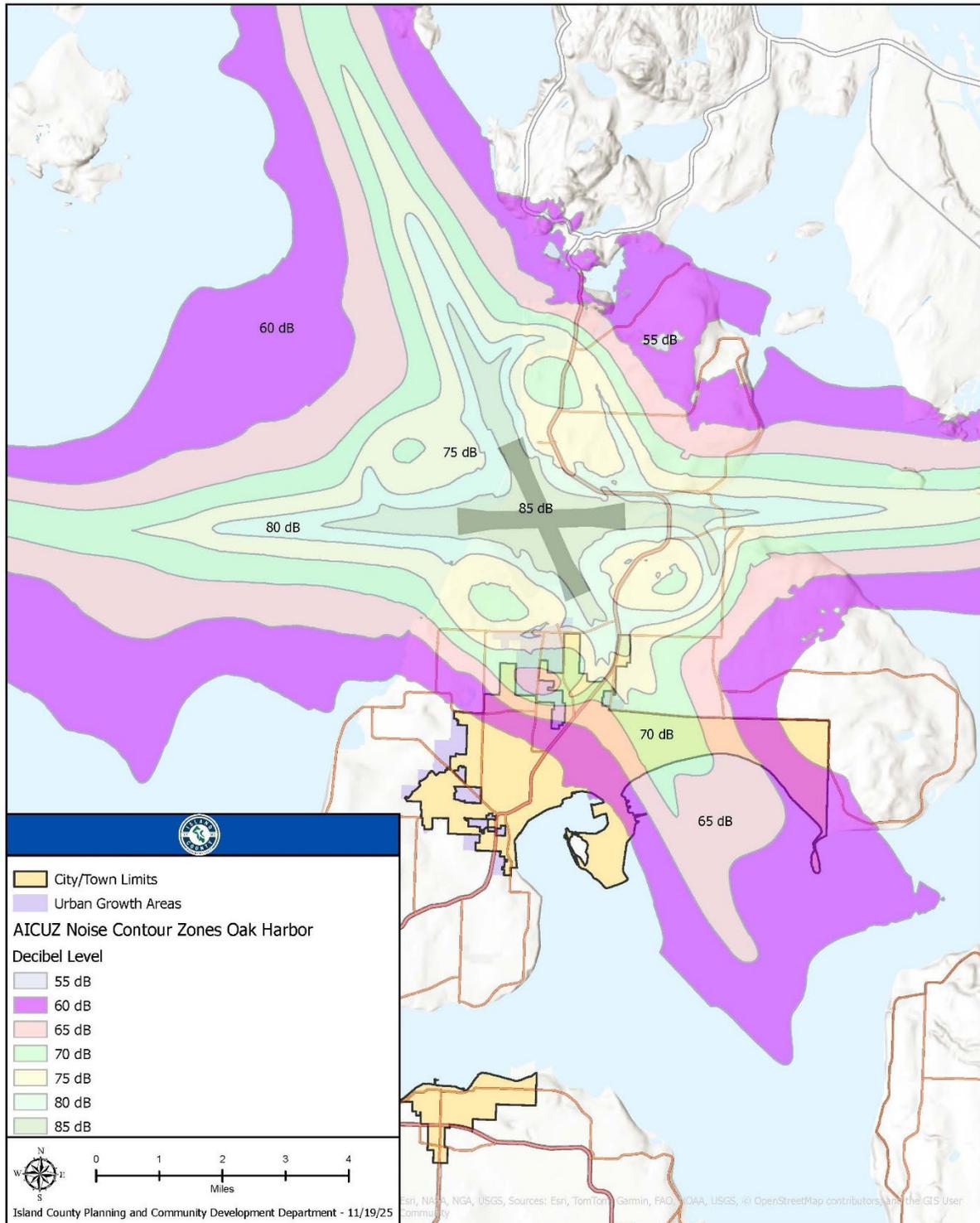
In 2011, an Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) Program was initiated. Under the program, a comprehensive study was prepared for military air installations to identify existing and compatible land use problem areas and to formulate courses of action to promote compatible development near the air facilities. The AICUZ study generally contains aircraft noise contour maps, Accident Potential Zone (APZ) designations, and recommended land use matrices for land areas within those noise zones and/ or APZs. In 2021, NASWI revisited the AICUZ program and the newest AICUZ and APZ maps will now be utilized for the implementation of these regulations.

Map 1J identifies the military airport APZs, while Maps 1K and 1L identify Island County aircraft noise contours in the Oak Harbor and Coupeville area respectively.

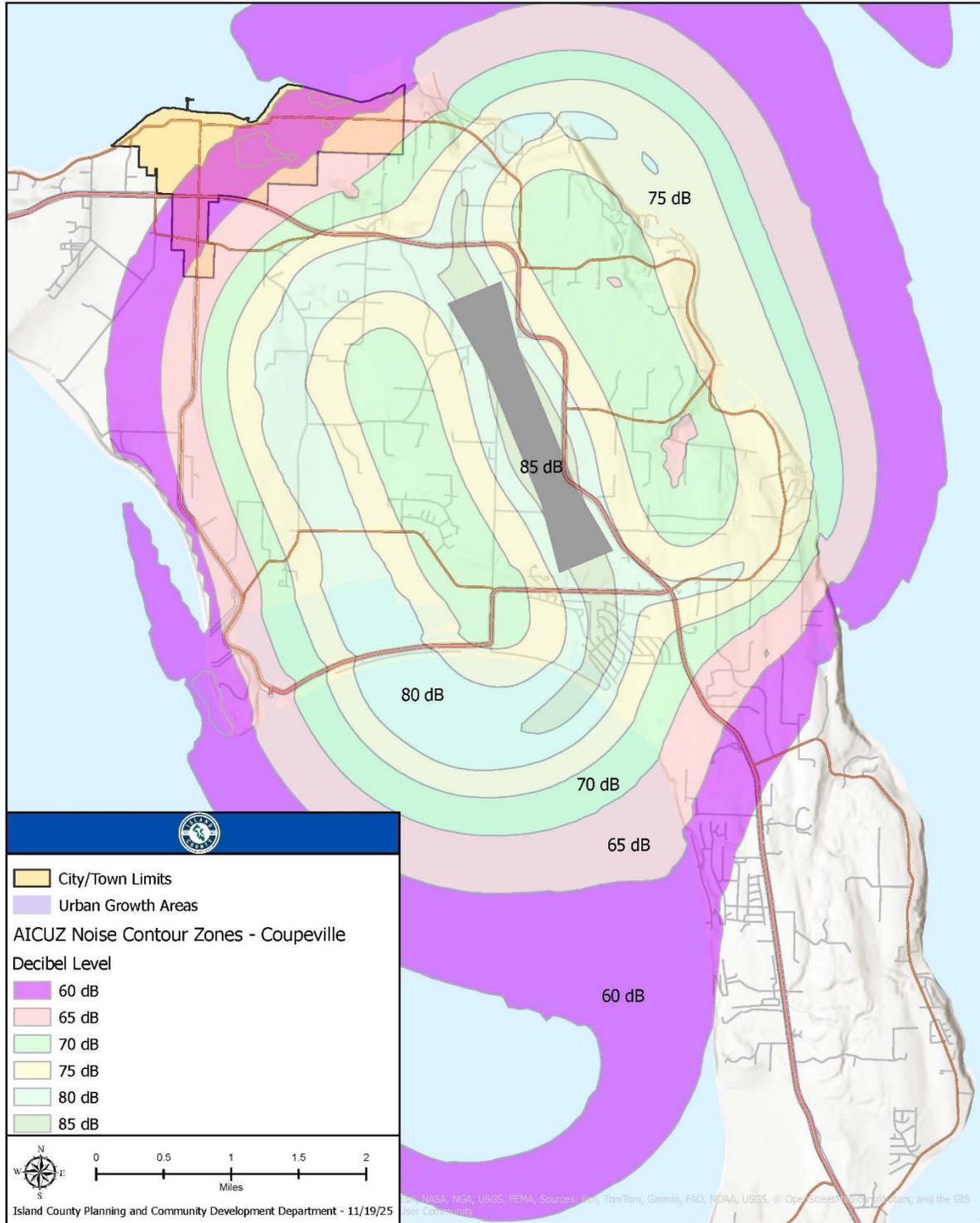
MAP 1J APZs



MAP 1K AICUZ Noise Contours Ault Field



MAP 1L AICUZ Noise Contours Outlying Field Coupeville



### **1.9.3 PARKS**

The Parks land use designation provides recreation opportunities and conserves critical areas and open spaces. Uses and activities allowed in the Parks designation are intended to provide services and recreation opportunities for local residents as well as visitors to the county while preserving, promoting or enhancing natural lands, open spaces and critical areas. A complete inventory of parks can be found in the Parks and Recreation Element.

### **1.9.4 PUBLIC/FEDERAL LANDS**

Roughly 9.6 percent of Island County is public lands held by the Federal, State, or local government. The majority of the public lands are designated forests which provide significant recreational opportunities and conservation of wildlife habitat. In addition to parks operated by Washington State Parks, there are fishing and shellfish harvest areas managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and forest lands and school trust lands managed by DNR.

Two units of the Federal government are responsible for management of lands in the County. The NASWI Ault Field air strip is located in northwest Whidbey Island and is owned by the U.S. Navy. Additionally, certain public properties within Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve are managed by the National Park Service.

### **1.9.5 MASTER PLANNED RESORTS**

Under RCW 36.70A.360 and 362 Island County may permit master planned resorts, which may constitute urban growth outside of UGAs. Island County's Master Planned Resorts are developed as significantly self-contained and integrated development. They may include visitor accommodations and recreational facilities within the boundaries of the master plan. While generally large enough to include conference facilities or commercial activities to support the resort, the uses are integrated into a logical plan set in a relatively natural and rural landscape. Utilities and services provided on-site are limited to those necessary for meeting the needs of the resort, and the cost of services provided by outside providers must be borne solely by the resort, rather than the public.

Table 1-1 Designation Criteria

Designation Criteria	Associated Zones
<b>Rural Lands</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UGAs or LAMIRDs; and</li> <li>• Areas in which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment; and</li> <li>• Areas which are compatible with land used by wildlife; and</li> <li>• Areas which reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development; and</li> <li>• Areas which are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and groundwater and surface water recharge areas; or</li> <li>• Areas which include lands having both long term commercial significance for production of agricultural products or timber; or</li> <li>• Those lands in public ownership that are dedicated or reserved primarily for public use or enjoyment for recreation, but can also serve as scenic amenities, natural resource lands, or for the protection of the environmentally sensitive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural</li> <li>• Rural Forest</li> <li>• Rural Agriculture</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Commercial Agriculture</li> </ul>

Table 1-2 Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRD) Designations

Designation Criteria	Associated Zones
<b>Residential LAMIRDs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of more intensive rural development are designated pursuant to the guidelines established in RCW 36.70A.070 for establishing logical outer boundaries for existing areas of more intensive rural development.</li> <li>• Areas which provide for the infill, development, or redevelopment of existing residential areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Residential</li> </ul>
<b>Mixed-Use LAMIRDs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed use areas or more intensive rural development are designated pursuant to the guidelines established in RCW 36.70A.070 for establishing logical outer boundaries for existing areas of more intensive rural development.</li> <li>• Areas in which existing commercial activities are associated with the provision of daily convenience goods and services for rural area populations.</li> <li>• Areas which provide commercial, light manufacturing, and higher density residential needs of the rural population wherein development exist in an attractive setting that is pedestrian oriented and served by public transit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Center</li> <li>• Camano Gateway Village</li> <li>• Rural Village</li> <li>• Rural Service</li> </ul>
<b>Aviation</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas around existing commercial airports and adjacent to existing non- residential uses that are suitable for increased levels of light industrial and manufacturing development and shall be designated pursuant to the guidelines established in RCW 36.70A.070 for establishing logical outer boundaries for existing LAMIRDs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airport</li> </ul>
<p><b>Light Manufacturing</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas with existing light industry and manufacturing, assembling, fabrication, storage, wholesaling, distribution, auto repair/salvage, and related activities which are clustered in a complex that provides adequate buffering and screening from surrounding land uses and shall be designated pursuant to the guidelines established in RCW 36.70A.070 for establishing logical outer boundaries for existing LAMIRDs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light Manufacturing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Special Review District</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas defined during the comprehensive planning process that require special consideration for future development which a master plan allows.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pacific Rim Institute</li> <li>• Greenbank Farm (Port Tract)</li> <li>• Keystone Preserve</li> </ul>

Table 1-3 Urban Land Use Designations

Designation Criteria	Associated Zones
<b>Unincorporated Municipal UGA</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas which are in the unincorporated portions of municipal Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)</li> <li>• These areas are intended to provide for zoning designations that do not impede the future intensification of development in the Urban Holding areas when urban infrastructure is available to serve these areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oak Harbor - Residential</li> <li>• Oak Harbor - Industrial</li> <li>• Oak Harbor - Highway Service Commercial</li> <li>• Oak Harbor - Planned Business Park</li> <li>• Oak Harbor - Planned Industrial Park</li> <li>• Urban Growth Area – Langlely</li> </ul>
<b>Urban Areas</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas within Non-Municipal UGAs and the incorporated portions of municipal Urban Growth Areas (UGA), which are designated pursuant to RCW 36.70A.110. This includes:</li> <li>• Areas where urban growth will be encouraged and supported with urban levels of service; and</li> <li>• Areas that make intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structure and impervious surfaces to the degree that it is incompatible with agriculture, forestry and the extraction of mineral resources; and</li> <li>• Designations of these areas are under the jurisdiction of separate comprehensive plans or sub-areas plans, all respective zoning associated with these areas are designated in those respective documents and development regulations.</li> </ul>	<p>No associated zones; the following is a list of the areas where this land use designation applies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Oak Harbor</li> <li>• City of Langlely</li> <li>• Town of Coupeville</li> <li>• Freeland NMUGA</li> </ul>

Table 1-4 Other Land Use Designations

Designation Criteria	Associated Zones
<b>Federal</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lands under ownership of the federal Government and it's departments, such as the Department of Defense</li> </ul>	<p>No associated zones; the following is a list of areas where this Land Use Designation applies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ault Field</li> <li>• Naval Outlying Field Coupeville</li> <li>• Lake Hancock</li> <li>• Seaplane Base</li> </ul>
<b>Water Areas</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas with lots historically established and existing entirely waterward of the Ordinary high Watermark (OHWM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water</li> </ul>

Table 1-5 Critical Areas Overlay Designations

Definition	Designation Criteria
<b>Aquifer Recharge Areas</b>	
<p>Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas are those areas that have been designated as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Sole Source Aquifer under the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act; or</li> <li>• Ground Water Management Areas per Chapters 90.44, 90.48, and 90.54 RCW, and Chapters 173 100 and 173 200 WAC.</li> </ul>	<p>All of Island County is comprised of High, Medium, or Low Recharge Susceptibility areas.</p>

<b>Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas Overlay</b>	
<p>Land management for maintaining species in suitable habitats within their natural geographic distribution so that isolated subpopulations are not created.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas with which species listed as endangered, threatened, and sensitive by federal or state government have a primary association.</li> <li>• Streams.</li> <li>• Commercial and recreational shellfish beds.</li> <li>• Kelp and eelgrass beds.</li> <li>• Herring and smelt spawning areas.</li> <li>• State natural area preserves and natural resource conservation areas.</li> <li>• In addition, habitats and species of local importance may be nominated and designated.</li> </ul>
<b>Frequently Flooded Areas</b>	
<p>Lands in the floodplain subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year (also known as 100-year floodplains); these areas include, but are not limited to, streams, lakes, coastal areas, and wetlands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100-year floodplains as listed and mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Flood Insurance Program.</li> </ul>
<b>Geologically Hazardous Areas (Steep/Unstable Slopes) Overlay</b>	
<p>Areas not suited to siting of commercial, residential, or industrial development consistent with public health or safety concerns due to their susceptibility to sliding or other slope failures, erosion, or other geological events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas indicated within the Washington Department of Ecology’s Coastal Zone Atlas of Island County, dated April, 1979 as having recent or historical slide activity and/or indicative of unstable slope conditions.</li> <li>• Areas with slopes 40% or greater and with a vertical elevation change of at least ten feet, except areas of consolidated rock.</li> </ul>

Table 1-6 Airport Aviation Safety Land Use Overlay Designations

Definition	Designation Criteria
<b>Aircraft Noise Contours</b>	
The Noise Contours represent the high aircraft noise zone areas of Island County where special land use controls are necessary to assure public health, welfare and safety.	The designated Island County Aircraft Noise Contours overlays are shown in Map 1S.
<b>Aircraft Accident Potential Zones (APZ)</b>	
The primary purpose of the Aircraft Accident Potential Zone Overlay is to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare by minimizing the risk to development in the immediate vicinity of aircraft paths of arrival and departure associated with NASWI Ault Field and OLF.	The designated Accident Potential Zone Overlay associated with NASWI, are shown in Map 1R.

Table 1-7 Other Overlays

Definition	Designation Criteria
<b>Mineral Lands Overlay</b>	
Those lands primarily devoted to the extraction of minerals or that have a known potential for long term commercial extraction of minerals. Minerals are defined as sand, gravel, and valuable metallic substances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Mineral Lands Overlay shall contain the existing mineral operations which have final use and site plan approval, conditional use permits, or certificates of zoning compliance.</li> <li>• Map E shows existing areas of surficial sand and gravel deposits.</li> <li>• There are no known deposits of valuable metallic minerals in Island County.</li> </ul>

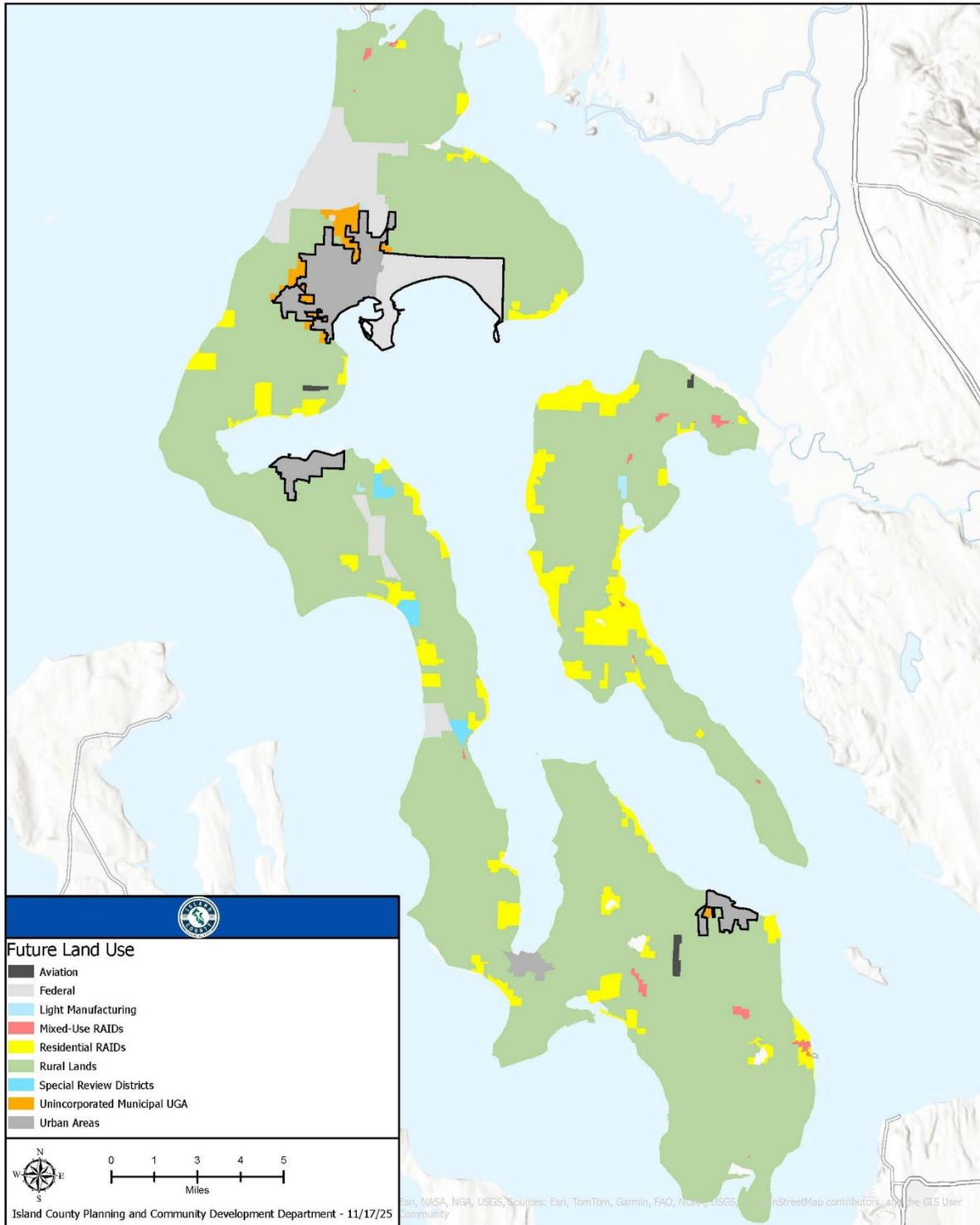
## 1.10 FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The following map indicates the locations identified for each of the above Land Use Designations. 11x17 version of this map is available in Appendix E.

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## MAP 1M Future Land Use Maps



## 1.11 GOALS AND POLICIES

### ~~LAND USE CONCEPTS AND CONSIDERATIONS~~

**Goal 1 Achieve a staged and orderly development pattern that accommodates growth, fosters a high quality living environment, and protects rural character, natural resources, and historic properties.**

LU 1.1 Accommodate projected population and employment growth in a manner ~~which that~~ protects the established character of neighborhoods and promotes equity regardless of geography and/or socio economic status. ~~preserves rural and environmental quality, promotes physical activity, and promotes economic growth.~~

~~LU 1.2 Prohibit the expansion of urban services in rural areas and guide urban growth into areas with adequate planned public facilities and services.~~

LU ~~1.2~~<sup>1.3</sup> Encourage infill of subdivided lands and the logical expansion of urban areas.

~~LU 1.4 Prohibit urban development in rural areas.~~

LU ~~1.3~~<sup>1.5</sup> Ensure residential developments are planned to minimize impacts upon, and public expenditures for both transportation and public facilities and services.

LU 1.4 Evaluate land use actions and decisions for their impact on equal access to opportunities and resources for all residents, regardless of identity, community, or socioeconomic circumstances.

LU 1.5 Utilize demonstration projects to create opportunities to evaluate the impact of land use actions and decisions on equal access to housing and employment for all residents. A Request for Proposal (RFP) process will be used to select qualified developers and/or providers for demonstration projects.

LU 1.6 Before the 2035 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, complete a Subarea Plan for the Camano Gateway.

LU 1.7 Allow transitional housing or permanent supportive housing in any zone where residential dwelling units or overnight lodging is allowed, provided that such facilities meet all Health, Building, Zoning code, and safety standards. Reasonable occupancy, spacing, and intensity of use requirements may be imposed on permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, emergency housing, and emergency shelters to protect public health and safety.

**Goal 2 Balance community health, safety, and conservation of natural and community resources**~~Assure general public health, safety, and welfare without unduly jeopardizing the rights of individuals.~~

LU 2.1 The County will coordinate with internal, local, state, federal, and tribal departments and agencies to ensure that there is consistency with planning and decision making.~~All levels of government will coordinate planning and decision making to ensure consistency.~~

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~~LU 2.1.1 County wide planning policies will be given priority when conflicts arise between jurisdictions.~~

~~LU 2.1.2 Comprehensive planning must be adaptable to changing conditions.~~

~~LU 2.1.3 There should be efficient interdepartmental coordination on all major programs and projects to minimize unnecessary delays in public decision making.~~

~~LU 2.2 Private property will not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.~~

LU 2.2 The County will work to preserve existing affordable housing stock, including but not limiting to, manufactured and mobile homes.

LU 2.3 Educate, promote, and incentivize the use of community septic systems and other new technologies within existing housing stock.

LU 2.4 Use Best Available Science to regulate development in a manner that balances protection of property rights and human health and safety with protection of critical area functions and values.

~~LU 2.4 Require new development (including subdivisions, site plan approvals, and other development) within UGAs to be served by public sewer and water, except within the NMUGA where demonstrated topographical constraints or other unpreventable factors could support granting variances or waivers to allow private wells and septic systems.~~

~~LU 2.5 New urban services and facilities shall be limited to municipal UGAs, unless service extension is necessary to respond to a documented public health hazard caused by existing development which cannot otherwise reasonably be remedied.~~

### **Urban Growth Areas**

~~**Goal 3 Provide the opportunity for the intensification of development on lots in the rural area containing, or new development of, small scale recreational or tourist uses, including commercial facilities to serve those recreational or tourist uses, that rely on a rural location and setting but that do not include new residential development (pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(ii)).**~~

~~LU 3.1 Provide for Small Bed and Breakfasts, Bed and Breakfast Inns, and small Country Inns in Rural land use designations, with appropriate screening, setbacks, and open space requirements. For developments in the shoreline areas, the visual impact from the water shall be considered and uses shall comply with the Shoreline Master Program.~~

~~LU 3.2 Provide for other small scale recreation and tourist uses in Rural land use designations, such as golf courses, model hobby parks, restaurants, wineries and breweries on parcels of an appropriate size. All activities shall be screened from the view of adjacent neighbors and the use shall not disrupt the character of any surrounding permitted uses. Residential development around golf courses, if any, must meet all requirements for residential development in the Rural land use designation.~~

~~LU 3.3 Continue to recognize and support the planned development of Existing Master Planned Resorts that were in existence on July 1, 1990 and developed, in whole or in part as a significant self-contained and integrated development that includes short-term visitor accommodations associated with a range of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities within the property boundaries in a setting of significant natural amenities pursuant to RCW 36.70A.363~~

**Goal 34 Direct growth to municipalities and urban growth areas (UGAs) where growth is economically viable, served by transportation, and where adequate municipal facilities and services exist or can be provided efficiently and consistently with environmental and other goals. Provide areas where urban land use activities may be concentrated in a manner which enables the efficient provision of public facilities and services.**

LU ~~3.14.1~~ Increase the proportion of growth in ~~municipal~~ UGAs ~~and NMUGAs (compared to growth in Rural areas)~~ where adequate public facilities or services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.

~~LU 4.2 Coordinate development within unincorporated municipal UGAs between the county, associated municipalities, and service providers through the following measures.~~

LU ~~3.24.2.1~~ Direct urban development first to areas within municipal boundaries, and then toward the unincorporated portion of municipal UGA~~s~~.

LU ~~3.34.2.2~~ Non-urban development in the UGA should only be allowed if it will be compatible with future urban development~~s~~.

LU ~~3.44.2.3~~ Encourage annexation of unincorporated UGA lands surrounded by areas within municipal lands.UGAs.

LU ~~3.54.2.3.1~~ ~~Avoid~~Prohibit non-contiguous annexation within the UGA, except where conserved lands or critical areas are counted as open space.

~~LU 4.2.3.2 Prohibit annexation of land outside the municipal UGA.~~

LU ~~3.64.2.4~~ Minimize harmful fiscal and environmental impacts of growth through urban development patterns.

LU ~~3.74.2.5~~ ~~When possible, u~~Use the edges of major features, such as roads and drainageways, to help provide a clear and natural boundary between urban and rural areas.

LU ~~3.84.2.6~~ Use interlocal agreements (ILAs) as a method to guide development in the unincorporated ~~portions of municipal~~ UGAs located around municipalities.

LU ~~3.8.14.2.6.1~~ Review interlocal agreements every five years starting in 2026 and make updates as necessary to guide development in the unincorporated portions of municipal UGAs.

LU ~~3.94.2.7~~ Coordinate with municipalities to Pprovide open space corridors adjacent to urban areas with intentional habitat interconnectivity for wildlife. ~~between UGAs as shown in the Natural Resources Element of this plan.~~

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~~LU 4.2.8 Identify unincorporated portions of municipal UGAs and applicable municipal land use designation in the Future Land Use Map.~~

~~LU 4.2.9 Regulation of development in municipal UGAs is under County jurisdiction until annexation by the associated jurisdiction, at which time the associated municipality is responsible.~~

~~LU 4.2.10 The County will notify the affected municipality when applications are received for new development within municipal UGAs.~~

~~LU 4.3 Growth and development within the municipal boundaries of Oak Harbor, Coupeville and Langley must conform to their adopted comprehensive plans and adopted CWPPs.~~

~~LU 4.4 Modification of UGAs may be requested by a municipality or individual; however UGA expansion is prohibited unless reasonable alternatives have been considered, consistent with adopted CWPPs.~~

LU 3.11~~2.5~~ New urban services and facilities (including, but not limited to storm and sanitary sewer systems, domestic water systems, street cleaning services, fire and police protection services, public transit services, and other public utilities associated with urban areas as defined in RCW 36.70A.030(43)) shall be limited to municipal UGAs, unless service extension is necessary to respond to a documented public health hazard caused by existing development which cannot otherwise reasonably be remedied.

LU 3.12 The County shall work to preserve existing affordable housing stock within UGAs, including but not limiting to manufactured and mobile homes, and partner with municipalities to achieve this policy.

LU 3.13~~2.4~~ Require nNew development (including subdivisions, site plan approvals, and other development) within UGAs to shall be served by public sewer and water., except within the NMUGA where demonstrated topographical constraints or other unpreventable factors could support granting variances or waivers to allow private wells and septic systems.

LU 3.13.1 Provide flexibility within the NMUGAs for community sewage and water service solutions.

**Goal 4~~5~~ Utilize J**oint Planning Areas (JPAs) to provide **an long term planning opportunities for long term planning** beyond the 20 year planning horizon by reserving areas which may be necessary for future urban growth and for protection of areas of long term rural significance.

~~LU 4.1~~5.1~~ Encourage municipalities to designate JPA overlays that are appropriate for future UGA expansions, including areas that are appropriate for future development at urban densities, as well as Potential Growth Area (PGA), and Long Term Rural Significance (LRS) overlays. Provide areas within JPA for municipal Urban Growth Area expansion which will allow for the future development of urban densities in an effective manner.~~

~~LU 5.2 Designate JPAs overlays, determined jointly by the County and associated municipality.~~

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~~LU 5.2.1 Designate Potential Growth Area (PGA) overlays that are appropriate for future UGA expansion.~~

~~LU 5.2.2 Designate overlays for areas of Long Term Rural Significance (LRS).~~

~~LU 5.3 JPAs shall be illustrated in the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map and shown in the Zoning Atlas.~~

~~LU 5.4 Municipal and County land use and Capital Facility Plans shall be coordinated within JPAs.~~

~~LU 4.2~~5.5 Cities, Towns and the County shall jointly develop implementation strategies for the Open Space Corridors identified within JPAs in the Natural ~~Resources Lands~~ Element of the County Comprehensive Plan.

~~LU 4.3~~5.6 ~~Development and a~~ amendment of the JPA boundaries, overlays, and joint planning processes should be coordinated between the County and associated municipalities ~~as outlined in the CPPs.~~

~~LU 5.6.1 With narrow exceptions per CWPP, amendments to the JPA boundaries and overlays should only occur during the periodic update process.~~

~~LU 4.4~~5.7 Land development decisions in Joint Planning Areas shall not preclude the future expansion of UGAs. ~~Land development decisions shall be managed in Joint Planning Areas to not preclude the future expansion of UGAs.~~

~~LU4.5~~5.8 Discourage siting of public facilities ~~and buildings~~ within a JPA unless their function or service area is best served by a location outside of a UGA.

### RAIDs

**Goal 56 Provide for the infill, development, or redevelopment of commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use LAMIRDs, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d). Designate Rural Areas of More Intensive Development (RAIDs) per RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d) with non-expandable logical outer boundaries.**

LU 5.1 In all LAMIRDs, use a proactive planning approach for access management onto State Highways consistent with Island County Code and Washington State Department of Transportation regulations, including cross connectivity, internal circulation systems, and consolidation of access points.

LU 5.2 Development within Light Manufacturing and Airport LAMIRDs shall avoid environmental and community impact where feasible. Developers must mitigate potential negative effects, such as air, light, noise, and water pollution, and traffic congestion.

LU 5.3 Cluster structures within Light Manufacturing and Airport LAMIRDs and provide adequate expansion space for compatible activities.

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LU 5.4 In Rural Village, Rural Center, Camano Gateway Village, and Rural Service LAMIRDs, encourage multi-family and mixed uses to support housing development and economic development.

LU 5.5 Incentivize and support the development of community and large onsite septic systems and upgrading of existing water systems to accommodate more intensive uses in the LAMIRDs.

LU 5.6 Allow for overnight lodging within Mixed-Use LAMIRDs.

LU 5.7 Encourage compact development within Mixed-Use LAMIRDs to prevent sprawl while utilizing the LAMIRDs for housing and economic opportunities.

LU 5.8 Accommodate the development of affordable worker housing within Light Manufacturing zones.

~~LU 6.1 RAID land use designations are adopted as described in Section 1.5.2.1 and Table 1-7.~~

### ~~LU 6.1.1 In Rural Center (RC) areas:~~

~~LU 6.1.1.1 Require consolidated access to the highway for all adjacent RC parcels to minimize traffic disruption.~~

~~LU 6.1.1.2 Develop RC highway shopping and service centers as compact units to prevent highway sprawl.~~

### ~~LU 6.1.2 In Rural Village (RV) areas:~~

~~LU 6.1.2.1 Manage access to the State Highway proactively, and consider consolidating access points where feasible.~~

### ~~LU 6.1.3 In Light Manufacturing (LM) areas:~~

~~LU 6.1.3.1 Provide for light industry and manufacturing, assembling, fabrication, storage, wholesaling, distribution, auto repair/ salvage and related activities that do not entail frequent visits of clientele.~~

~~LU 6.1.3.2 Design and develop LM areas to have minimal environmental and community impact and require mitigation of potentially adverse impacts by the developer so that air, light, noise, and water pollution, open storage, and similar undesirable effects are controlled, contained or screened so as not to detract from surrounding uses.~~

~~LU 6.1.3.3 Cluster structures within LM areas and provide adequate expansion space for compatible activities.~~

~~LU 6.1.3.4 Manage access proactively. Require common arterial accesses, internal circulation systems, and cross connectivity. Consider consolidation of non-arterial access points where feasible.~~

~~LU 6.1.3.5 Protect surrounding uses from adverse effects by providing adequate landscape buffers and open space, and designating compatible surrounding uses.~~

### ~~LU 6.1.4 In Rural Service (RS) areas:~~

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~~LU 6.1.4.1 Prohibit a change in use that results in a greater intensity than the existing use.~~

~~LU 6.1.4.2 Require landscaping and other site improvements, on a case by case basis, for changes or expansions to existing uses.~~

~~LU 5.9 In Airport areas, e~~Ensure compatibility with existing uses in ~~Wes Lupien Air Park~~  
~~DeLaurentis Airport, South~~ Whidbey Air ~~P~~ark or Camano Island Air ~~F~~ield.

~~LU 6.1.5.2 Design and develop AP areas to have minimal environmental and community impact, including low levels of air, light, noise, odor and water pollution, and require mitigation of potentially adverse impacts by the developer.~~

~~LU 6.1.5.3 Protect surrounding uses from adverse effects by providing adequate landscape buffers and open space, and designating compatible surrounding uses with a focus on protecting critical lands, residential, rural and resource areas.~~

~~LU 6.1.5.4 Cluster structures within AP areas and provide adequate expansion space for compatible activities.~~

~~LU 6.1.5.5 Manage access proactively. Require common arterial accesses and internal circulation systems, and consider consolidation of access points where feasible.~~

~~LU 5.9.16.1.5.6~~ Implement site development standards according to the needs of each site.

~~LU 5.9.26.1.5.7~~ Protect existing ~~Airport~~AP areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

### ~~LU 6.1.6 In Rural Residential (RR) Areas:~~

~~LU 6.1.6.1 Raising of large livestock shall be provided for conditioned on the approval of an Animal Management Plan.~~

~~LU 6.1.6.2 A proactive planning approach shall be used for access management onto State Highway. Possible consolidation of access points should be explored.~~

### ~~LU 6.1.7 In the Camano Gateway Area~~

~~LU 6.1.7.1 Establish sustainable building practices, use of low impact development, reduction in water consumption, sensitive design, minimizing bulk and mass, participation in local economic development strategies, and reduction in traffic. Incentives should be provided to developers so that the benefits outweigh the costs.~~

~~LU 6.1.7.2 A proactive planning approach should be used for access management into State Highway 532. Possible consolidation of access points shall be explored consistent with Island County Code and Washington State Department of Transportation regulations.~~

~~LU 6.1.7.3 Mixed Uses involving a combination of Residential and NonResidential components are encouraged, especially with long term village residence above business activities or that are detached but functionally and physically connected to each other.~~

~~LU 6.1.7.4 Overnight lodging shall be designed to fit into and enhance the rural island landscape through effective design, orientation, siting, signage, lighting and landscaping.~~

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~~Overnight Lodging should be designed in a manner that does not utilize and distribute water resources beyond the capacity of the resources available in the RAID.~~

~~LU 6.2 Provide for the infill, development, or redevelopment of existing residential areas, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d).~~

~~LU 6.3 Ensure compatibility with adjacent uses through compliance with rural design guidelines.~~

~~LU 6.3.1 Provide for appropriate permitted and conditional uses including accessory uses.~~

~~LU 6.3.2 Encourage clustering of uses, where compact design promotes a physical activity and community orientation.~~

~~LU 6.3.3 Provide for the conditional expansion of existing businesses in a manner which protects environmental quality, rural character, unique scenic features and community amenities and values.~~

~~LU 6.3.4 Reflect the local knowledge, experience, preferences and character of the rural community in RAID land use designations.~~

~~LU 6.3.5 Ensure appropriate landscaping, screening, signing and shielded lighting to promote compatibility.~~

LU 5.10~~6.4~~ Consider the long term availability of known and/or verifiable water supplies, the general suitability of the area for on-site septic systems, the presence of geologically unstable areas, and the presence of flood or tsunami hazards when establishing density.

LU 5.11~~6.5~~ Facilitate pedestrian orientation through site design that incorporates common areas, pedestrian pathways, access to public transit, landscaping, clustering, small parks and compact design.

~~LU 6.5.1 Encourage mixed uses, with dwelling units above businesses, in the RC, RV, RS, and CVG designations.~~

LU 5.12~~6.6~~ Discourage public facilities ~~and buildings~~ unless their function or service area is best served by a location outside of a UGA.

~~LU 6.7 Prohibit the creation of new lots unless they have adequate area outside of tsunami hazards, flood areas, geohazards, and other critical areas.~~

LU 5.13~~6.8~~ Require all new development to connect to community water systems; require existing development to connect to community wastewater systems when feasible. Encourage shared water and wastewater services between adjacent structures.

~~LU 6.9 Provide the opportunity for the intensification of development on lots in the rural area containing existing isolated non-residential uses or new development of isolated cottage industries and isolated small scale businesses that are not principally designed to serve the existing and projected rural population and non-residential uses, but do provide job opportunities for rural residents (pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(iii)).~~

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~~LU 6.9.1 Isolated Non Residential. The intensification of development on lots in the rural area containing existing isolated non-residential uses shall be permitted according to development standards which address impacts on surrounding properties.~~

~~LU 6.9.2 Home Occupations. Allow the intensification or development of home occupations in RAIDs.~~

~~LU 6.9.3 Home Industries. Allow the intensification or development of home industries in RAIDs taking into account the size of the parcel where it is permitted and the associated impacts of the use. Provided that if a home industry grows too large or adversely impacts neighbors, it shall be required to relocate to a non-residential or mixed use land use designation.~~

### **Rural Designations, general**

~~**GOAL 7 Encourage clustered residential development where appropriate. All residential development should preserve the community feel of an area and further the protection of rural character in Island County.**~~

~~LU 7.1 Standards for subdivisions and Planned Residential Developments shall encourage clustering to avoid or minimize the adverse impacts to the visual or physical environment while still fostering rural lifestyles and rural character by maintaining low density rural areas.~~

~~LU 7.2 In a cluster development, lots should be grouped on a limited portion of the site and should be smaller than those in a conventional subdivision. As a result, part of the site shall remain undeveloped while retaining the same overall number of units.~~

~~LU 7.2.1 Setbacks, minimum area and related dimensional bonuses shall be available in cluster developments for providing the type of land and quality open space amenities which the community most values.~~

~~LU 7.2.2 Provide locational criteria for cluster subdivisions.~~

~~LU 7.2.3 Provide for flexible building envelopes.~~

~~LU 7.2.4 Provide for varied spacing between buildings. In some cases allow “zero lot lines” for single family residential developments. In other cases, such as cohousing projects, provide for greater spacing in clusters to foster rural living and privacy on individual lots as well as within clusters.~~

~~LU 7.3 Minimize impervious surfaces.~~

~~LU 7.4 Provide for duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes in the Rural Residential land use district.~~

~~LU 7.5 Provide for a variety of residential densities.~~

~~LU 7.6 Limit overall area which can be developed for large lot residential development.~~

~~LU 7.7 Street yard setbacks shall be based on road classifications.~~

~~LU 7.8 Innovative development concepts will be encouraged to buffer agricultural and mineral resource lands from development.~~

~~LU 7.9 Lot size averaging is allowed in subdivisions and short plats.~~

~~LU 7.10 Designate the siting of water storage facilities by public water systems as permitted in all land use designation subject to screening requirements.~~

~~**GOAL 8 Ensure Planned Residential Developments retain and incorporate natural features and open space and preserve rural character.**~~

~~LU 8.1 Standards for subdivisions and planned residential developments shall encourage clustering and avoid or minimize the adverse impacts to the visual or physical environment while still fostering rural lifestyles and rural character.~~

~~LU 8.2 Planned Residential Developments shall require a landscaping plan that requires the retention of existing native vegetation.~~

~~LU 8.3 Planned Residential Developments require identification of dedicated open space areas.~~

~~LU 8.4 Permit the use of open space areas in Planned Residential Developments for off-site wells, septic systems, trails and walkways, and, where desired by applicants, permit trail systems through open space areas to neighboring properties as connections to other trail systems.~~

~~LU 8.5 Develop guidelines which require Planned Residential Developments be separated from lands designated Commercial Agriculture and Mineral Resource by dedicated open space areas or by other buffering measures. Buffers may be provided by trees, but may also be separation by distance.~~

~~LU 8.6 Both attached and detached housing units will be provided for in Planned Residential Developments with conditions which preserve rural character.~~

~~LU 8.7 Preference shall be given to PRD cluster development consisting of either attached or detached housing in the event subdivision of land occurs.~~

~~LU 8.8 A density bonus shall be given for PRDs as an incentive for allocation of permanent open space, provided the development meets parcel size, open space allocation, and other requirements, and there are no adverse impacts to critical areas or natural resource conservation areas. No PRD density bonus shall be given to PRDs created as part of a Farm/Forest Plan.~~

~~**Goal 69 Maintain development patterns in rural lands to accommodate low density residential uses compatible with resource lands and critical areas. Maintain low residential densities to preserve rural character and to provide buffers between urban activities and agricultural and forestry uses.**~~

~~LU 6.1 Provide flexibility for cluster developments, consistent with WAC 365-196-425, including allowing for residential density bonuses in return for protection of open space resources and natural resource functions.~~

~~LU 9.1 Maintain development patterns in Rural (R) areas that provide primarily for low density rural residential use, while also considering the long term availability of known and/or verifiable~~

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~~water supplies, the general suitability of the area for on-site septic systems, the presence of geologically unstable areas, and the presence of flood or tsunami hazards.~~

~~LU 9.2 Lot size averaging shall be allowed for subdivision of parcels meeting minimum size requirements, provided minimum and average parcel size and density thresholds are met as set forth in the development regulations.~~

~~LU 9.3 Encourage diverse economic opportunities and uses compatible with and supportive of a rural way of life as outlined under the goals and policies in this chapter for Home Occupations and Home Industries in the Rural Area.~~

~~LU 6.29.4 Minimize potential conflicts between residential development and designated commercial agricultural lands. Residential development near designated Commercial Agriculture lands must be designed to minimize potential conflict and prevent unnecessary conversion of farm land.~~

LU 6.3 Prevent unnecessary conversion of farm land.

~~LU 6.49.5 Encourage and protect small scale agriculture activities, including those that occur on land not zoned commercial agriculture, that are compatible with surrounding uses. Minor or small scale agriculture activities are consistent with rural areas, support rural character, and should be protected and encouraged.~~

~~LU 9.6 All non-residential uses within the Rural designation must comply with rural design guidelines to assure compatibility with adjacent uses.~~

~~LU 6.59.7 Discourage essential public facilities and buildings unless their function or service area is best served by a location outside of a UGA.~~

~~LU 6.69.8 Prohibit the creation of new lots unless they have adequate area outside of tsunami hazards, flood areas, geohazards, and other critical areas.~~

~~LU 6.77.3 Require rural development to use low impact development (LID) techniques and Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce stormwater runoff and protect water quality in Puget Sound and local freshwater systems. Development proposals shall incorporate techniques such as minimizing impervious surfaces, using permeable materials, installing bioswales and/or rain gardens, and preserving native vegetation.~~

### **Resource Lands**

~~**Goal 710 Protect agriculture and forestry uses, including both as habitats and as resources, by providing buffers between these uses and urban activities via low residential densities. Create an area where rural agricultural activities are encouraged to occur with residential uses while preserving rural character and maintaining open space as the dominant characteristic.**~~

~~LU10.1 Maintain parcel patterns in Rural Agricultural (RA) areas that provide for rural agricultural and rural residential use, while also considering the long term availability of known~~

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~~and/or verifiable water supplies, the general suitability of the area for on-site septic systems, the presence of geologically unstable areas, and the presence of flood or tsunami hazards.~~

~~LU 7.1~~10.2 Encourage use of Rural Clusters consistent with WAC 365-196-425 to maintain open space and avoid or minimize the adverse impacts to the visual or physical environment. Maintain allowance and preference for PRD using clustering within RA areas whenever subdivision of land is proposed.

~~LU 7.2~~10.3 Right to farm and forest measures shall protect the right to pursue farm and forestry activities.

~~LU 7.3~~10.4 Permit roadside farm stands, farmers markets, and other allowable agricultural and value-added sales outlets in locations that serve residential areas in proximity to farms. Measures shall be used to support roadside stands or farmers' markets which may help farmers who wish to directly market products to nearby residential areas.

~~LU 10.5 Encourage the conservation of lands suitable for agricultural use to support farming as an activity valued in the County.~~

~~LU 7.4~~10.5.1 Direct nonagricultural uses to land with poor soils or areas otherwise not suitable for agricultural purposes. Limit nonagricultural uses to lands with poor soils or areas otherwise not suitable for agricultural purposes.

~~LU 10.5.2 Limit the allowable range of accessory uses to those allowed by state statute.~~

~~LU 7.5~~10.6 Review Island County code for barriers to agricultural activities, including agri-tourism, and consider ways to remove such barriers. Cooperative agricultural production and marketing will be encouraged.

~~LU 7.6~~10.7 Provide tax incentive programs, and other incentives, to encourage agricultural landowners to keep lands in agricultural production. Encourage agricultural landowners to retain their lands in agricultural production and to utilize tax incentive programs.

~~LU 7.7~~10.8 Support innovative public and private programs that provide incentives for farmers incentives to stay on the land and for landowners to conserve lands suitable for agricultural use.

~~LU 7.8~~12.2 Reserve lands which because of their size, soil type, and active management are part of an essential land base for continued commercial agriculture. Assure that these lands have Support the continued viability of these lands to serve as a resource for food, fiber, feed, and forage.

~~LU 7.9~~12.3 Conserve long term mineral lands to ensure the continued supply of sand, gravel, and non-renewable minerals, and their protection from urban encroachment, as well as environmental protection through appropriate siting, operation, reclamation standards, and groundwater protection measures.

~~LU 7.10~~7.8 Explore innovative development concepts will be encouraged to that buffer agricultural and mineral resource lands from development.

LU 7.11 Encourage new agricultural activities to follow Best Management Practices that, when used collectively, provide riparian protection, source control, and filtration to prevent contributing pollutants to surface and ground waters to conserve important habitat areas for salmonids and shorebirds while maintaining working lands.

### **Rural Designations, general**

#### **Goal 11 Encourage preservation of natural resources and rural character through the Earned Development Unit (EDU) system.**

~~LU 11.1 Upon adoption of this plan, Rural Agriculture landowners will be allocated EDUs based on the time of commitment of their conservation easement in a Farm/Forest Management Plan. A schedule for the allocation of EDUs shall be shown in the development regulations with a clear relationship between number of earned units and time of commitment of conservation easement.~~

~~LU 11.2 EDUs may be used pursuant to an adopted Farm/Forest Development and Management Plan through boundary line adjustment, land division or PRD meeting lot size requirements.~~

~~LU 11.2.1 The plan will cover such items as the general location of earned development units, identify action to strengthen the farm or forest unit, shall encompass the entire farm or forest unit, shall commit at least 75% of the farm or forest unit to a conservation easement for no less than 10 years, and must protect the most productive portions of the farm or forest unit and enhance commercial productivity.~~

~~LU 11.2.2 All uses allowed in the Rural land use designation shall be allowed in the remaining 25%.~~

~~LU 11.2.3 EDUs may be used only on land that does not contain prime soils or is otherwise not suitable for farming.~~

~~LU 11.2.4 EDUs may be located on the Farm unit or other Rural, Rural Agriculture, Rural Forest or Commercial Agriculture lands owned by the farm or forest operator provided that at least 75% of the Farm unit is kept in a conservation easement.~~

### **Resource Lands**

#### **Goal 12 Ensure the long-term conservation of natural resource lands, and preclude land uses and developments that are incompatible within natural resource lands, while allowing existing and ongoing resource management operations and preserving long-term commercial viability of those uses.**

~~LU 12.1 Create an area where rural forestry activities are encouraged to occur with residential uses while preserving rural character and maintaining open space as the dominant characteristic.~~

~~LU 12.2 Reserve lands which because of their size, soil type, and active management are part of an essential land base for continued commercial agriculture. Assure that these lands have continued viability to serve as a resource for food, fiber, feed and forage.~~

~~LU 12.3 Conserve long term mineral lands to ensure the continued supply of sand, gravel, and non-renewable minerals, and their protection from urban encroachment, as well as environmental protection through appropriate siting, operation, reclamation standards and groundwater protection measures.~~

### **General Land Use Designations and Overlays**

**Goal 8.13 Ensure that future development in the Airport and Aviation Safety Overlay protects public health, safety and welfare.**

Policies Applicable to All Airports

LU 8.1 Land use policies and development regulations affecting airports and aviation notification zones shall be updated in accordance with the regulations set forth in the Washington State Department of Transportation's Airports and Compatible Land Use Guidebook, CFR Title 14, FAR Part 77, and FAA Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS).

LU 8.2~~13.1~~ Ensure that the permitting process for any new or expanding airport is subjected to a thorough review. Potential benefits will be carefully considered as will potential adverse impacts.

LU 8.3~~13.2~~ Ensure that public or private development around existing airports allows the continued use of that facility as an airport. Land within aircraft approach and departure zones will be protected from inappropriate development.

LU 8.4~~13.3~~ Ensure that new land uses which would attract or accommodate large concentrations of people will not be permitted to locate within approach or departure zones and/or Accident Potential Zones of existing airports.

LU 8.5~~13.4~~ Help to minimize the number of people exposed to very high aircraft noise levels in areas near airports through compatible land uses. In the highest airport noise level areas open/undeveloped space will be encouraged and land use densities shall remain low. The objective is to achieve the greatest degree of compatibility and the least public annoyance which can be attained.

LU 8.6~~13.5~~ Preserve the right of airport owners and operators to continue present operations and allow for future air transportation and airport facility needs. It is also important to consider the present and future use of private property and the rights of private property owners.

LU 8.7~~13.6~~ New dwellings in moderate and high aircraft noise areas will be built to a noise level reducing standard that is higher than that which is obtained by building to current minimum building code standards. Structural noise attenuation standards in the higher noise areas (NAS/OLF) will be greater than that required in moderate aircraft noise areas.

LU 8.8~~13.7~~ Island County will notify the airport operator, state and federal aviation agencies, at the time of initial application, of any proposed actions or projects, which would lead to

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development near an airport that is not compatible with the airport's operations. The airport operator shall notify Island County, and potentially affected citizens, of any proposed operational changes which would have a significant impact on existing land uses.

[LU 8.9](#)~~13.8~~ Land use proposals, structures, or objects that would interfere with the safe operation of aircraft will be examined for compatibility as defined in CFR Title 14, FAR Part 77 and FAA Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS) ~~Chapter 12, and WA 31~~. The object is to permit land uses which allow safe aircraft operations as defined in the documents referenced above.

[LU 8.10](#)~~13.9~~ A public site plan review is required in the event airport operations exceed an operational growth rate of 30% in 3 years which necessitates expansion of existing airport boundaries.

[LU 8.11](#)~~13.10~~ Island County will require a Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the establishment of any proposed new airport.

[LU 8.12](#)~~13.11~~ Require advance notification of future owners or renters of properties within noise impact areas of potentially significant noise impacts.

[LU 8.13](#)~~13.12~~ Overlay policies and development regulations shall be implemented in addition to those associated with the underlying land use designation. When there is a conflict in policy statements or development regulations, the more restrictive shall apply.

Policies Applicable [Only](#) to Military Airports ~~Only~~

[LU 8.14](#)~~13.13~~ Island County will discourage residential development in Aircraft Accident Potential Zones (APZ). To protect the operational use of military airports, Island County will ensure that future development in Accident Potential Zones (APZs) around Ault Field and Outlying Field Coupeville is at the lowest possible density consistent with the underlying land use designation.

[LU 8.15](#)~~13.14~~ If the Department of Defense should declare surplus any portion of NAS Whidbey Island, the County will work closely with federal and state officials, the City of Oak Harbor, and other appropriate entities to ensure that the base capital facilities are put to the best economic use, consistent with city and county comprehensive plans.

[LU 8.16](#)~~13.15~~ Island County will continue to work with NAS Whidbey Island to ensure land use will remain compatible with the changing needs and uses of NAS Whidbey Island.

[LU 8.17](#) When applicable, Island County will take action on updated AICUZ and APZ standards provided by NAS Whidbey Island within two (2) years of their production.

**Goal [9](#)~~14~~ Provide for unique areas in the County where special review shall be required through the master plan process to protect lands and structures that have historical, archaeological or environmental significance.**

[LU 9.1](#)~~14.1~~ A master plan shall be required for all developments.

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[LU 9.2](#)~~14.2~~ Protect lands and structures that have historical, archaeological or environmental significance while allowing a unique combination of uses that enhance, conserve or highlight these features of significance.

~~14.3 Discourage public facilities and buildings unless their function or service area is best served by a location outside of a UGA.~~

~~14.4 Prohibit the creation of new lots unless they have adequate area outside of tsunami hazards, flood areas, geohazards, and other critical areas.~~

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## **ELEMENT 02 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Since its earliest settlement, Island County has experienced slow but unmistakable development. Economic factors significantly affect Island County’s quality of life, and Island County’s economic development strategy can encourage appropriate economic development, consistent with the county’s rural character and protection of its environment. Long-term economic vitality requires flexibility while encouraging development consistent with the history, assets, and long-term goals. This Element is intended to guide long-term improvements in the use of land, labor, and capital resources in Island County while building on previous work.

Adequate transportation, water, and sewer has been a limiting factor in the economic development of Island County for many years. However, with proper planning and policies, Island County has qualities that can provide a strong economic future for its citizens. The county is remote enough from metropolitan areas to retain rural character, yet close enough to provide reasonable access to urban markets, business centers, and amenities. This strategic location, along with attributes of charm and quality of life, provides a setting for a diversified economy.

The scale, type, and intensity of economic development must be compatible with Island County’s basic assets, as well as particular regional differences. Appropriate development for North, Central and South Whidbey, and Camano Island will vary widely. Close coordination is crucial between these regions and the Cities, the Port, Water, Fire, School, Park and Recreation Districts, Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve, and the Public Transit Benefit Area.

### **2.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Island County’s labor market is near full employment. As of late 2023, the civilian labor force numbered around 36,600 with unemployment hovering at a low three to four percent, down sharply from the pandemic peak of 15.8 percent in April 2020. Local job growth and business re-openings have brought the county back to pre-pandemic employment levels, but many employers still report difficulty filling positions despite the low unemployment rate.

The county’s area median income was about \$102,000 (2024). Average wages are lower than the state average (annual wage \$55,071 vs. \$89,138 statewide), reflecting the prevalence of service and public sector jobs. At the same time, the cost of living has been rising rapidly, with housing, childcare, and other essentials becoming more expensive. Island County’s housing market in particular has seen sharp increases: the median home sale price reached over \$600,000 in 2024, up nearly 50 percent from 2017. These trends point to growing affordability challenges for residents despite modest income growth.

Geographically, Island County is somewhat integrated into the broader Puget Sound economy while retaining its island character, but many residents still commute off-island for work or

telecommute. For example, approximately 900 Island County residents commute to Snohomish County to work at Boeing’s Everett facilities, and others travel to jobs in Skagit or King County. The expansion of remote work since 2020 has also enabled more island residents to hold metropolitan jobs from home. These connections to external job markets bring income into the community but also underscore the county’s dependence on reliable transportation links and digital infrastructure.

## **2.3 ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

Island County’s economic development planning is closely aligned with broader regional and state strategies. Washington’s Growth Management Act identifies economic development as a statewide planning goal, and the County’s Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Element is designed to be consistent with GMA objectives. The 2024-2028 Island County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was developed through a collaborative process with county, city, port, and community stakeholders, and in accordance with U.S. Economic Development Administration guidelines. This regional approach is encouraged by federal and state agencies to maximize resources and impact.

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## 2.4 GOALS AND POLICIES

### Goal 1. Promote a Resilient and Diverse Economy

ED 1.1 Support retention and expansion of local businesses, especially those providing living wage jobs.

ED 1.2 Encourage development in professional and technical services, creative industries, clean technology, and other emerging economic sectors, including as home based businesses.

ED 1.3 Support entrepreneurship by expanding access to technical assistance, networking, and capital.

ED 1.4 Promote full access to economic opportunities including for underserved and populations historically disadvantaged.

~~Goal 1. Encourage diverse economic development consistent with adopted comprehensive plans.~~

~~1.1. Strive to increase locally based non-military jobs from the current 50% of the County labor force to 60% of the labor force by the year 2020 (this would result in a 4,000 job increase above the 1996 level of locally based jobs).~~

~~1.2. Encourage a diverse range of economic activities within appropriate areas of Island County.~~

~~1.3. Acknowledge as a basis for planning that the goals of preserving rural lands and enhancing economic vitality are complementary and not mutually exclusive, as the County's rural character is a direct economic asset.~~

~~1.4. Overall, economic development with regional orientation will be pursued in cooperation with local governments and the private sector, targeting specific projects aimed at diversifying and stabilizing the economy.~~

~~1.5. Retain existing businesses in the region and minimize obstacles to their expansion, where appropriate.~~

~~1.6. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low density development.~~

~~1.7 The development of "living wage" employment opportunities is actively encouraged to reduce off island commuting and provide career opportunities.~~

~~1.8 Pursue the development of a diversified economy that attracts business activities that inject "new money" into the local economy (i.e. academic and research organizations, light industries, financial services, information processing, engineers, and home businesses) and includes appropriate service industries such as health care and professional services.~~

~~1.9 Commercial development must be designed and located to provide goods and services in a convenient, safe, attractive and environmentally responsible manner.~~

~~1.10 Regional shopping centers must locate within municipal UGAs.~~

~~1.11 Marinas and water related commercial uses will develop in accordance with the SMP.~~

~~1.12 Encourage and support public/farmers markets and small scale farming operations.~~

~~1.13 Encourage and support efforts to enhance the profitability of agriculture and forestry operations with value added and specialty products and cooperative marketing programs.~~

~~1.14 Encourage the development of appropriate support facilities and programs for the retirement industry.~~

~~1.15 Encourage home occupations and home industries.~~

~~1.16 Existing businesses that serve municipal UGAs will be encouraged to remain within these areas and expand as needed.~~

~~1.17 Encompass isolated non-residential uses.~~

~~1.18 Island County's land use decisions will support the retention and future use of NAS-Whidbey, including OLF Coupeville and the Seaplane Base for use by military aviation. In the event that any military facilities are removed, downsized or closed, the County will promote the future use of these facilities for aviation related activities. Should this not be economically viable, Island County will aggressively work to convert these capital assets into comparable economic benefits for the County and adjacent developed areas.~~

~~1.19 Encourage agriculture and forestry land uses that help farmers and foresters stay on the land thus protecting the County's rural character, which in turn, attracts other economic activities.~~

## **Goal 2. Enhance Infrastructure to Support Economic Development**

ED 2.1 Prioritize infrastructure projects that directly support economic development, including broadband expansion, transportation improvements, and water/sewer upgrades.

ED 2.2 Support land use planning that accommodates business growth in designated Urban Growth Areas, Non-municipal Urban Growth Areas, and Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development.

ED 2.3 Accommodate commercial development and supporting infrastructure in locations that are convenient, safe, attractive, and environmentally responsible.

ED 2.4 Develop marinas and water related commercial uses in accordance with the Shoreline Master Program.

**Goal 3. Strengthen Workforce and Education Systems**

ED 3.1 Support workforce training through partnerships with Skagit Valley College, the Washington State University Extension, and regional institutions.

ED 3.2 Promote living-wage job opportunities through career and technical education.

ED 3.3 Support initiatives that improve affordable housing and childcare to enable labor force participation.

ED 3.4 Support initiatives that provide workforce and/or student housing.

**Goal 4. Support Rural, Tourism, and Resource-Based Economies**

ED 4.1 Protect and enhance the County's natural assets as economic drivers, especially for tourism and agriculture.

ED 4.2 Support value-added agriculture, aquaculture, and local food systems.

ED 4.3 Expand shoulder-season tourism and destination branding to increase economic stability and reduce strain on public facilities and natural resources.

ED 4.4 Support Special Review Districts for tourism and their other economic benefits to the community.

**Goal 5. Strengthen Partnerships and Infrastructure Advocacy**

ED 5.1 Partner with ports, municipalities, tribes, state agencies, local nonprofits and chambers to align programs, funding, and strategy.

ED 5.2 Preserve and strengthen the relationship with the local associate development organization to ensure ongoing collaboration, program alignment, and coordinated implementation of economic strategies.

ED 5.3 Advocate for state and federal investment in Island County priorities including those that increase capacity for elder care, behavioral health, and rural health services.

ED 5.4 Advocate for bridge upgrades, ferry service reliability, and long-term resiliency improvements to support workforce mobility, business logistics, and access to markets.

## **ELEMENT 04 – HOUSING**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan outlines current housing conditions and future housing needs in Island County for the 20-year planning period, to be included in the Comprehensive Plan as required by the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070(2)). The future housing needs are estimated using the population projections in the revised Countywide Planning Policies (draft as of November 2025).

Island County has several housing related challenges, including the need for a variety of housing types and the need for more housing affordable to low-income households. The need for housing over the 20-year planning period includes accommodating housing at all income levels, which likely means more diversity in housing types, more rental options, smaller units, and senior housing. However, the rural nature of much of Island County presents challenges for developing new housing due to limited infrastructure for septic and water.

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 healthy residential areas, while increasing the supply and diversity of housing.

The Housing Element provides policy direction for Island County to address these challenges. This policy direction is established in the adopted housing goals and policies. Goals are the primary housing related objectives and outcomes the County wants to achieve over the 20-year planning period. The related policies provide guidance on County actions, such as programs, regulations, and funding, to achieve those goals.

This Element is broken down into the following sections:

1. An inventory of the current housing stock and conditions
2. Population and demographic trends
3. Racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion risks
4. A forecast of housing needs and capacity
5. Goals and policies

### **4.2 HOUSING INVENTORY**

Island County's existing supply of housing reflects past growth, market demand, and regulations in Island County. This section summarizes Island County's existing housing stock, including the number of units by type and price. This section also considers recent development trends and housing vacancy in Island County.

#### **4.2.1 HOUSING UNITS**

According to the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), there are approximately 42,954 housing units in Island County as of 2025. The majority of those units (78 percent) are single-unit homes. Multifamily housing (buildings with two or more units)

represents 11 percent of the total housing stock with most of the multifamily housing stock within Oak Harbor.

Table 4-1. Housing Units by Type and Jurisdiction, 2024

	Single-family	2+ Units	Mobile Homes	Total
City of Oak Harbor	6,188	3,441	555	10,184
Town of Coupeville	697	221	129	1,047
Town of Langley	549	224	0	773
Unincorporated	25,940	829	4,181	30,950
<b>Island County</b>	<b>33,374</b>	<b>4,715</b>	<b>4,865</b>	<b>42,954</b>

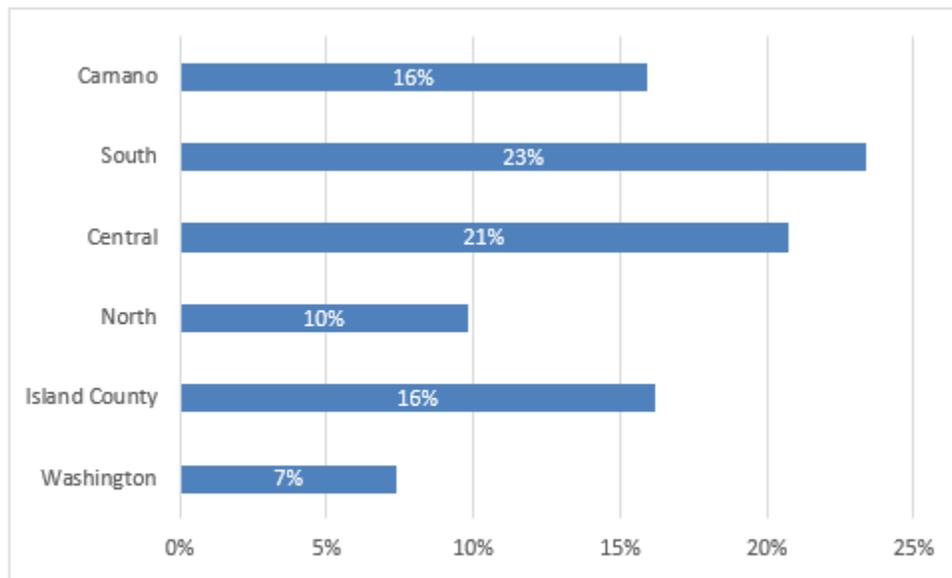
Source: Office of Financial Management 2020-2024 Census Data.

Mobile homes (as defined by the OFM and American Community Survey) are over 11 percent of total housing stock.

The housing stock in Island County is a mix of ages. Since 2016, just 2,859 new units have been built, and only three units of those have been multifamily units. From 2016 to 2022, the county averaged 334 new housing units each year. Since then, building has slowed down with an average of 258 new units in 2023 and 2024.

The percentage of units that are vacant in Island County is higher relative to Washington State. Based on the 2023 Census, about 16 percent of housing units in Island County are vacant, which is double the vacancy rate for Washington State.

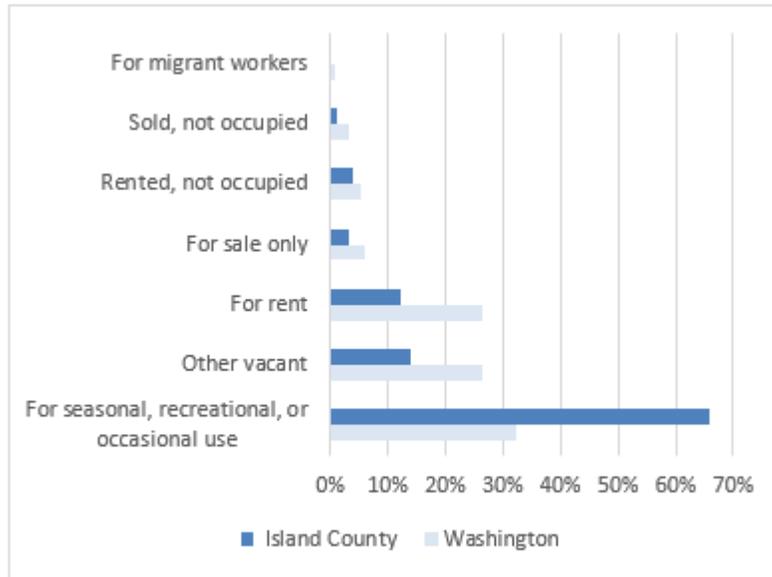
Figure 4-2. Vacancy Status, Island County, Washington State 2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimate

The most common reason for vacancies is that homes have seasonal, recreational, and occasional uses, which is the reason for over 60 percent of vacant units in Island County.

Figure 4-3. Vacancy Reason, Island County and Washington State, 2023

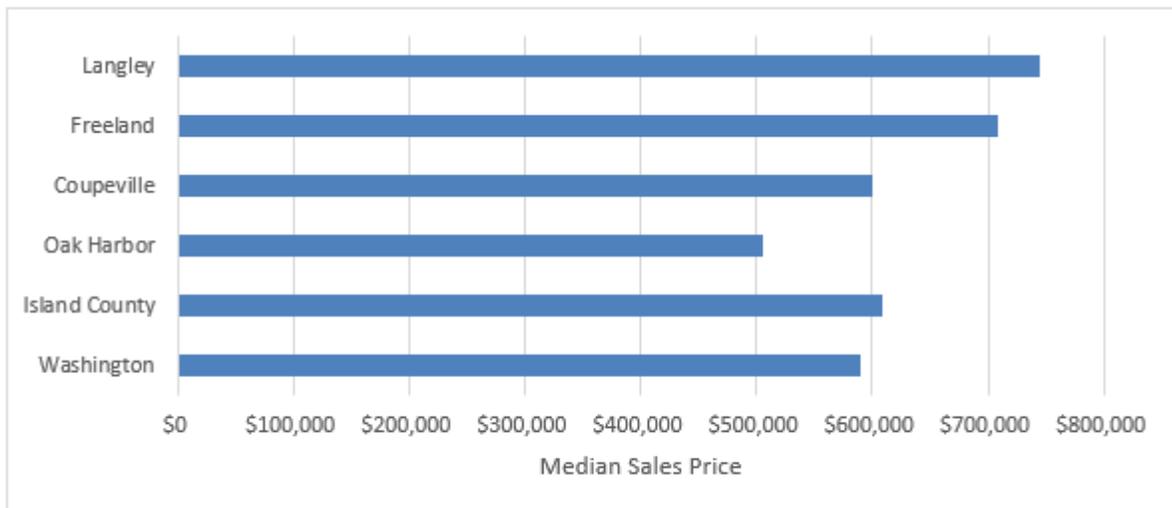


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, [2023 ACS](#), 5-Year Estimate

### 4.2.2 HOUSING PRICES

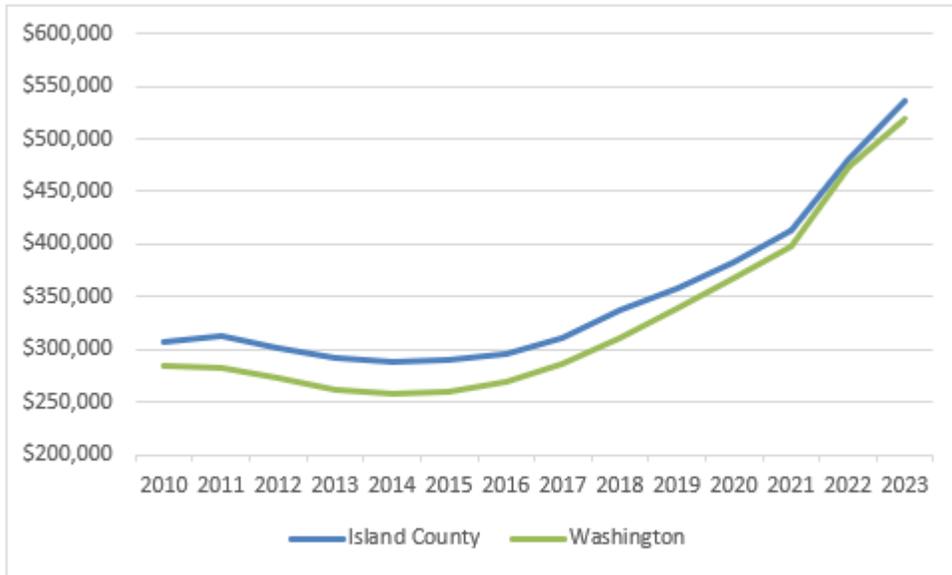
In 2024, Island County had a median sales price of over \$600,000, a 50 percent increase since 2017. Home sales prices in Island County have followed a similar trend to Washington State.

Figure 4-4. Median Sales Price, Island County as of December 2024



Source: Zillow

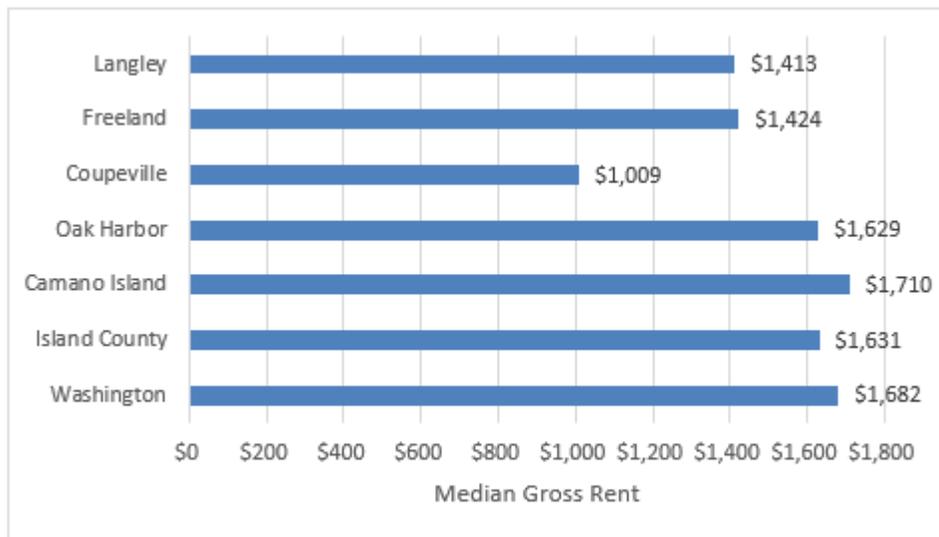
Figure 4-5. Median Sales Price, Island County and Washington State, 2010-2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, [2023 ACS 5-Year Estimate](#)

The median gross rent in Island County for 2018-2023 was \$1,682, an increase of \$600 since 2017. Rent on Camano Island is higher than the Washington State average.

Figure 4-6. Median Gross Rent, Island County, Washington State, and Selected Areas, 2018-2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimate

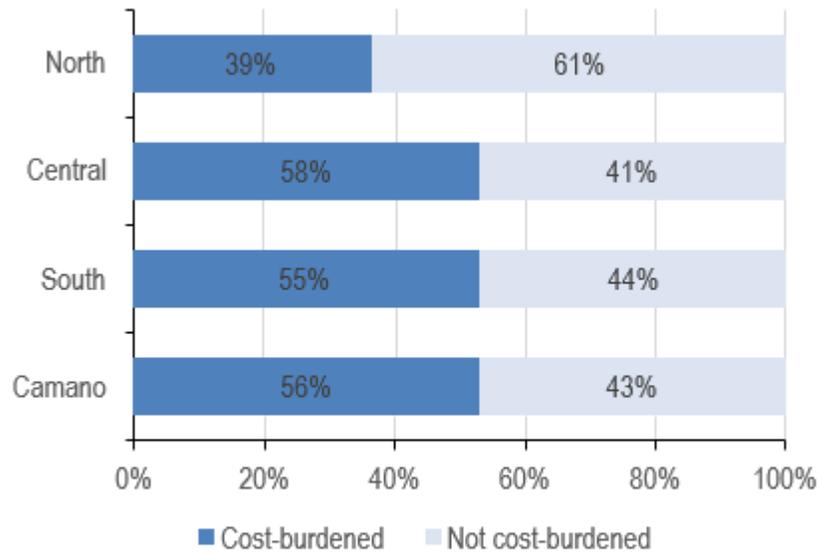
### 4.2.3 HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The typical standard used to determine housing affordability is that a household should pay no more than a certain percentage of household income for housing, including payments and interest or rent, utilities, and insurance. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development (HUD) guidelines indicate that households paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing are “cost burdened” and households paying more than 50 percent of their income on housing are “severely cost burdened.”

In the 2012-2016 period, about 35 percent of Island County’s households were cost burdened. In 2023, that number jumped to 52 percent. Residents in Central and South Whidbey, and Camano Island, have become severely cost burdened in the last 10 years.

Figure 4-7. Housing Cost Burden by Area 2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimate



Table 4-8. Supportive Housing in Island County 2025

Supportive Housing in Island County	
Night to Night Shelter	30 beds
Night to Night Shelter Youth ( <u>18-24 year olds</u> )	15 beds
Emergency Shelters	53 beds
Transitional Housing	21 beds
Permanent Supportive Housing	0 beds
Transitional Housing Youth ( <u>18-24 year olds</u> )	16 beds

Source: Island County Housing Support Center

***Transitional Housing***

A project that has as its purpose facilitating the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time (usually 24 months).  
Department of Housing & Urban Development

***Emergency Shelter***

Short-term facilities are intended to provide temporary shelter (up to 90 days) to eligible individuals to prevent homelessness and allow an opportunity to develop an individualized housing and service plan to guide the client’s linkage to permanent housing  
Department of Housing & Urban Development

***Night to Night 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.  
Department of Housing & Urban Development

***Supportive Housing***

A combination of housing and services intended as a cost-effective way to help people live more stable, productive lives. Supportive housing is widely believed to work well for those who face the most complex challenges; individuals and families confronted with homelessness and who also have very low incomes and/or serious, persistent issues that may include substance use disorders, mental health, chronic illness, diverse disabilities or other serious challenges to stable housing. Supportive housing can be coupled with such social services as job training, life skills training, alcohol and substance use disorder treatment, community support services and case management.

### 4.2.4 HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS

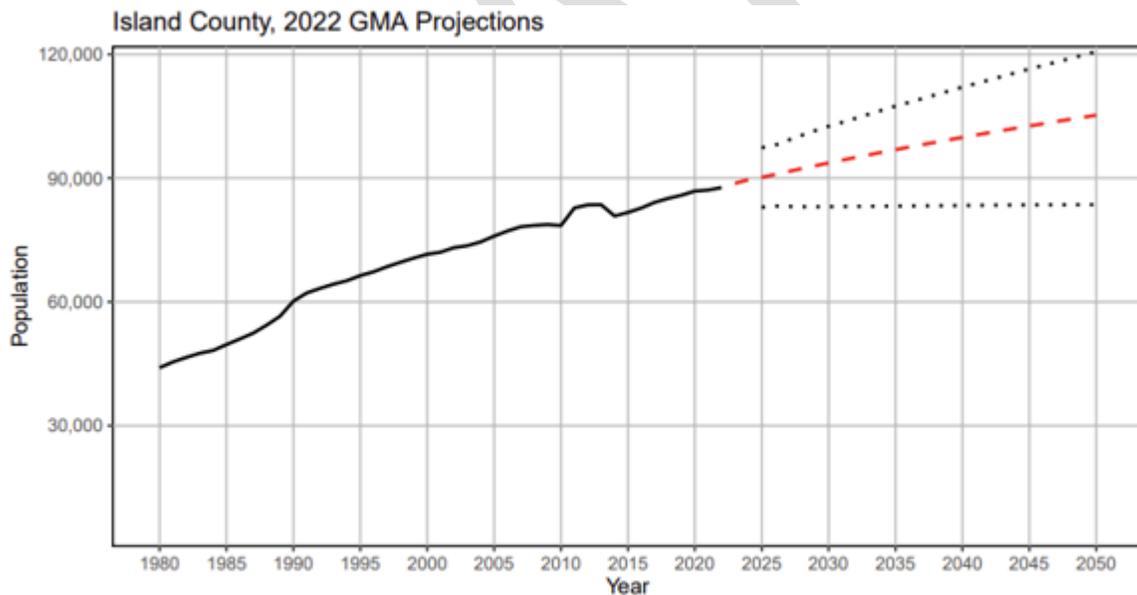
Housing demand is determined by the preferences for different types of housing (e.g., single-family detached or apartment), and the ability to pay for that housing (the ability to exercise those preferences in a housing market by purchasing or renting housing). Preferences for housing are related to demographic characteristics and changes, in addition to personal preferences. The ability to pay for housing is based on income and housing costs. The following two sections analyze and discuss these factors.

### 4.3 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The last comprehensive plan update selected a population growth estimate between the low and medium range provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) due to slower than anticipated population growth over the previous ten-year period. Since then, the County’s population has grown faster than planned and between 2015 and 2020, Island County added 6,257 new residents. The population growth estimates for the last comprehensive plan were met or exceeded in 2022, more than ten years before anticipated.

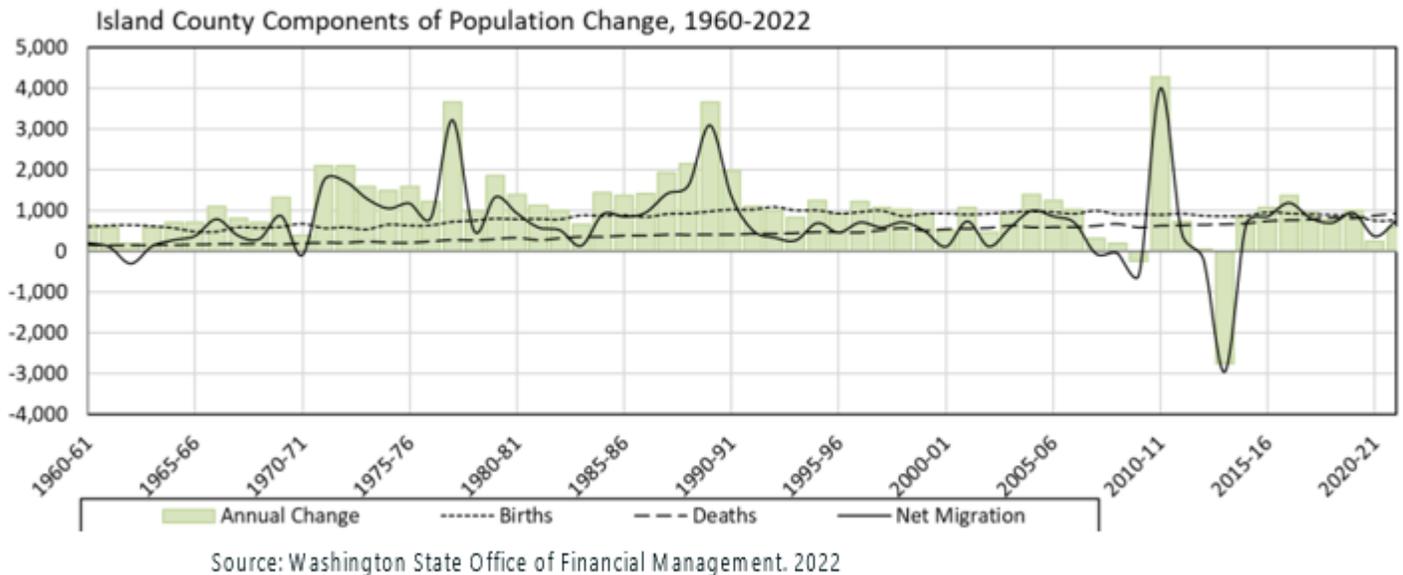
The County’s population projection is 99,202 for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update, which is based on the OFM mid-range projection (adjusted down for infrastructure challenges) and anticipates 12,345 new residents by 2045.

Figure 4-9. Annual Population Growth 2022 (High, Medium, and Low Projections)



Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management. 2022

Figure 4-10. Population Change 2022



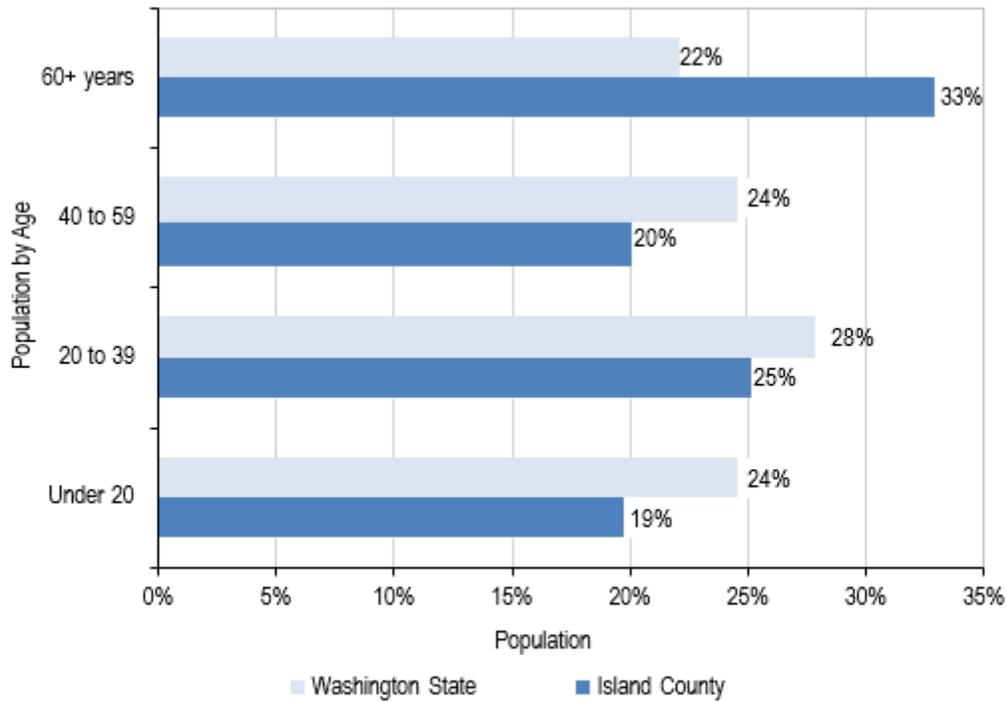
### 4.3.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

In the last ten years, Island County’s portion of people aged 60 and older rose four percent and is ten percentage points higher than the Washington State average (33 percent versus 22 percent, respectively). In the last ten years, Island County has lost residents in the 40-59 age ranges, while gaining modestly in the other age ranges. These factors indicate that Island County continues to have an aging population.

Population projections from OFM indicate that from 2024 to 2045, Island County will see the largest increases in those 80-84 and 85+ with an estimated 7,314 residents. The second largest age group increase is anticipated in ages 45-50 and 50-54, with an estimated 6,236 new residents in these age groups. OFM is projecting a slight decline in age groups 65-69 and 70-74, and very modest growth in the age groups under 40.

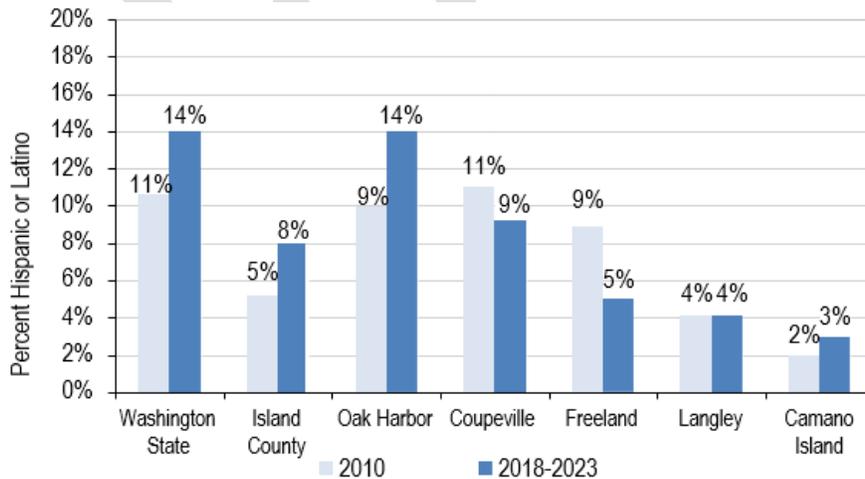
Island County’s population is predominantly white non-Hispanic and over 65 years of age. Diversity is increasing in some areas. The Hispanic and Latino population grew five percent in the 2010–2023 period. The population of Island County remains less ethnically diverse than Washington State. Oak Harbor and Coupeville are more ethnically diverse than the Island County average, with the Hispanic and Latino population making up 9.3 percent and 14.1 percent of residents, respectively.

Figure 4-11. Population Distribution by Age, Island County and Washington State 2022



Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-year estimate.

Figure 4-12. Hispanic or Latino Population as a Percent of the Total Population, Island County, Washington State, and Selected Urban areas, 2000 to 2018-2023

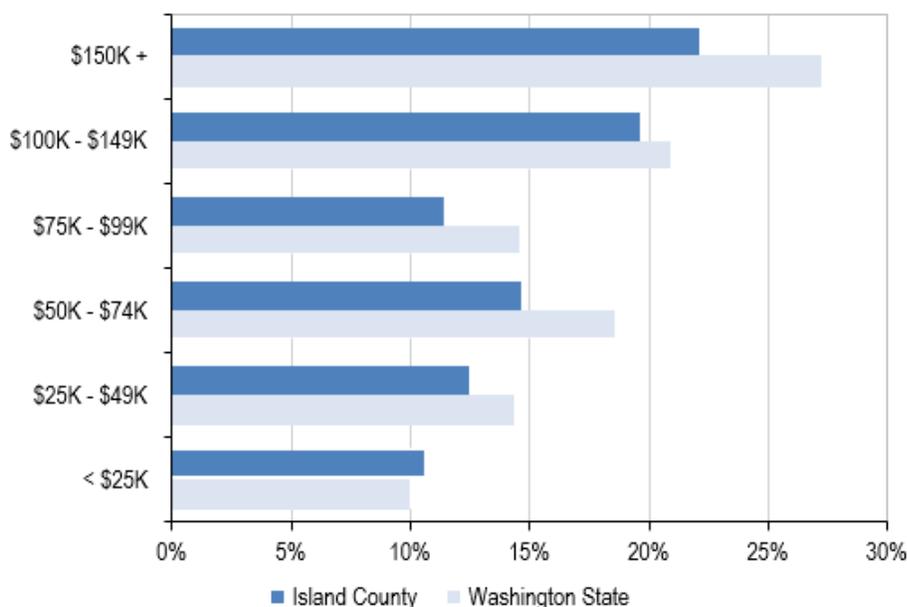


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census. U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimate

Income is one of the key determinants in housing choice and households’ ability to afford housing. For the 2018–2023 period, Island County gained residents at the higher incomes, and lost residents at the lower income levels. The households with income over \$150,000 went up from eight percent to 22 percent, while the households making less than \$50,000 per year dropped from 24 percent to 14 percent. These trends are similar to the trends across

Washington State.

Figure 4-13. Household Income, Island County, and Washington State, 2018-2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census. U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimate

#### 4.4 RACIALLY DISPERATE IMPACTS, DISPLACEMENT, AND EXCLUSION RISKS IN HOUSING

In 2021, the Washington Legislature changed the way communities are required to plan for housing with House Bill 1220 (HB1220). Local governments are now required to “plan for and accommodate” housing affordable to all income levels. In addition, new changes require local jurisdictions to examine racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion risks in housing policies and regulations to begin to undo the impacts.

The median family income in Island County in 2025 is \$102,000 as reported by HUD. This sets the 50 percent area median income limit for a family of four at \$55,700 for the county.

##### *Area Median Income (AMI)*

The Area Median Income (AMI) is the midpoint of a region’s income distribution; half of families in a region earn more than the median and half earn less than the median. For housing policy, income thresholds set relative to the area median income (such as 50 percent of the area median income) identify households eligible to live in income-restricted housing units and the affordability of housing units to low-income households.

As the cost-of-living increases, risk of displacement also increases. Displacement in housing is when a household is forced to move for reasons beyond their control. Displacement can happen because of eviction or foreclosure, because the cost of living becomes too high, or because of community or cultural reasons. Displacement risks are rated as high in North Whidbey and Oak Harbor compared to the rest of the County, according to the Department of Commerce’s analysis.

Communities of color are at particular risk of displacement. As illustrated in Figures 4-12 and 4-

16, North Whidbey has the most racial and ethnic diversity in the county, followed by Central Whidbey. South Whidbey and Camano are made up of predominantly white non-Hispanic populations. Island County as a whole is less diverse than mainland counties in terms of racial and ethnic diversity.

Figure 4-14. Displacement Risk Map for Island County (Dept. of Commerce)

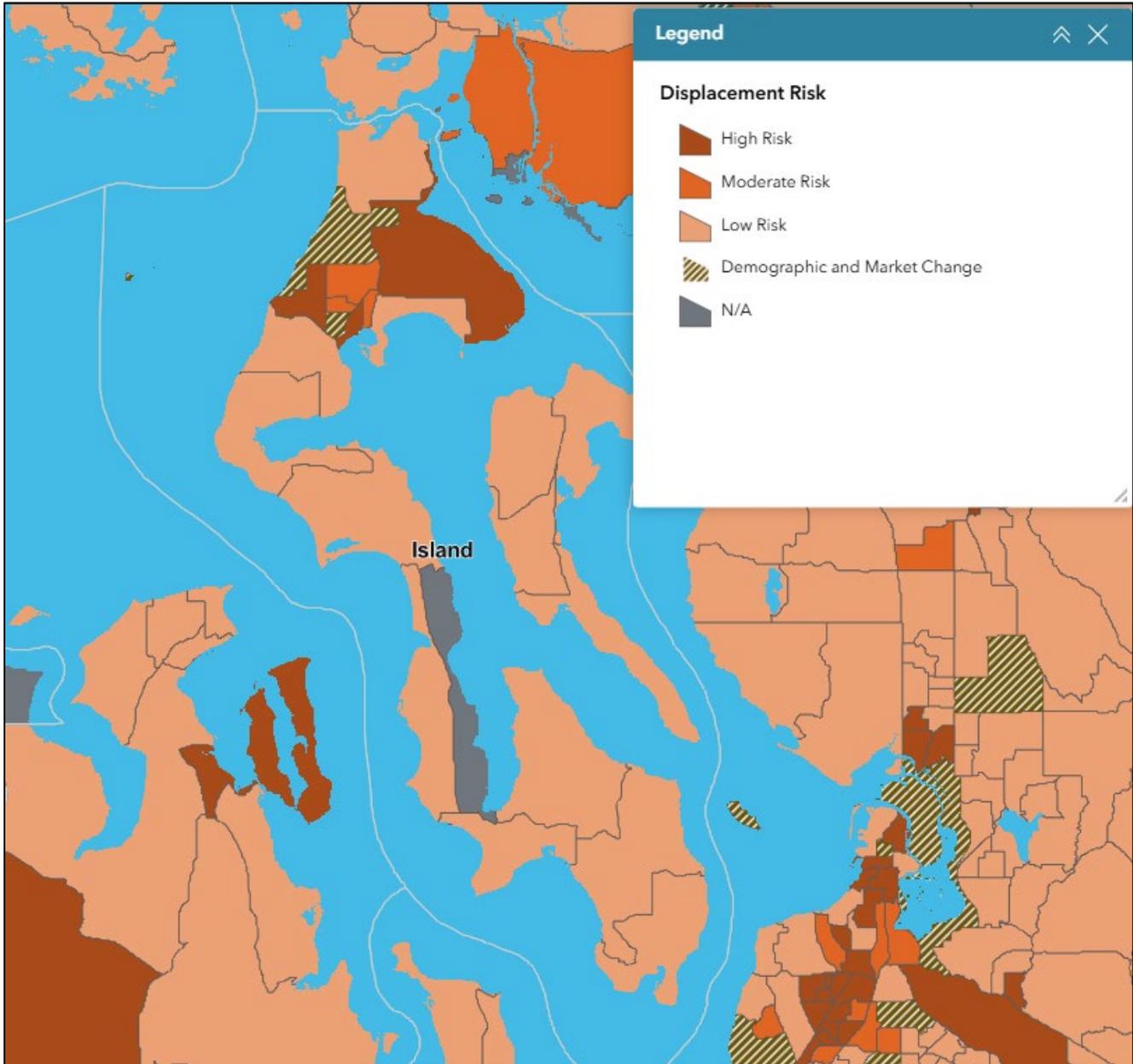
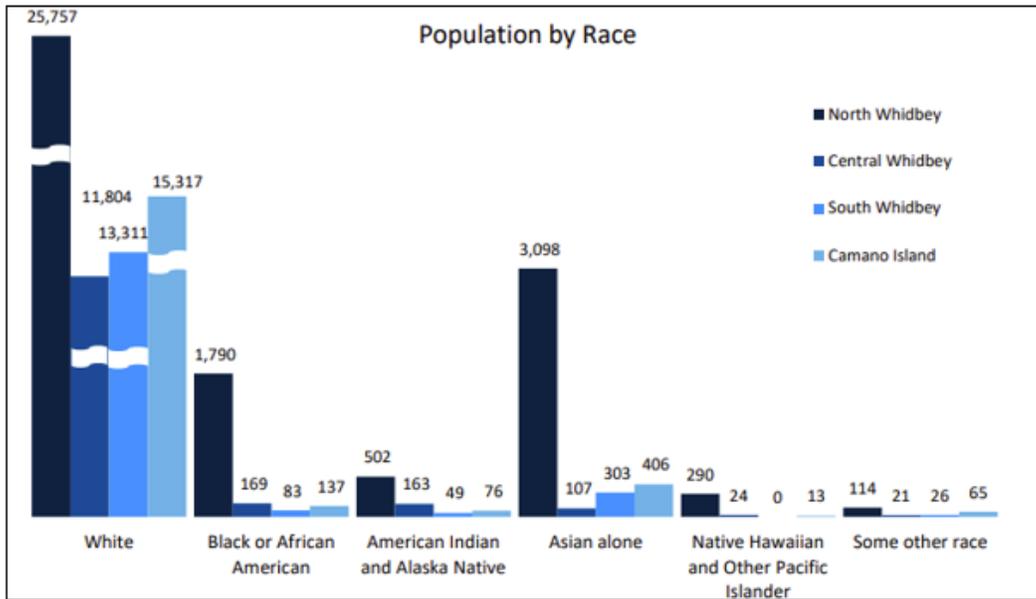


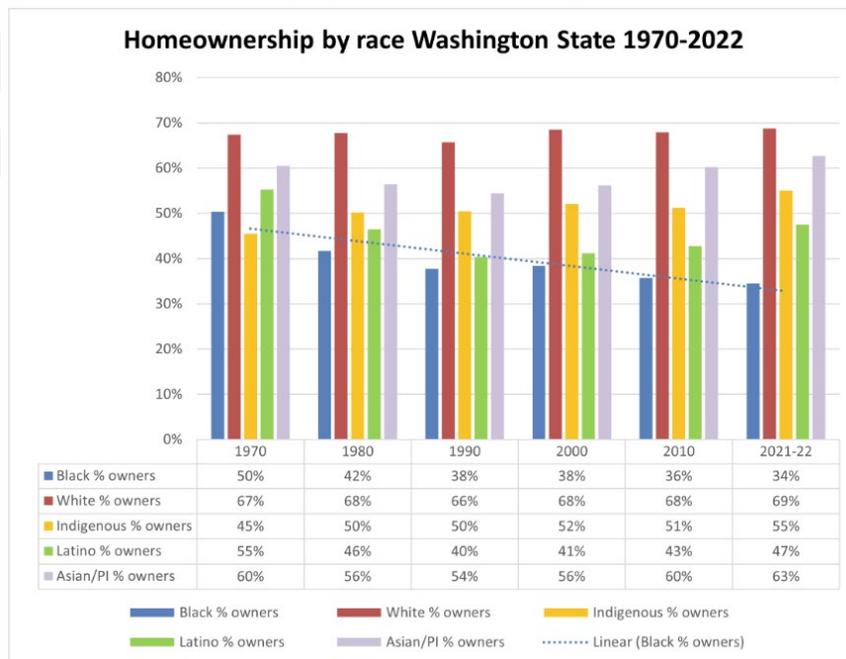
Figure 4-16. Population By Race for Island County



Source: Economic Development Council Island County, Demographics Report 2022

Historically, people of color have been subject to racist and discriminatory practices in housing, which have created inequities in home ownership rates for generations. People of color are disproportionately renters, making them even more vulnerable to price increases and a tight housing market. Island County’s home ownership rate is 76 percent according to the 2023 U.S. Census which is 20 percent higher than the state average. This makes it very difficult for renters to find stable housing in our communities.

Figure 4-17. Homeownership by Race for Washington State



Source: Racial Restrictive Covenants Project, Washington State

## 4.5 HOUSING NEEDS, FORECAST, AND CAPACITY

### 4.5.1 HOUSING NEEDS AND FORECAST

Island County’s 2045 population target is 99,202, this represents 7,176 new dwelling units over the next 20 years. This section describes the key assumptions and presents an estimate of new housing units needed in unincorporated Island County to accommodate this population growth.

Island County needs 2,388 new dwelling units over the 20 years to meet the growing demands for housing in our area. Of these 2,388 new units, over 900 units of housing are needed below the 0-50 percent AMI levels. Currently, 64 percent of Island County’s housing is over 100 percent AMI. Very little multi-family and affordable housing types exist in unincorporated Island County and therefore the focus over the next 20 years needs to be in accommodating lower income levels with more affordable housing types.

Table 4-18. Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT), 2025

Island County		Projection Year: 2045 Population Target = 99,202		Permanent Housing Needs by Income Level (% of Area Median Income)							Emergency Housing Needs (Temporary)
		Total	0-30%	Non-PSH	PSH	>30-50%	>50-80%	>80-100%	>100-120%	>120%	
Countywide Estimated Housing Supply (2020)		37,272	1,210	18	2,915	7,479	5,878	4,734	15,038	116	
Countywide Additional Units Needed (2020-2045)		7,176	846	762	1,560	1,266	560	527	1,655	238	
Sum of Allocation to Jurisdictions (from User Inputs)		7,176	846	762	1,560	1,266	560	527	1,655	238	
User Input - % Share of County Population Growth. Values must sum to 100%		100.00% Met Target <-- Sum of user inputs for jurisdiction shares of county future net housing need. If below 100%, increase shares. If above 100%, decrease shares.									
* The location of 10 existing permanent supportive housing units within Island County is unknown. Therefore, they are not included in the jurisdiction table below.		Permanent Housing Needs by Income Level (% of Area Median Income)							Emergency Housing Needs (Temporary)		
		Total	0-30%	Non-PSH	PSH *	>30-50%	>50-80%	>80-100%		>100-120%	>120%
33.27 %	Unincorporated Island County	Estimated Housing Supply (2020)	25,445	598	8	1,580	3,311	3,676	3,788	12,484	28
		Allocation Method A (2020-2045)	2,388	290	272	545	427	178	166	508	84
4.88 %	Coupeville town	Estimated Housing Supply (2020)	1,017	73	0	191	162	77	118	396	0
		Allocation Method A (2020-2045)	350	40	34	71	61	29	27	89	11
6.22 %	Langley city	Estimated Housing Supply (2020)	743	74	0	34	90	125	107	313	21
		Allocation Method A (2020-2045)	446	50	43	91	77	37	35	113	14
55.63 %	Oak Harbor city	Estimated Housing Supply (2020)	10,057	465	0	1,110	3,916	2,000	721	1,845	67
		Allocation Method A (2020-2045)	3,992	486	455	912	714	298	278	849	140

Source: Washington Department of Commerce, HAPT 2025

Table 4-19. Island County Housing Needs, 2025

	Total Housing Units	0-30%	30-50%	50-80%	80-100%	100-120%	120+	Emergency Housing
Existing Stock	25,445	606	1,580	3,311	3,676	3,788	12,484	28
2045 Allocations	2,388	500	486	414	196	187	604	73

Source: HAPT

### 4.5.2 HOUSING CAPACITY

The County conducted a Lands Capacity Analysis as a part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update, the capacity analysis process is outlined in the Countywide Planning Policies. The new requirements from HB 1220 break out housing units by income level. The capacity analysis for the County demonstrated a distinct lack of housing at the lower income levels, with the largest deficits occurring between 0-30 percent and 30-50 percent AMI levels.

Table 4-20. Lands Capacity for Units Needed, 2025

Income Levels	Zone Categories	Projected Need	% from HAPT	Total Zone Capacity	Capacity Surplus / Deficit
0-30%	Multifamily	500	4%	26	-474
30-50%		486	7%	44	-442
50-80%	Moderate Density	414	13%	212	-202
80-100%		196	14%	565	369
100-120%	Low Density	187	14%	2,225	2,038
120%+		604	47%	4,833	4,229

Source: Island County Lands Capacity Analysis, 2025

The housing deficits identified in the capacity analysis are not surprising given the predominance of single-family housing in Island County and the high rates of home ownership. The focus over the next 20 years must be on creating capacity at the lower income levels to create more equity in housing types.

Proposed changes to meet the housing demands include:

- Allowances for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Code changes in Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRDs)
- Updates to Rural Cluster housing provision
- Co-Living Housing required updates
- Recreational vehicles on single-family lots
- Other zoning changes to support supportive housing

The resulting capacity gained from these changes are summarized in the table below (for more details see Island County’s SEPA Checklist 2025).

Figure 4-21. SEPA Checklist Capacity Summary

Code Change Proposal	Housing Capacity Increase Over 20 Years	Affected Zones	Notes on Affordable Housing Capacity
<b>ADUs</b>	1,122 ADUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential LAMIRDS (Rural Residential Zones);</li> </ul> Rural, Rural Forest, and Commercial Agriculture	120 ADUs (out of 1,122) affordable up to 80% AMI.

		Zones.	
<b>Mixed-use LAMIRDs</b>	758 multi-family dwelling units	RC, RV, and CGV Zones.	758 duplex, triplex and fourplex, and apartments available as market rate affordable, including 0 to 80% with federal and state funding.
<b>Rural Cluster Housing</b>	260 dwelling units	Rural, Rural Agriculture, Commercial Agriculture or Rural Forest Zones.	200 dwelling units (out of 260) affordable at up to 50% and 80% of AMI.
<b>Co-living Housing</b>	20 developments with 80 sleeping rooms	NMUGA, Rural Residential, Rural Center, Rural Village, and Camano Gateway Village Zones.	80 sleeping rooms are available as market-rate affordable up to 80% AMI.
<b>RVs on SF lots</b>	40 RVs	Rural, Rural residential, Rural Commercial, Rural Village, Camano Gateway Village Zones.	40 shelter units available.
<b>TOTAL over the 20-year planning period, and dwelling units per year</b>	2,180 dwelling units (includes sleeping rooms in Co-living housing, and RVs for shelter).  109 dwelling units/yr.	NA	Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) income range deficit for 0 to 80% AMI is 1,118 dwelling units.  The portion of the increased housing capacity specifically estimated as available to serve the deficit is 1,198 DUs.  The overall housing capacity increase, which is approximately 55% of total increase, provides the zoning allowance to more than meet the HAPT need.

Source: Island County SEPA Checklist 2025

### 4.5.3 FUNDING STRATEGIES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Funding the development of housing at affordable levels is a challenge for any jurisdiction and will be an enormous challenge for Island County. It will take create public and private partnerships to make progress toward meeting the housing deficits in this comprehensive plan. Likely all of the 0-50 percent AMI housing and some 50-80 percent AMI housing will require public funding and subsidies to be built.

Current funding sources for affordable housing include (see the 5-year Homeless Housing Plan for more details):

- 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1 percent sales tax (local)
- Document recording fees (local)
- Consolidated homeless grant (state)
- House Bill 1406 (local)
- Skagit Home Consortium
- Balance of State / Continuum of Care
- Real Estate Excise Tax (for infrastructure only)
- Rural County Economic Development (for infrastructure only)

Additional state and federal grants and funding will be pursued for specific projects. Local non-profits play a large role in the development of affordable housing in Island County and we anticipate they will continue to play a large role. The County will partner and support these non-profit developers to achieve our shared goals of housing affordable to all income levels across the county.

#### **4.5.4 EMERGENCY HOUSING AND PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

Island County Human Services is updating the Homeless Housing Plan (HAP) at the same time as this comprehensive plan update. The HAP is a 5-year plan that outlines strategies for meeting the Supportive Housing needs for the County.

Additionally, changes to the zoning code were made for voluntary compliance with HB 1220, RCW 35A.21.430, and RCW 35.21.683, including:

- Allow for emergency shelter anywhere that overnight lodging is allowed.
- Allow night-to-night shelters in the Rural zone.
- Allow permanent supportive housing in areas zoned for multi-family housing (NMUGAs and LAMIRDs).
- Allow permanent supportive housing and transitional housing in rural cluster developments.

## 4.6 GOALS & POLICIES

**Goal 1. Encourage preservation of existing housing stock capacity, as well as subsidized and affordable housing units, ~~and the character of existing communities.~~**

~~H1.1. 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, scale, and character of those neighborhoods.~~

H1.1 ~~4.2~~ Preserve the existing housing stock to meet the changing needs of residents by continuing to improve the permitting process for remodels/additions, and accessory dwelling units, ~~and guest cottages.~~

H1.2 ~~4.3~~ Monitor properties ~~with expiring subsidies~~ that provide affordable housing and identify strategies and resources to preserve their continued affordability.

H1.3 ~~4.4 Identify and promote~~ Incentivize and build awareness of resources and programs available for housing repair and rehabilitation for homeowners ~~with low incomes~~; examples may include, reduced dependence on natural gas, weatherization, resiliency to sea level rise, septic repair or compliance with flood hazard regulations.

H1.4 ~~4.5~~ Support the preservation of manufactured home parks in Island County, by prioritizing of County funds, as a component of the County's affordable housing stock. \_

H1.5 ~~4.6~~ Develop strategies to accommodate ~~encourage~~ the re-use of existing housing and historic structures in ~~rural~~ residential areas including potential incentives for co-living housing, intergenerational housing, and relocation of houses to other sites.

~~H1.6 4.7 Monitor the impacts of vacation rentals on housing availability in the County. Implement policies and regulations on existing and future uses of short-term rentals in the County to reduce the impact of short-term rentals on long term housing.~~

H1.7 ~~4.8~~ Consider development regulations for the LAMIRDS ~~RAIDs~~ and NMUGAs that are compatible with moderate density housing ~~residential community character~~, that promote pedestrian connectivity, employment locations, and support the County in meeting our housing allocations ~~ensure the long-term vitality of Island County neighborhoods.~~

**Goal 2. Promote the development of ~~different housing types, such as~~ rentals and affordable housing ~~manufactured homes~~, to meet the needs of all demographic segments of the population, housing tenure choices, and income levels. Provide for more diverse ~~these~~ housing types in ~~appropriate~~ locations where infrastructure, public transit, and community services are readily accessible, planned in the near future, or are included as part of a new development ~~fully-contained community as described in RCW 36.70A.350.~~**

H2.1 ~~Encourage~~ Accommodate the construction of multi-family units, primarily rentals, in areas where higher densities are permitted and where infrastructure, including but not limited to public transportation, water, and wastewater is already available or can be supported.

H2.2 ~~Encourage~~ Incentivize the development of housing suitable to the needs of older adults, including independent and assisted living housing, in Mixed Use LAMIRDS ~~RAIDs~~ and UGAs.

H2.3 ~~Encourage~~ Allow the siting of cluster developments, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in all Rural Residential zones, ~~that are near in~~ Mixed Use LAMIRDs ~~RAIDs~~ and UGAs, and educate homeowners associations about middle housing.

H2.4 ~~Identify~~ Incentivize the development of innovative housing approaches, such as cluster housing for Camano Island in areas of the county where the predominance of rural zones and lack of a UGA presents challenges for meeting a diversity of housing needs to accommodate housing for all income levels.

~~H2.5 Evaluate and modify as needed, Planned Residential Developments and clustered housing code provisions to ensure that they provide adequate incentives to achieve desired densities.~~

~~H2.5 2.6 Evaluate~~ Implement regulations to ~~determine appropriate locations~~, provide expanded opportunities, ~~determine potential~~ incentives, and remove unnecessary barriers and/or impediments to the development of the following housing types: co-living housing, permanent and seasonal farm worker housing, accessory dwelling units ~~and guest cottages~~, manufactured housing communities and manufactured homes, rural clusters ~~small multi-unit structures, cottage housing~~, and other small dwelling unit types like tiny homes and recreational vehicles.

~~H2.6 2.7 Encourage~~ Accommodate infill development in LAMIRDs ~~RAIDs~~ and UGAs ~~through zoning regulations~~ by implementing minimum density requirements and increase height limits, and consider incentives with specific attention to the incentives identified under RCW 36.70A.540.

~~H2.7 2.8 Explore~~ Pursue options to allow ~~temporary~~ housing structures to accommodate temporary short-term unhoused housing needs ~~related to limited term employment and the homeless population~~.

~~H2.8 2.9~~ Monitor Island County's housing development and periodically compare to housing development targets in the Comprehensive Plan and buildable land supply. Require municipalities to submit an activities report for tracking purposes annually.

~~H2.9 2.10 Ensure that~~ Incentivize innovative housing options with septic and water infrastructure, such as pilot programs to encourage specific types of housing, and are considered and addressed in county housing policies, programs, funding, and local zoning regulations.

~~H2.10 2.11~~ Develop and allow "pre-approved" or "permit ready" house plans for detached accessory dwelling units, ~~guest cottages, cottage housing~~ and other potential housing types in appropriate locations.

~~H2.11 2.12~~ 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, tiny homes, manufactured homes, recreational vehicles, community sewage infrastructure, community drinking water, and the use of existing or reclaimed building materials.

~~H2.12 2.13~~ Provide funding for identified sites or partner with non-profit or community based organization to create additional locations for, and encourage the siting of, recreational vehicle parks as a temporary lodging option.

~~H2.13 2.14~~ Continue to identify and evaluate opportunities to streamline interdepartmental permitting and create a one-stop-shop for affordable housing developments ~~review where possible~~.

H2.14 Provide flexibility for recreational vehicles to be used as temporary housing in residential zones with adequate utilities including but not limited to water, septic, and electricity.

H2.15 Utilize 1590 funds (10th of 1% sale tax) to demonstrate the County's commitment to affordable housing initiatives.

H2.16 Allow provisions for accessory dwelling units (ADUs), consistent with RCW 36.70A.681, to support ADUs as an affordable housing type.

H2.17 Pursue innovative public and private partnership models for infrastructure development to support affordable housing.

H2.18 Facilitate a variety of ownership opportunities and choices by allowing and supporting the creation of condominiums, mutual housing associations, limited equity cooperatives, and community land trusts.

**Goal 3. ~~Promote fair access to housing and shelter for all persons.~~ Collect census data on race and ethnicity data and analyze for racial disparities in access to affordable rent, rental cost burden, home ownership, and displacement.**

H3.1 ~~Identify appropriate locations to~~ Support the development of and facilitate transitional housing, coordinated with critical support services, for youth, adults, seniors, families, and those with disabilities.

H3.2 ~~Identify appropriate locations to~~ Support and facilitate the development of emergency shelters and ~~temporary short-term~~ housing for those in need through public private partnerships and commitment of County funding.

H3.3 Ensure that community housing and shelter needs are considered and addressed in county housing policies, programs, funding, and local zoning regulations.

H3.4 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.

H3.5 Promote community and landlord awareness of and compliance with federal and state Fair Housing laws through training in cultural awareness for housing providers.

H3.6 ~~Promote diverse~~ Increase the representation of people of color, low-income, and marginalized voices on boards and committees that make recommendations concerning housing-related policies, programs or funding.

H3.7 Protect existing underutilized and non-conforming affordable housing, like manufactured home parks, from redevelopment and displacement of residents.

H3.8 Establish requirements and/or add incentives for new housing developments to include a percentage of the project for affordable housing and/or for seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities.

H3.9 Avoid siting housing related essential public facilities in AICUZ/APZ zoned lands.

**Goal 4. Promote changes policies that ~~facilitate the reduction in~~ reduce the share amount of cost burdened households by 10 percent. ~~by increasing the supply of subsidized housing.~~**

H4.1 ~~Define subsidized and~~ Utilize the Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) to establish the low-income housing needs by income level for communities across the County, and establish measurable subsidized and low-income housing targets relative to those needs. Each jurisdiction is responsible for meeting the housing needs at each income level.

H4.2 ~~Encourage~~ Support the development of a range of permanent ~~subsidized affordable~~ housing options through small demonstration projects ~~based structures~~, administration of rental assistance, and supportive housing.

H4.3 Ensure publicly-funded, ~~low-income affordable~~ housing is located in appropriate locations where infrastructure, public transit, and community services are readily accessible, planned in the near future, or are included as a part of a new development fully-contained community as described in RCW 36.70A.350.

H4.4 ~~Review~~ Prioritize the use of existing surplus and buildable public land owned by Island County and other public agencies to support ~~determine if any such lands are appropriate to be transferred to a non-profit housing agency for subsidized or low-income~~ affordable or subsidized housing.

~~4.5 Evaluate opportunities to reduce or eliminate permit fees for subsidized and low-income housing.~~

H4.5 ~~4.6~~ Implement incentives, including reducing or eliminating fees, for ~~subsidized affordable~~ housing projects within non-municipal urban growth areas and mixed use LAMIRDs ~~RAIDs~~.

H4.6 ~~4.7~~ Ensure coordination between the policies addressed in the Comprehensive Plan and those outlined in Island County's Homeless Housing Plan.

H4.7 ~~4.8~~ Collaborate with municipal jurisdictions to develop mutual policies and agreements that facilitate the siting and subsequent annexation of ~~subsidized affordable~~ housing in unincorporated UGAs.

H4.9 Incentivize churches and non profits in developing and providing affordable housing on their land including the infrastructure needed to support the housing.

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

H5.1 Actively convene committees to coordinate county-wide housing issues and include representatives from under served communities and individuals who have previously experienced homelessness or housing insecurity.

H5.2 ~~Evaluate the potential for~~ Implement a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program ~~for the Freeland NMUGA, or~~ in conjunction with municipal jurisdictions incorporated communities, that allows higher densities within city boundaries, and urban growth areas, mixed-use LAMIRDs and evaluate opportunities for using the TDR program to preserve existing affordable housing.

H5.3 Continue to build maintain partnerships and support collaboration with housing groups, ~~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 ~~subsidized and low-income~~ affordable housing projects in Island County.

H5.4 Support collaboration between private developers, public agencies, and non-profit organizations so that a variety of housing options are dispersed throughout the county and develop these partnerships to collaboratively advocate for more financial resources from the federal and state government for subsidized, ~~low-income~~ [and affordable](#) housing.

H5.5 Continue to coordinate with, and provide staff support for the Housing Provider Network and other housing-related committees.

H5.6 Support applications for federal, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and other available incentives for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new constructions of rental housing targeted to lower-income households.

H5.7 The Board [of Island County Commissioners](#) shall consider housing related policy implementation actions as part of the annual work plan review.

## **ELEMENT 06 – NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Natural Resource Element covers several important issues, such as the protection of agricultural land and forest areas, open space corridors, property rights, wetlands, groundwater, rural character, and wildlife habitat protection. The need for conservation and protection of natural resources increases as the County population continues to grow.

The balance between natural resource protection and development influences the economic condition of Island County. Natural resources have the potential to create jobs, provide recreational opportunities, enhance property values, attract customers and revenue to local businesses, increase government revenues, decrease the cost of community services, and improve the local quality of life.

Since the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, Island County has advanced several efforts to strengthen natural resource management. Notably the County completed an update to its Critical Areas Ordinance in 2019, conducted a Sea Level Rise Study in 2020, updated its Shoreline Master Program in 2025 (pending state approval), and completed a Climate Resiliency Element in 2025. The County will continue to build on this work to proactively protect critical areas and connected habitats, address water conservation, steer growth in ways that minimize risks and vulnerability to our changing climate, and to build environmental resilience.

#### **6.1.1 DEFINITION OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

Natural resources are natural materials, substances, processes or organisms that people and wildlife depend on for clean air, clean water, enjoyment, and production of products that can be potentially useful for economic gain. Classically, natural resources were thought of as minerals, fossil fuels, timber, water, fish, and wildlife. More frequently however, the definition has emphasized natural systems not as resources to be managed, but vital assets that provide ecosystem services, recreation, and climate resilience for current and future residents. This element covers natural lands, air quality, mineral lands, critical areas, and groundwater resources.

#### **6.1.2 VISION FOR NATURAL RESOURCES**

Natural resource systems should be conserved and preserved in recognition of the irreplaceable character of such resources, and of their importance to the quality of life of residents, visitors, and the future generations of Island County. Provisions should be made for natural resources to meet human needs throughout the County in order to protect them and enhance enjoyment and appreciation of the environment.

### **6.2 CRITICAL AREAS**

Critical areas are lands that possess certain development limitations, or that provide important public natural resources. However, a property owner cannot be deprived of a reasonable use and the enjoyment of lands on which critical areas and their associated buffers, if any, are located.

Critical areas are:

- A. Wetlands
- B. Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water

- C. Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
- D. Frequently flooded areas
- E. Geologically hazardous areas

Prior to adoption of the 1984 Island County Code, many critical areas in Island County had been disturbed by past development, logging, or other human activity. Some critical areas are essentially in pristine condition, having recovered from logging or other activity which has occurred on or near them in the last century or so. Many of the county's most valuable critical areas lie in undeveloped rural areas and in resource lands.

The Critical Areas maps (located on the Island County Mapping System ICGeo Map), provide a generalized location based on authoritative studies, e.g., maps generated by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Priority Habitats and Species Program; occurrence maps generated by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Natural Heritage Program; United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory maps; DNR Water Type maps; maps of frequently flooded areas prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and maps of identified wetlands prepared for the County in 1990 or completed by qualified consultants. The County updated its maps of the shoreline areas to include commercial and recreational shellfish areas; additional updates may include kelp and eelgrass beds; and herring and smelt spawning areas. These maps are intended for informational (but not necessarily regulatory) purposes. Detailed on-site inspections may be required to determine if an area meets the designation and classification criteria. These studies may take precedence over generalized mapping.

The County is responsible for updating and maintaining the maps on a regular basis, as additional information is developed through studies and subsequent determinations. Considerable progress can be made toward protecting some types of critical areas simply by making the information in these maps and other materials readily accessible to current and potential landowners, development interests, and the public. Island County will make the location of wetlands, streams, and steep slopes publicly available but will not disclose the location of sensitive species when disclosure might harm those species or their habitat.

Effective enforcement is an important component of any critical areas protection program. The enforcement action and severity of any penalty must be proportionate to the nature and circumstances of the violation, and the damage or risk to private and public resources. When wetlands or fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas are damaged in violation of the law, restoration to at least pre-existing functional condition will be required.

### **6.2.1 WETLANDS**

Island County contains a wide variety of wetlands, from salmonberry and alder swamps to lush bogs, thriving estuarine marshes, and broad wet meadows. Often these wetlands are fragile ecosystems that may serve important and beneficial functions. Wetlands can assist in reducing flooding, erosion, siltation, and ground and surface water pollution; help maintain ground water recharge and surface water flows; and provide wildlife, plant, and fisheries habitats. Wetlands harbor plant and animal species with recreational, economic, and cultural importance. Many wetlands are essential components of the highly valued visual landscape of Island County.

Wetlands historically have been treated as wasted land, to be reclaimed through draining and

filling. Wetlands destruction, or impairment of wetland functions, may result in increased public and private costs or property losses, through effects such as increased flooding or water quality degradation. Only in recent decades has the economic, environmental, and cultural impacts of wetlands destruction been recognized and efforts made to reduce the loss of wetland functions and values.

Designation of wetlands and regulation of wetlands are separate issues. The economic, environmental, and cultural values that communities place on wetlands should be used to determine wetlands policy and regulation. Wetlands classification or ratings systems are used to define what regulatory standards apply and to establish priorities for non-regulatory mechanisms, such as acquisition and restoration.

Wetland functions typically refer to physical, chemical, and biological processes. Some functions, such as water quality and purification, flood attenuation, sediment trapping, and wildlife habitat, can be quantified accurately depending on level of study. Wetland values (aesthetic, cultural, educational, or recreational) generally refer to the importance or worth that society places on wetlands. As values are by nature subjective, they are difficult to measure.

Some wetlands have greater economic, environmental, or cultural value than others. In some instances, wetland alterations may be preferable to available alternatives. For example, a valuable mature forest may also have high habitat value. Altering or developing it may have greater environmental costs than altering a highly degraded, adjacent wetland with minimal function and value.

Island County has had wetland regulations in place since 1984. During public review, these regulations were determined to have met the GMA's substantive and procedural requirements. Wetlands within the shoreline jurisdiction are regulated by the Shoreline Master Program, rather than the Critical Areas Ordinance. In addition, the County should require the use of best management practices for existing agricultural uses and should not exempt new agricultural uses. The County may also wish to allow certain low impact uses within wetland buffers and allow installation of infrastructure where there is no practical alternative location.

### **6.2.2 CRITICAL AQUIFER RECHARGE AREAS**

The natural history of Island County, from the region's volcanic origins to its repeated glacial advances and retreats punctuated by massive post-glacial flooding, has left a geologic hodgepodge of sands, gravels, fine silts, and sediments; cemented till ("hardpan"); clays; and metamorphic rock formations.

Many of these formations bear accessible groundwater and can supply groundwater for the county's domestic, agricultural, recreational, and commercial/industrial needs.

Most of Island County depends on groundwater, 73 percent of residents rely on groundwater as a drinking water source. All county residents share responsibility to keep our groundwater resources safe. Some areas rely on surface water, such as the City of Oak Harbor, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, and an outlying community near Deception Pass, which all rely on Skagit River water piped to the city via the Anacortes treatment plant.

General areas of low, medium, and high recharge potential have been mapped based on surficial geology county-wide (Map 6D). While providing useful and valuable information about

recharge potential over wide areas, the mapping scale and complexity of the underlying geology make it impractical to apply the information to site-specific land uses.

Rainfall infiltration from the surface to water-bearing layers is currently the only source for renewing the county's groundwater supplies. There is no evidence of any naturally occurring underground hydraulic connection to mainland sources of groundwater. Continued infiltration of fresh water can exclude intruding sea water from subsurface water-bearing layers, thereby keeping the sea water at bay.

(This topic is discussed in-depth below, see section 6.3)

#### **6.2.2.1 GROUNDWATER DATA AND RECHARGE**

Comprehensive data collection and management efforts are the basis for better management of Island County's groundwater resources. Island County Public Health compiles the best available science pertaining to groundwater wells and groundwater quality from the following sources:

- Island County Public Health Seawater Intrusion and Long-Term Groundwater Monitoring
- Washington Department of Ecology Well Report and Environmental Information Management System
- Washington Department of Health Office of Drinking Water Sentry and Source Water Assessment Program
- United States Geological Survey
- Public Water Systems
- Individual Well Owners

Island County conducts long term monitoring of groundwater and seawater intrusion and maintains a hydrogeology dashboard with information from multiple data sources for water quality and quantity throughout the county. Data collection and sharing helps protect our aquifers and drinking water supplies by informing and engaging the public in taking an active role in helping protect our groundwater resources.

#### **6.2.3 FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION AREAS**

Island County supports a variety of fish and wildlife species thanks to our abundant forests, prairies, and marine waters. The GMA requires County's to designate and protect Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCAs), areas vital for maintaining species populations. These include habitats for species listed as endangered, threatened, or sensitive, priority habitats identified by the state, and areas of local importance.

FWHCAs in Island County include streams and small seasonal creeks, lakes and ponds, wetlands, marine nearshore habitats, upland wildlife areas, and habitat corridors. Since 2016, the County has improved its mapping and information for these areas. For example, the County's critical areas map now incorporates data from state and federal agencies, including the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife's Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) database, the National Wetlands Inventory, and local surveys of marine resources. These marine habitats are crucial for the marine food web and have been recognized as priorities for conservation. Eelgrass beds, for instance, provide nursery areas for juvenile fish and forage species.

#### **6.2.4 FREQUENTLY FLOODED AREAS**

Although lacking major river systems that occur in mainland Western Washington, Island County is not immune to flood threats. Flooding generally occurs in the winter during intense storms, combined with high tides. Wind-generated waves frequently run up the beach and overtop many shore protection structures, damaging structures along the shoreline and flooding inland areas. Wave-tossed driftwood can threaten safety and property.

Flooding that is less violent and severe, but perhaps more frequent, occurs around lakes and other low-lying areas during and following heavy precipitation. Increased rates of runoff have been caused by development, creation of impervious surfaces, channeling of surface water flows, and loss of wetlands and extensive forest vegetative cover, all of which decreases the capacity of upland areas to retain moisture and exacerbating flood problems.

Individual residents, community associations, and diking districts have undertaken local flood protection efforts, including drainage improvements, tide gates, holding ponds, and shore protection structures such as bulkheads and rip-rap. Some of these facilities are maintained by the County.

The County has adopted a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (Chapter 14.02A ICC) which provides construction standards for frequently flooded areas, and stormwater regulations with required detention (Chapter 11.03 ICC).

#### **6.2.5 GEOLOGICALLY HAZARDOUS AREAS**

Although Island County is characterized by a gentler landscape than much of the mountainous and river-torn Puget Sound mainland, the islands have been and continue to be buffeted by geological and climatological forces. Vertical bluffs, ancient landslides, slopes with groundwater seepage, or springs can be found in Island County. Careless development in such areas can lead to loss of life and property, both on-site and on other properties. The County regulates clearing and grading and construction activities under Chapter 11.02 ICC.

### **6.3 GROUNDWATER RESOURCES**

#### **6.3.1 GROUNDWATER OVERVIEW**

The geologic development of Island County has resulted in the reliance on limited sources of groundwater. The physical presence of saltwater surrounding the islands creates threats to groundwater quality which are not experienced in other areas. Typical measures to protect groundwater include ensuring adequate recharge of rainfall and other surface waters and minimizing the threat of pollutants. In Island County, measures must also include careful monitoring of the level of groundwater extraction, to minimize the threat of saltwater intrusion into freshwater aquifers.

In 1979, Island County began work to define the hydrogeology of the islands; determine the chemical quality of groundwater; and identify areas of existing and potential sea water intrusion. These studies have provided detailed information on the hydrogeology of Island County.

In 1982, the Environmental Protection Agency declared Sole Source Aquifer for Whidbey Island and Camano Island. The designation acknowledged Island County's reliance on

groundwater as a potable water source for both islands and requires federally funded projects be designed to ensure protection of groundwater resources. The county is in fact served by a multiple aquifer system. The sole source designation refers to the county's reliance on groundwater for drinking water rather than a singular aquifer.

Island County's aquifer system is the critically important water supply for people living outside the general Oak Harbor area. Approximately 73 percent of the county's population relies upon groundwater as a potable water resource. Population growth in rural areas has increased groundwater demand proportionally; this is expected to continue in the future. Studies completed to date, including hydrogeologic investigations conducted by local, state and federal agencies, conclude that groundwater supplies are a finite resource in Island County.

### **6.3.2 GROUNDWATER RESOURCE AND RECHARGE PROTECTION**

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the designation and protection of critical areas, such as aquifer recharge areas. Included in the adopted Ground Water Management Plan are areas identified as having a greater potential for recharge based upon soil type and surficial hydrology. In 1992, Chapter 8.09 ICC was amended to include measures to protect groundwater from surface activities in susceptible areas. All of Island County was considered a recharge area and specific protection measures were determined at the time of application and related to project impacts.

The amendments to Chapter 8.09 ICC in 1992 were based upon the entire county as a critical recharge area formulated from the sole source aquifer designation and adopted groundwater management areas pursuant to Chapter 90.44 RCW. The criteria established in Chapter 8.09 ICC provided the basis for the protection of groundwater resources in critical recharge areas.

A 2002 United States Geological Survey (USGS) Recharge Study provided Island County with invaluable information concerning the local conditions that affect the recharge of precipitation into our aquifer systems. Previously, these areas had not been specifically delineated other than through the application of potential recharge rates based upon superficial geology.

Through the Watershed Planning process, Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARA) have been delineated using the "Guidance Document for the Establishment of CARA Ordinances", Department of Ecology, 2000.

The following four criteria were used to assess aquifer vulnerability, and maps of each parameter were developed.

1. Depth-to-Water parameter was used to develop the "Depth to Water Susceptibility Rating" map, using data from the Island County hydrogeology database;
2. Recharge parameter was used to develop the "Groundwater Recharge Rate" map, using information from the USGS Deep Percolation Model and Ecology Scoring Options;
3. Soil Permeability parameter was used to develop the "Soil Percolation Rate" map, using information from the Island County Soil Survey; and
4. Surficial Geology parameter was used to develop the "Surficial Geology Susceptibility Rating" map, using data from the Island County hydrogeology database.

The CARA Map shows the sum of the scores from the four individual maps and ranks the County into one of three zones: “limited,” “moderate,” and “high” risk for contamination. The specific risk associated with surface contaminants, then, is based upon the four criteria rather than just surficial geology as in the past. Project actions in areas identified as having an increased risk for groundwater contamination may require a hydrogeologic assessment, as determined by Chapter 8.09 ICC.

Hydrogeologic evaluations are required prior to approval of projects identified by the Health Officer as having a potential for groundwater contamination. Appropriate mitigation measures are imposed as conditions of approval for projects with a potential for impacts to groundwater resources.

Due to the complexity of the aquifer systems underlying Island County, it is difficult, if not impossible, to apply regional determinations of groundwater resource protection and water availability. Given these management limitations, site-specific, project specific evaluations are the best available option. As additional information is collected and analyzed, refinements can be made to the system of identifying critical areas for recharge and groundwater protection.

### **6.3.3 SEAWATER INTRUSION PROTECTION**

In order to prevent seawater from entering a freshwater aquifer, adequate freshwater pressure must be maintained. An aquifer’s susceptibility for seawater intrusion can be evaluated by measuring the distribution of water level elevations. Thus, the relationship between an aquifer’s water level elevation and its susceptibility to seawater intrusion can be utilized as a planning and resource management tool.

An aquifer that has water level elevations (pressure) significantly above sea level is not at risk for seawater intrusion, while an aquifer that has near sea level water levels is at risk.

Through the Watershed Planning effort, Island County and the Water Resource Advisory Committee collected and analyzed water quality and groundwater elevation data for 378 wells. This information was used to develop county wide water level elevation criteria to define at what elevation is a well at risk to seawater intrusion. These elevations, coupled with chloride data, were then used to define risk categories for the purpose of reviewing land-use proposals to define impact to the resource.

Pursuant to Chapter 8.09 ICC, hydrogeologic evaluations are required prior to approval of projects identified by the Health Officer as having a potential for causing, inducing, or contributing to seawater intrusion (ICC 8.09.099). Appropriate mitigation measures are imposed as conditions of approval for projects with a potential for impacts to groundwater resources. Additionally, public water systems are required to collect groundwater chemistry indicators of seawater intrusion in areas defined as being at increased risks to intrusion.

## **6.4 NATURAL LANDS**

### **6.4.1 NATURAL LANDS OVERVIEW**

Island County has chosen to include information on the protection of natural lands in its Comprehensive Plan as a result of strong interest in this issue expressed by county residents. The protection and conservation of natural lands is important for the environment, is aesthetically

beneficial, and benefits the economy of Island County.

The conservation or protection of natural lands is an important strategy that can also help to maintain the rural character of much of Island County. Generally, large expanses of open spaces, interspersed with forest lands and working agricultural landscapes, are important elements of what it makes it special to live in Island County.

State law directs that local governments designate lands as critical areas, open space corridors, and for public purposes. Outside of these specific mandates, the decision to preserve natural lands is not mandated by the GMA or any other state or federal regulation. Rather, the decision lies with the determination of the citizens of Island County to preserve their quality of life by identifying and protecting those natural elements of the landscape which contribute to the scenic and open character of the community.

Many agencies are involved in the protection of natural lands throughout the county, including the federal government, the State of Washington, Island County, the Town of Coupeville, the City of Oak Harbor, and the City of Langley, as well as non-profits, private citizens, and Tribes. The conservation of natural lands can be accomplished in many ways, from regulation to tax incentives to land use ordinances. In all cases, the preferred method of conservation should include the voluntary participation of the property owner. When conservation occurs through land use regulation, efforts must be made to ensure that the owner is left with a reasonable use of the property.

The development and implementation of protection strategies for natural lands rely heavily upon community values. The protection of these natural assets is essential to the continued high quality of life of county residents. These assets are also important to the quality of the experience enjoyed by visitors to this special place.

#### **6.4.2 DEFINITION OF NATURAL LANDS**

Natural lands include any land area whose preservation in its natural or existing state would conserve or enhance natural, scenic, or cultural resources; protect surface water or groundwater quality and supplies; promote the conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches, or tidal marshes; enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, nature reservations, or other open spaces; enhance recreation opportunities; preserve historic sites; preserve working agricultural landscapes; or preserve visual quality or scenic vistas along transportation corridors.

Examples of natural lands may include, but are not limited to, forests and watersheds, agricultural lands, wetlands, significant wildlife habitats (including corridors important for wildlife movement or migration), complex shoreline systems (including lagoons, saltwater tidal flats, marshes, and accretion beaches), and conservation areas or reserves which have the capacity to support complex biological communities or ecosystems.

The terms ‘natural lands’ and ‘open space’ are often used interchangeably by the public. While ‘open space’ is a generic term which may be applied to any parcel of undeveloped land, ‘natural lands’ may also include lands which may contain some development activity or are “worked” (such as agricultural and forestry uses), but which promote values consistent with environmental conservation. Definitions of different types of natural lands can and quite often overlap and

should not be confused with the definition of Natural Resource lands, which the state clearly defines as based on soil types.

### **6.4.3 NATURAL LANDS TYPOLOGY**

Not all natural lands will have equal value or serve the same ecological functions. Different types of natural lands will benefit from varying types of conservation or protection. Policies reflecting the values of the community will help to determine the types of sites to be protected or conserved, and the level of protection desired.

#### **6.4.3.1 Agriculture**

These land types have high visual value as they create a sense of ‘openness’ in rural areas. Unlike the more traditional definition of natural lands, agricultural areas experience a higher degree of human intrusion as crops are harvested. However, these lands are recognized as an important and limited resource which can provide a community with both environmental and economic value. Today’s land use decisions can greatly affect future agricultural production capabilities. The need to preserve productive farmland is extremely important for future generations.

In addition to agriculture’s historic and economic role, vast expanses of farmland provide scenic open spaces, which contribute to the overall health and welfare of residents and help to promote tourism.

As development occurs, the pressure to convert agricultural land to other, more intensive land uses increases significantly. Displacement can occur as agricultural areas become more urbanized, and as uses change. Loss of agricultural lands affects the whole community. Many strategies may be employed to promote the goal of agricultural land preservation. Among those strategies are:

- ‘Right-to-farm’ regulations which discourage the infringement of non-agricultural land uses in agricultural areas;
- Land use policies and related strategies which promote value-added activities such as the processing of agricultural products, and which recognize the diverse nature of land uses necessary for agriculture to succeed;
- Property tax policies which do not penalize farmers when land values rise.

#### **6.4.3.2 Forestry**

Unlike agricultural activities, the harvesting of timber crops is perceived to have a greater impact upon the land and to the surrounding community. Some of the reasons for the differing impacts are the following:

- The life cycle of a timber harvest can take more than a generation, people come to view wooded areas as a more permanent part of the local landscape;
- The harvesting of timber can create significantly more noise than the harvest of more traditional crops;
- The weight of logging trucks can significantly degrade pavements;
- Wooded areas can provide significant and sometimes critical habitat for wildlife;

- Trees improve air quality by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen in significant quantities;
- The root systems of trees stabilize soils, and thus help to prevent or minimize soil erosion; and
- Wooded areas can promote groundwater recharge.

However, there are several reasons forestry should be protected in Island County. It is important to the economy of Island County and can offer a local source of lumber to residents thereby reducing transportation impacts on the environment of obtaining lumber elsewhere. Timberlands, although they may be too disruptive for permanent wildlife habitat, may provide corridors for wildlife travel and migration. Preserving timber lands also prevents further development which has larger environmental impacts.

#### **6.4.3.3 Wetland Protection**

Wetlands provide a variety of functions which are important such as flood prevention, groundwater recharge, and filtering, and they provide critical habitat for plants and wildlife. However, wetlands vary significantly from site to site in terms of their values, functions, and quality. The quality of a wetland must be taken into consideration in determining its priority status for conservation or protection. More detailed information regarding wetlands as critical areas is contained within section 6.2.1.

#### **6.4.3.4 Open Space Corridors**

Open space corridors serve important functions for humans, providing walking, jogging, or cycling paths, or scenic vistas. Additionally, they are useful as migratory corridors for wildlife.

The identification of open space corridors between cities and Urban Growth Areas (UGA) is of particular importance in meeting the requirements of the GMA. The County's open space map identifies the following open space components:

- Parks lands
- Designated forest lands
- Open space lands
- Whidbey Camano Land Trust lands
- Natural shoreline areas
- Documented Prairie and Oak Woodland Communities
- Critical areas (including streams, wetlands and unstable slopes)
- Mapped trails

Island County will utilize this map to help identify priority areas for future acquisition that will continue to build important open space connections.

#### **6.4.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF NATURAL LANDS IN ISLAND COUNTY**

Natural land protection and preservation has long been a high priority of residents of Island County. Residents place a high value in open space preservation, protection of watersheds and drinking water sources, natural lands, farmland, and forests threatened by development. Protection of the remaining Natural Lands in Island County continues to be an increasingly important issue for Island County residents.

**Table 6-1. Natural Lands/Open Space Summary**

	Acres	Parcels
Some Form of Development	64,912	37,448
Open Space Program	23,286	1,617

Although both agriculture and forestry have become a much smaller part of the Island County economy in their own right, the overall importance of natural resource lands to the economic and cultural character of Island County is not easily measured. Rolling farmlands and extensive forested tracts are important components of Island County’s rural atmosphere. The rural “feel” that will attract more residents and tourists may depend on the continued existence and maintenance of these lands. In addition to their aesthetic values, these lands also play important roles in air and water quality, climate resilience, and wildlife habitat.

While the aesthetic and environmental benefits of mineral resource lands (such as gravel pits) are not on a level with agricultural and forested lands, extraction of mineral resources is required under the GMA and important to the county’s economic stability and diversity.

**6.4.4.1 Agricultural Land Conservation**

Conserving productive agricultural soils and encouraging farming operations as economically viable activity (and as an accepted way of life) is a major challenge in Island County.

Significant efforts have been made to preserve agricultural lands of key aesthetic and historical significance, and where viable farming is continuing, through public purchase of easements or of the land itself. Outside of those areas, farming activities are scattered and in comparatively small blocks. Much of the area which remains in production is not underlain by significant amounts of prime (Class II or III) soils. There are no unique soils in Island County as defined by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. Farming in Island County typically includes fruits and vegetables, livestock and poultry, forage and grain, and seed production.

In light of the existing pattern of rural development in Island County, the County must find ways to protect farms large and small from increasing development pressures.

**Table 6-2. Agricultural Lands**

There are 17,038 acres of farmland in Island County, comprising of 377 farms of different sizes. The average farm size is 45 acres, which is down from the historical average of 62 acres.

	Acres	Parcels
Commercial Agriculture Lands	4,316	199
Rural Agriculture Lands	6,651	435
In the Agricultural Tax Program	9,466	545

**Table 6-3. Agricultural Economy**

	Average Number of People
Employed in Crop Production	102
Employed in Animal Production & Aquaculture	78

Farming in Island County is a \$23 million dollar industry. Of the commercial products produced by Island County farms, dairy and livestock operations tend to be in significantly larger blocks of land under single ownership or management than are vegetable, berry, and seed production areas. In examining the minimum block size under a single management which is feasible for dairy or livestock, however, it appears that farms as small as 40 acres may be economically feasible. Similarly, vegetable, berry, or seed production on blocks of 40 acres or more appears to be economically viable. Micro-farming of vegetables or flowers may occur on significantly smaller tracts.

Given the existing development pressure in the rural areas of the county, there is a long-term need to preserve lands which are in active commercial production, and which have soil quality to support agricultural production. Reviewing the blocks of land being actively farmed under single management in Island County disclosed that many of those farms are not underlain by 50 percent or more prime soils. Some commercial farms with relatively little prime soil have been in operation in Island County for many years. It is assumed, however, that where the farm does not have prime soils, the current status of the farm as a commercial operation may be more a result of the skill or commitment of the current operator than the long-term value of the land as a land base for commercial agriculture. As a result, the only farms that should be put in Commercial Agriculture designation automatically are those which meet three criteria:

1. The farm is a block of at least 40 acres in size, owned by a single farmer.
2. Fifty percent or more of the block is underlain by prime soils.
3. The block is in active commercial agricultural use.

Farms which do not qualify for designation as Commercial Agriculture because of soil quality may volunteer to be put in that classification. All other parcels of 20 acres or more, within the agricultural tax program should be treated as agricultural lands of local importance and designated Rural Agriculture.

Small farms are gaining increased importance in the county. Specialty crops may be cultivated on lands of a size and with underlying soils not normally associated with larger scale farming. It is important that the County recognize the changing trends of farming in the county and provide for the appropriate land use regulations to allow them to prosper.

Incompatible development adjacent to agricultural lands increases pressures to convert these properties. Pressure comes from demands to suppress the “nuisance” factors created by farms, such as prohibiting livestock raising or limiting the storage and use of fertilizers. Right-to-farm measures must be adopted to enhance the farm economy. Under GMA, the County must ensure that uses on lands adjacent to resource lands do not interfere with continuing well-managed agricultural activities on resource lands. This may be accomplished by establishing a rural zoning density surrounding the resource lands; and, as required per RCW 36.70A.060, adopting regulations requiring that all users of new development within 300 feet of the property be notified of the proximity and impacts of the ongoing agricultural activities.

Rising taxation on adjacent land further accelerates conversion pressures. Farmland can be preserved as agricultural open space by implementing an array of programs, such as agricultural

land zoning and placing the property in current use tax programs.

**6.4.4.2 Forest Lands Conservation**

Forests in Island County are an important natural resource to landowners and local citizens. Forest lands contribute to the rural character, protect watershed functions, and provide wildlife habitat. Management of forest lands for timber production constitutes a valued element in the county’s renewable natural and economic resource base, although it forms a small part of the local economy. Development pressure and widespread antipathy to commercial forest practices threatens the viability of forestry as a self-sustaining local industry.

The remaining timber land in Island County is in small and scattered blocks. That is significantly smaller than the minimum block sizes established by several Western Washington counties for forest lands of long-term commercial significance and is much smaller than the blocks of commercial significance which exist in the counties of Western Washington where the forest industry is active.

There are few industrial foresters left in Island County. The remaining forest landowners in Island County are non-industrial private forest owners. Although a few of those owners actively manage their lands to increase growth and for continuous production, much of the land is subject to minimal management. There are currently no timber converting facilities in Island County. All timber which is harvested in the county is trucked off the islands for processing.

**Table 6-4. Forestry Lands and Timber Production**

	Acres	Parcels
In the Timber Tax Program	12,298	856
Owned by DNR	399.36	10

While not all of these lands are being actively managed for industrial timber production, it is likely that all forest lands which do meet the definition are in a timber tax program.

One of the greatest obstacles to timber lands management is pressure from adjacent land uses. There are very few, if any, forest lands that are not adjacent to or within sight of existing plats, urban areas, or major transportation routes, some of which are scenic highways. Changing attitudes towards resource use have brought intense political pressure on elected officials to limit the aesthetic and environmental consequences of timber management practices.

**6.4.5 IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL LANDS**

Early identification of important natural land areas, and the use of proven management and environmental protection techniques can help to maintain and improve environmental quality by preventing unwanted environmental consequences. This approach is both environmentally and fiscally responsible, as the costs associated with remediation or correction of environmental problems can be significantly higher than costs for prevention.

Identification of natural lands should also include land within urban areas, such as towns, cities,

UGAs, and Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRDs). Efforts should be made to designate natural lands in sizes and patterns which will maximize their benefit to the community and environment. Natural lands within urban areas may also perform the valuable function of acting as a buffer between differing land uses.

The ownership and extent of protection afforded to natural lands within the county is as varied as the many different types of natural lands which exist. Publicly owned lands which may qualify as natural lands may be owned or managed by State or Federal agencies, local governments, special purpose districts, or a combination of interest groups. Most recently, lands acquired through “joint venture” arrangements have protected significant sites by combining the resources of both public and private entities. The success of these efforts will determine the model for many future acquisitions.

## **6.4.6 ANALYSIS**

### **6.4.6.1 Incentives**

#### **6.4.6.1.1 Tax Benefit Programs**

State law permits counties to offer reductions in property taxes as an incentive in exchange for agreements to conserve or protect farmlands, forest lands, or open space.

On a countywide scale this occurs as tax shift, rather than a reduction, because the same total amount of taxes are collected, but the burden is instead shifted to other property owners. Island County has offered these incentives for many years, and the County Assessor’s office has developed a record of success in implementing these programs. Currently, the County implements a Public Benefit Rating System (PBRS) program to incentivize private property owners to conserve natural lands (Chapter 3.40 ICC). It is implemented by evaluating an applicant’s property based on guidelines established by the County. A larger reduction is offered depending on the type of land conserved and its relative benefit to the public and the environment. When it comes to the tax reduction programs offered to forestry, the reduction is based on soil type (RCW 84.33 and WAC 458-40-540). The reduction for agriculture is a bit more complicated; while most counties use a Farm Advisory Board to value the land, Island County does not have a Farm Advisory Board (RCW 84.34). Instead, the County uses long established values based on which region of the county the property is located.

The advantage to tax benefit programs is that they do not require the appropriation of new funds by the County to protect unique or desirable natural lands. In addition, the PBRS approach permits the County to focus on the protection of their identified priorities, without providing a larger benefit than needed to a less important property. One of the most important benefits to a PBRS program is that it reflects the values and priorities established by county residents.

#### **6.4.6.1.2 Purchase or donation of easements or other rights**

In some cases, a valuable portion or characteristic of a site can be protected without limiting the use or development of the remainder of the parcel. In these instances, the purchase or acquisition of an easement, a conservation restriction, or a development right may provide the full level of protection needed or desired by the public. Because the conveyance of an easement or any other interest in a parcel of land will affect the value of the property, the

property owner is likely to also experience a reduction in property taxes. Also, the conveyance of an interest in land by donation may result in an income tax deduction for the property owner.

The advantage to this approach is that only a portion of the value of a property is acquired, thus resulting in a lower public cost than the outright purchase of a complete interest in the property. Advantages to the property owners is that they are left with a valuable remainder of the property that can still be used, as well as possible property or income tax reductions.

#### **6.4.6.2 Funding Strategies**

Many approaches to conserve or protect natural lands will require the expenditure of public funds. Traditionally, grants from State or Federal agencies have been sought and utilized for this purpose. However, with increasing competition for these scarce resources, exclusive reliance on these types of funding sources will not succeed. In an era of limited public resources, Island County will need creative approaches to locating the needed funds.

##### **6.4.6.2.1 Impact or mitigation fees**

The authority to impose fees to mitigate the impact of development is discussed under regulatory approaches. Once collected, such funds may only be used in a manner which will mitigate the identified impact. If funds are collected to replace lost open space or recreational opportunities, they may then be used as part of an overall funding strategy to acquire, preserve, or protect natural lands.

##### **6.4.6.2.2 Grants or loans from foundations**

Many foundations are dedicated to environmental stewardship, including the conservation of natural lands. Foundations may be established as independent organizations, or as a charitable extension of a corporation. In addition to foundations or charitable trusts, corporations will often provide direct funding for specific projects if such projects can benefit them or the communities in which they do business.

##### **6.4.6.2.3 Dedicated revenues from local taxes**

Subject to the approval of voters, the County may authorize the use of local real estate taxes to pay for the costs associated with acquiring or conserving natural lands. Some examples of uses of local taxes for this purpose are:

- Conservation Futures Fund
- Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)
- The Real Estate Environmental Endowment (TREE)
- Bonds
- Voter-approved Property Tax Levy

#### **6.4.6.3 Collaborative Approaches**

Island County benefits from the presence of a diverse array of citizens, organizations, and agencies who are dedicated to the conservation, preservation, or protection of natural lands. These organizations include park districts, port districts, private land trusts, and government

agencies on all levels. It is often the case that no single agency or organization has the resources to protect important natural lands. It is thus becoming increasingly important for individuals and groups with similar interests to work together to pool their resources and protect those qualities that they determine to be important.

#### **6.4.7 CONTINUED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND EDUCATION**

To implement this plan, support from the public is essential. Public involvement should be encouraged throughout this plan's implementation. The County should encourage dialogue among its citizens, and it should make every effort to enhance communication between individuals, interest groups, special districts, and governments at all levels.

Public involvement and support starts with education. In order for these strategies to succeed, they must be accepted and actively supported by the citizens of the county. Experience in many jurisdictions throughout the country has shown that such support will be given only when the public understands the issues.

The most traditional form of public involvement has been through formal public hearings. Such hearings serve a useful purpose, but they are most helpful in educating and informing the public. One major drawback to the use of public hearings is that the format of the hearing often results in a rigid setting between citizens and public officials which doesn't allow for adequate dialogue. Less formal meetings that encourage a cooperative exchange of information are almost always more productive. Other educational methods include speaking before interest groups and local service clubs, disseminating information through the internet, and providing informational materials to the public in easily understood formats.

#### **6.5 MINERAL LANDS**

The GMA calls for long-term conservation of mineral resource lands to ensure current and future supplies of sand, gravel, and non-renewable minerals. These lands must be protected from urban encroachment while ensuring environmental protection through appropriate siting, operation, and reclamation standards. Mineral resource lands include those lands devoted primarily to mineral extraction or that have a known potential for long-term commercial extraction of minerals. Minerals are defined as sand, gravel, and valuable metallic substances.

Surface mining is considered a zoning overlay, applicable within Agricultural, Forestry, and Rural Lands. This precludes unnecessary rezoning of land for mining and related mine activities and maintains the Comprehensive Plan's long-term land use vision beyond surface mining. However, as with agricultural and forest lands, GMA requires the County to establish designation and protective criteria for these lands.

##### **6.5.1 EXISTING MINERAL LANDS**

While designation of these sites is fairly straightforward, the issue of protecting them is more difficult. Existing sites have, however, already been permitted. Thus, the conditions under which they operate have been established and are vested. Surrounding uses of existing sites have had fair warning of the existence of the site. Therefore, it is not clear that additional restrictions on surrounding lands are necessary. The County will require that all plats, short plats, development permits, and building permits issued for development activities on, or within three hundred feet of

existing mineral lands contain a notice that the subject property is within or near designated mineral resource lands on which a variety of commercial activities may occur that are not compatible with residential development for certain periods of limited duration.

### **6.5.2 POTENTIAL MINERAL LANDS**

Although the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has identified broad areas of potential gravel deposits in Island County, it is unreasonable to designate those entire areas. They are in large part already developed with small lot sizes and incompatible land uses for any new mineral extraction. The USGS designation also provides no assurance that the land in fact has gravel under it, how deep such gravel deposits may be, or whether any gravel, if it exists, is present in commercial quantities.

Thus, restricting the use of land which may be in large enough undeveloped parcels to provide the ability to permit a new mineral extraction site, based on the USGS study, is unreasonable, because it is little more than speculative to suggest that the land has “potential” for mineral development. The County will revisit the issue of designation of potential mineral sites at such time as it has information upon which to make a reasonable judgment about designation of potential sites. For now, a permitting system and land use standards for surface mining that allows new proposals to be considered, on a case-by-case basis, is the best interim course of action available to the County.

## 6.6 GOALS AND POLICIES

**Goal 1. Safeguard the natural environment as an integrated system where the land, water, and air resources interact creating a ~~balanced~~ healthy and resilient environment for all life on the islands.**

NR 1.1 Include the best available science in developing policies and development regulations to protect the ecosystem-functions and values of critical areas to ensure no net loss and give special consideration to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries.

NR 1.2 Preserve Island County's environmental quality in pursuit of environmental justice and health equity through the careful use of land, water, and air resources.

NR 1.2.1 Extraction of mineral resources must avoid to the greatest extent feasible minimize detrimental effects to the environment. ~~(Other policies related to the siting and conservation of mineral lands are located in the Land Use Element.)~~

NR 1.2.2 Prioritize and incentivize infilling of developed lands, Urban Growth Areas, clustering, and areas of more intensive rural development ~~will be encouraged in order~~ to provide public facilities and services in the most efficient manner, as laid out in the Land Use Element.

NR 1.2.3 Incentivize green infrastructure and Low Impact Development (LID) practices to promote stormwater infiltration, non-point source pollution, and aquifer recharge.

NR 1.3 Conserve energy by incentivizing efficient energy consumption, reduction of waste, reduced emissions, and ~~proper~~ efficient land use management.

NR 1.3.1 ~~Government must~~ Provide leadership guidance and education in employing energy conservation practices and the use of renewable energy technologies to improve climate resilience.

NR 1.3.1.1 ~~Recycling of wastes and use of recycled or reused materials will be encouraged.~~ Encourage easy to access community facilities for reuse, recycling, and composting.

NR 1.3.1.2 Allow for reuse of ~~gray and treated black~~ water ~~will be encouraged~~, provided treatment design meets local and state public health standards.

~~NR 1.3.2 Transportation systems and land use patterns must be designed to consider conservation of energy. Primary employers, commercial users and population centers will be clustered where possible to minimize worker, service and consumer travel, as laid out in the Transportation Element.~~

~~NR 1.3.3 Government services will be sited to minimize consumer travel, as laid out in the Capital Facilities Element.~~

NR 1.3.2 ~~4 Island County will encourage~~ Incentivize developments and structures with energy and/or water conservation technologies through density credits, waiving of permit fees, and

bonuses for implementation of conservation practices in development.

~~NR 1.4 High intensity lighting is discouraged, but where necessary will require that it must be shielded from adjacent properties and roads and shielded and directed down to reduce impacts to the dark sky.~~

NR 1.4 Conserve and enhance a diverse network of natural lands and open spaces for public benefit and wildlife.

NR 1.5 Incentivize innovative conservation methods to permanently protect high-priority natural areas.

NR 1.6 Preserve a high level of air quality by limiting outdoor burning and reducing the use of fossil fuels.

NR 1.6.1 Encourage alternatives to outdoor burning from clearing, grading, and logging activities, and incentivize having materials chipped on site.

NR 1.6.2 Incentivize conversion to alternative fuels and energy sources and tree planting to improve air quality.

## **Goal 2. Preserve a high level of air quality**

~~NR 2.1 Emphasis will be given to alternative forms of transportation (public transit, car pools, bicycle and pedestrian trails) decreasing dependency on the single-occupant automobile.~~

~~NR 2.2 Promote non-polluting alternatives to wood burning, such as solar heating and chipping instead of burning slash.~~

**Goal 2. 3Protect wetlands from a net loss in functions. Protect, preserve, and enhance wetlands to offset impacts and to achieve no net loss of wetland functions.**

~~NR 3.1 Protect, preserve, and enhance wetlands to achieve no net loss of wetland functions.~~

NR 2.1 3.1.1 Avoid land development that causes loss of wetland functions and values. When there is no reasonable alternative, minimize and ~~mitigate~~ compensate adverse impacts to wetland functions.

NR 2.2 3.1.2 ~~Mitigation projects that add to existing wetlands or increase functions and values of degraded wetlands are preferred over efforts to create wetlands from non-wetland areas and should remain subject to wetlands protection regulations.~~ Prioritize onsite mitigation projects that add to existing wetlands or increase functions and values of degraded wetlands followed by in-watershed mitigation. rather than creating wetlands from non-wetland areas.

NR 2.3 3.1.3 Prohibit alteration of land that results in degradation of **Category A** wetlands, except for maintenance of existing public use, ~~or~~ road, or utility crossings that are the least environmentally damaging practical alternative. ~~or if necessary to permit reasonable use of the land. In such cases, minimize and mitigate the degradation.~~

~~NR 3.1.4 Implement non-regulatory wetlands protection measures such as acquisition and incentive programs and the public benefit ratings system.~~

NR 2.4 3.1.5 Improve ecological connectivity between critical areas by allowing increased flexibility in the application of buffers, to include buffer averaging, protection of non-buffer areas via conservation easements, density and/or tax incentives, site design, and other techniques.

NR 2.5 3.1.6 Consider economic, environmental, and cultural costs when evaluating proposals for wetland buffer alterations, and recognize instances where development or alteration within or adjacent to wetlands buffers is acceptable.

NR 2.6 3.2 Allow reasonable use of a property, provided all wetlands functions are evaluated, the least harmful impactful alternative is pursued, and degraded functions are mitigated to ensure no net loss of ecological function.

~~NR 3.3 Locate development away from regulated wetlands by use of buffers. and Planned Residential Developments.~~

~~NR 3.4 Maps, site specific studies, and information collected by other agencies available for public review will be made readily accessible to potential and existing landowners, interested citizens, and development interests to aid in the protection of these areas.~~

~~NR 3.5 Alteration will occur only after careful consideration of the function of the area, the potential environmental costs of alterations, the sensitivity of the area to disturbance, and the intensity and potential risks associated with a proposed land use.~~

~~NR 3.6 When a violation of the policies and regulations of this area is identified, the enforcement action and severity of any penalty will be proportional to the nature and circumstances of the violation and the damage or risk to private and public resources.~~

~~NR 3.7 Overlay policies and development regulations shall be implemented in addition to those associated with the underlying land use designation. When there is a conflict in policy statements or development regulations, the more restrictive shall apply.~~

~~NR 3.8 Wetlands regulations are contained in ICC 17.02B and where applicable, ICC 17.05A.~~

**Goal 3. 4 Protect Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas to provide for biodiversity and ecosystem services, such as water infiltration and retention, flood mitigation, climate resiliency, and recreation.**

NR 3.1 4.1 Develop Utilize specific criteria and processes to nominate, designate, and classify habitats and species of local importance.

NR 3.2 4.2 Periodically review and update designations as new information on species viability and habitat needs becomes available.

~~NR 4.3 Conserve habitats necessary for continued reproductive success of designated species.~~

~~NR 3.3 4.3.1 Conserve and protect elements necessary to the survival of designated species, including~~ habitat areas such as nests, breeding areas, and nurseries from disturbance during critical life cycle periods to support the survival of protected species.

~~NR 3.3.1 4.3.2~~ Encourage enhancement of ~~degraded~~ habitat areas where the function and value of habitat has been degraded.

~~NR 3.3.2 4.3.3~~ Based on the recommendations of Biological Site Assessment or Habitat Management Plan, provide physical buffers or timing restrictions around specific habitat areas used by designated species commensurate to the seasonal use of the area (where that is the case), the sensitivity of the species and habitat, the relative importance of the species and habitat, and the intensity of proposed and actual uses.

~~NR 3.3.3 4.3.4 Landscaping, screening, or vegetated buffers required through development review should r~~ Retain, salvage, or re-establish native vegetation using conditions developed during review of a development application.

~~4.3.5 Limit the use of non-native and prohibit the use of invasive plant species in Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas.~~

~~NR 3.3.4 4.3.6 Encourage the provision of~~ Identify, map, protect, and encourage corridors and networks of native vegetation between protected habitat areas to minimize isolating and fragmenting designated wildlife habitat. ~~Incorporate~~ Incentivize natural resource lands supporting uses such as forestry and agriculture into wildlife corridors and networks.

~~NR 3.3.5~~ Allow the modification of buffer standards that would result in no net loss of ecological function and values (pursuant to Biological Site Assessment) to promote connectivity of critical areas.

~~NR 3.3.6 4.3.7 Consult with~~ Review State and Federal regulations and guidelines for consistency ~~agencies~~ when making wildlife management and protection decisions.

~~NR 3.3.7 4.3.8~~ Develop a watershed-based plan to identify options for improving continuity of natural systems, through restoration, rehabilitation and preservation, including incentives for landowners including flexibility of buffer standards, tax incentives, or density bonuses.

~~NR 3.4 4.4 Protect all streams.~~ Support and incentivize voluntary stream, wetland, riparian, and shoreline restoration and preservation efforts.

~~NR 3.5~~ Establish a regular update schedule for the County's Monitoring and Adaptive Management element of the Critical Areas Ordinance, based on guidance from WDFW and WA Dept. of Ecology and pursuant to WAC 365-196-660(2)(b).

~~NR 4.5 Protect near shore habitats, including commercial and recreational shellfish areas; kelp and eelgrass beds; herring, sand lance and smelt spawning areas.~~

~~NR 4.5.1 The design of new and replacement on-site sewage systems shall meet the minimum requirements outlined in ICC 8.07C and where applicable, meet the siting requirements in ICC~~

17.05A

~~NR 4.5.2 Require buffers for new development adjacent to streams and marine habitats.~~

~~NR 4.5.3 Require preparation of farm plans for new agriculture uses in the Commercial Agriculture land use district.~~

NR 3.6 ~~4.5.4~~ Require implementation of Natural Resources Conservation Service best management practices for ~~new and~~ existing agricultural activities.

~~NR 4.6 Maps, site specific studies, and information collected by other agencies available for public review will be made readily accessible to potential and existing landowners, interested citizens, and development interests to aid in the protection of these areas.~~

NR 3.7 ~~4.7~~ Regulation of these areas will take into consideration the ecological functions and values of the area, the potential environmental costs of alterations, the sensitivity of the area to disturbance, and the intensity and potential risks associated with a proposed land use.

~~NR 4.8 When a violation of the policies and regulations of this area is identified, the enforcement action and severity of any penalty will be proportional to the nature and circumstances of the violation and the damage or risk to private and public resources.~~

~~NR 4.9 Overlay policies and development regulations shall be implemented in addition to those associated with the underlying land use designation. When there is a conflict in policy statements or development regulations, the more restrictive shall apply.~~

~~NR 4.10 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas regulations are contained in ICC 17.02B and where applicable, 17.05A.~~

NR 3.8 Support recovery of native fish populations based on data provided by, and in coordination with state, tribal, and federal programs.

**Goal 4 ~~5~~ Protect public health, safety, and welfare, to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in frequently flooded areas.**

NR 4.1 ~~5.1~~ Reduce the potential for physical injury and damage to public and private property from flooding by minimizing impacts of upstream land uses.

NR 4.1.1 ~~5.1.1~~ Protect natural water storage areas and drainage systems, including wetlands, streams, and lakes, to reduce downstream flooding.

NR 4.1.2 ~~5.1.2~~. Ensure new or expanded development ~~above identified thresholds~~ located within frequently flooded areas complies with the current version of the State Stormwater Manual and is accompanied by appropriate stormwater facilities, such as detention ponds, infiltration facilities, and other measures to maintain rates of runoff at pre-development levels. ~~minimizes additional runoff by limiting impervious surfaces, unnecessary grading and compaction of soils, and preserving areas of undisturbed vegetation.~~

~~NR 5.1.3 Ensure new development above identified thresholds is accompanied by appropriate stormwater facilities, such as detention ponds, infiltration facilities, and other measures to maintain rates of runoff at pre-development levels.~~

~~NR 5.1.4 Impose standards for construction in frequently flooded areas to minimize the potential for physical injury and property damage.~~

~~NR 5.2 Maps, site specific studies, and information collected by other agencies available for public review will be made readily accessible to potential and existing landowners, interested citizens, and development interests to aid in the protection of these areas.~~

~~NR 5.3 When a violation of the policies and regulations of this area is identified, the enforcement action and severity of any penalty will be proportional to the nature and circumstances of the violation and the damage or risk to private and public resources.~~

~~NR 5.4 Development regulations shall be implemented in addition to those associated with the underlying land use designation.~~

NR 4.2 5.5 The County's Surface Water Program will continue to implement LID practices work to review drainage, flooding, and stormwater run-off in the area and nearby jurisdictions to provide guidance for corrective actions to mitigate or cleanse those discharges that pollute waters of the state.

NR 4.3 Examine alternatives and increase scrutiny for septic systems located in areas that are subject to flooding for any reason, particularly during high runoff rainstorms or coastal flooding events.

~~NR 5.6 Regulations for frequently flooded areas are contained in the ICG 17.02B, as well as ICG 17.05A for the FEMA designated 1% flood zone.~~

NR 4.4 Incentivize community septic systems and the purchasing of land for septic systems located landward of shoreline areas that replace aging single-family infrastructure in flood prone areas.

**Goal 5 6 Protect the public health, safety, and welfare from threats resulting from incompatible development being sited on or near steep and/or unstable slopes.**

NR 5.1 6.1 Minimize damage to life, health, property, and natural resources caused by geological processes.

NR 5.1.1 6.1.1 Require thorough geotechnical investigation of localized conditions during the review of proposed development within areas of steep/unstable slopes. ~~The amount of information required will be proportionate to the severity of the geologic hazard and the susceptibility of the proposed development.~~

NR 5.1.2 6.1.2 Encourage, and where appropriate, require use of special engineering, site design, and modified construction practices.

NR 5.1.3 6.1.3 ~~When technology cannot reduce risks to acceptable levels,~~ prohibit activities and

land uses which cause or exacerbate existing hazardous geological conditions such as site modification, modification of vegetation, and/or modifications for stormwater management.

~~NR 6.2 Maps, site-specific studies, and information collected by other agencies available for public review will be made readily accessible to potential and existing landowners, interested citizens, and development interests to aid in the protection of these areas.~~

~~NR 5.2 6.3~~ Regulation of these areas will take into consideration the sensitivity of the area to disturbance, and the intensity and potential risks associated with a proposed land use.

~~NR 6.4 When a violation of the policies and regulations of this area is identified, the enforcement action and severity of any penalty will be proportional to the nature and circumstances of the violation and the damage or risk to private and public resources.~~

~~NR 6.5 Overlay policies and development regulations shall be implemented in addition to those associated with the underlying land use designation. When there is a conflict in policy statements or development regulations, the more restrictive shall apply.~~

~~NR 6.6 Steep and unstable slope regulations are contained in ICG 17.02B.~~

**Goal 6 7 Manage and protect ground water and provide for resource protection through a common goal of non-degradation and replacement for existing and future residents of Island County.**

~~NR 6.1 7.1~~ Protect the quantity and quality of groundwater resources for existing and future residents of Island County.

~~NR 6.1.1 7.1.1~~ Provide or direct residents to incentive programs to encourage participation in water conservation and aquifer recharge area protection programs.

~~NR 6.1.2 7.1.2 No-Prohibit~~ development ~~shall be allowed~~ in areas of known ground water limitations as determined by the Health Department, unless it can be proven through objective well tests not to diminish water supplies or reduce water quality for existing users, ~~per ICG 8.09 and related policies.~~

~~NR 7.1.3 Continue to carefully evaluate the hydrogeologic setting when making decisions on potentially contaminating land uses, and require use of Best Management Practices, hazardous material management plans, and other tools to help prevent contamination of ground water.~~

~~NR 6.2 7.2 The County will promote~~ Incentivize the retention and reuse of stormwater using integrated stormwater management best practices to protect surface and groundwater quality when it is the best and environmentally correct option.

~~NR 6.3 7.3 Public education concerning water conservation will be a continuing high priority. Educate County residents and businesses about the function and benefits of water conservation.~~

~~NR 6.4 7.4 Reuse of water, recharge of aquifers and alternative storage systems will be~~

~~encouraged.~~ Identify and protect critical aquifer recharge areas by utilizing LID site planning principles, water reuse, or alternative storage systems to the greatest extent possible for reducing stormwater runoff.

~~NR 6.5 8.1 Consider acquisition of~~ Identify, protect, and acquire areas with particular value to groundwater recharge.

~~NR 6.6 8.2 Continue efforts to identify areas with ground water problems such as seawater intrusion, groundwater depletion, and contamination from surface activities.~~ Develop a comprehensive assessment of groundwater infrastructure in Island County including resiliency needs to support preparedness.

NR 6.6.1 Continue implementing data collection and analysis efforts as recommended in the Ground Water Management Program.

NR 6.6.2 Use site-specific data as it becomes available to determine locations of important recharge areas, areas of limited ground water availability, and areas of particular vulnerability to contamination from surface activities. Maintain, update, and coordinate this data to make the most effective use of the available information.

~~NR 7.6.2 Work with the Island County Health Department, Washington Departments of Health and Ecology to make best use of available data and new technology.~~

NR 6.7 Prohibit hazardous uses in critical recharge areas and protected wellhead areas, limit impervious surfaces to reduce stormwater runoff, and require LID standards.

~~**Goal 7 9 Ensure that Island County plans and develops in a manner that utilizes the best available information regarding water resources so that the resource will be preserved for current and future use.**~~ Ensure water will be preserved for current and future uses by treating it as precious and incentivizing conservation, reducing leakage, reclamation, and reuse.

~~NR 9.1 Maps, site-specific studies, and information collected by other agencies available for public review will be made readily accessible to potential and existing landowners, interested citizens, and development interests to aid in the protection of these areas.~~

~~NR 7.1 9.2 Watershed management planning will be cognizant of the need to preserve water supply while providing drainage facilities to protect the welfare and safety of the community.~~ Develop a watershed planning approach through collaboration between Island County DNR, Public Works, and Planning utilizing the Clean Water Utility to support comprehensive watershed plans that can be continually updated to advance priorities.

~~NR 9.3 Development plans will contain plans for facilities to mitigate the impacts of increased runoff, stormwater drainage and flooding.~~

~~NR 9.4 The location and design of development will be carefully guided in order to minimize potential adverse impacts on the quality of ground and surface waters.~~

NR 7.2 ~~9.5~~ Encourage land use patterns and practices such as preservation of forested areas, wetlands, and floodplains, and impervious surface reduction that preserve and restore the integrity of the natural watershed system.

**Goal 8** ~~Protect aquifer recharge areas from contamination and insure long term recharge potential.~~

**Goal 8** ~~10-Natural Lands~~ **Conserve a variety of natural lands, in both public and private ownership, for the enjoyment and economic benefit of current and future residents of Island County.**

NR 8.1 ~~10.1~~ Balance public and private interests in land.

NR 8.1.1 ~~10.1.1~~ Correct ~~any~~ imbalances in public policies between open space protection and land development ~~incentives through sound incentives for land conservation and careful analysis of the~~ using equity criteria and real costs, both financial and environmental, of subsidizing development.

NR 8.1.2 ~~10.1.2~~ Only consider divestment in publicly owned open lands and resources if careful analysis shows that they contain little value as public conservation or recreational land.

NR 8.1.3 ~~10.1.3~~ Reinvest proceeds from the selling or trading of publicly owned open lands and resources ~~should be reinvested in~~ towards conservation of land and resources, either directly or through a dedicated fund that yields continuing income streams devoted to land conservation.

NR 8.1.4 ~~10.1.4~~ Respect property rights when developing regulations and policies around land conservation.

~~NR 10.1.4.1 Ensure that the designation of natural lands does not infringe on individual property rights.~~

NR 8.1.5 ~~10.1.5~~ Develop objective criteria to prioritize public expenditures for the acquisition of fee simple or other interests in natural lands recognizing the physical and mental health benefits that natural environments provide to our residents.

NR 8.2 ~~10.2~~ Identify Pursue funding ~~sources~~ for the acquisition or protection of natural lands in accordance with the Parks and Recreation Element.

**Goal 9** ~~11~~ **Prioritize the protection of natural lands that coincide with other valuable resources, including ecological, ~~historical,~~ and agricultural, ~~recreational, and cultural~~ lands.**

NR 9.1 ~~11.1~~ Maintain the important ecological functions and values of natural landscapes such as wetlands, stream corridors, shoreline systems, and forests.

NR 9.1.1 ~~11.1.1~~ Develop land use regulations and strategies such as cluster development and wetlands buffer requirements to identify and preserve important natural lands areas located on sites proposed for development.

~~NR 9.1.2 11.1.2 Prioritize the protection of natural lands that contain historic or archaeological sites, structures, and landscapes, which are important to local culture and retain the county's rural quality and character.~~ Prioritize the protection of natural lands that provide multiple benefits, including critical wildlife habitat, aquifer recharge, flood storage, carbon sequestration, and recreational or scenic value.

~~NR 9.2 11.2~~ Conserve agricultural lands for the continued profitable production of crops, timber, and livestock.

~~NR 9.2.1 11.2.1 Discourage the conversion of~~ Require properties identified as having prime farmland soils or designated as resource lands comply with WAC 365-190-040 to de-designate lands to non-agricultural uses.

~~NR 9.2.2 11.2.2 Look into~~ Consider possible strategies for protecting agricultural uses and maintaining the economic viability and sustainability of existing farms.

~~NR 9.3 11.3~~ Enhance recreational opportunities for ~~C~~ county residents.

**~~Goal 13 Continue to promote active public involvement in the conservation or protection of important natural lands.~~**

~~NR 9.4 13.1~~ Foster enduring voluntary land conservation through incentives, partnerships, new innovative solutions, and government assistance such as income and estate tax benefits, technical assistance grants, and programs to purchase partial land interests.

~~NR 9.5 13.1.1~~ Continue implementing the Public Benefit Rating System as a property tax reduction incentive program for property owners to conserve open space and encourage transition of parcels from designated forest to PBRs.

~~NR 9.6 13.1.2~~ Maintain existing current use taxation programs for designated forest and agricultural lands.

~~NR 9.7 14~~ Continue an open dialogue between Island County, incorporated jurisdictions, special purpose districts, non-profits, and other interested individuals and organizations working toward the conservation or protection of natural lands.

~~NR 9.8 14.1 Establish and maintain~~ Continue to foster active public involvement and partnerships with State and Federal agencies, cities, towns, private non-profit conservation groups, port districts, school districts, tribes, foundations, corporations, and individuals for the purpose of acquiring or protecting natural lands.

~~NR 9.9 14.2~~ Design and implement education programs to promote the benefits of conserving natural lands, and to introduce available and proposed current use taxation programs.

**~~Goal 10 12~~ Protect ~~natural~~, scenic, cultural, and historic lands as community assets.**

~~NR 10.1 12.1~~ Maintain Island County's natural lands and open space to protect health and

welfare, enhance the quality of life, preserve heritage, promote economic vitality, and reduce the burden on government resources.

~~NR 12.2 When converting land to a use that requires water availability, Island County will prohibit major alterations to the land beyond the minimum necessary to do soil and water testing prior to the issuance of a water right or other state or local authorized evidence of adequate potable water.~~

~~NR 10.2 12.2~~ Ensure residents have adequate access to open space areas, including land that contains natural areas, beach access, ~~habitat lands, natural drainage features,~~ and/or other ~~environmental,~~ cultural, and scenic resources.

**Goal 11 15** **Protect existing and ongoing resource management operations and preserving long-term commercial viability of those uses, while encouraging extraction methods that are least damaging to the environment.**

~~NR 11.1 15.1 Measures shall be used~~ Implement further measures to support ~~silviculture~~ sustainable forest practices ~~industries.~~

~~NR 11.2 15.2~~ Encourage the conservation of lands suitable for forestry ~~use~~ and support healthy forestry ~~stewardship and management~~ as an activity valued in the County.

~~NR 11.3 15.3 Cluster development or~~ Encourage low intensity uses or cluster development (per WAC 365-196-425) to minimize site clearing and maintain future forestry use options.

~~NR 11.4 15.4~~ Encourage forestry landowners to retain their lands in timber production and timber stewardship and to utilize tax incentive programs.

~~NR 11.5 15.5~~ Support innovative public and private programs that provide foresters incentives to stay on the land.

~~NR 11.6 15.6~~ Encourage selective clearing and logging, as opposed to clearcutting, especially if forest harvesting is done in the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

NR 11.7 Promote innovative and sustainable forest management that enhances forest health, protects existing tree canopy, and promotes replanting with diverse native species.

NR 11.8 Encourage reforestation of underutilized or degraded lands and agroforestry practices that integrate native trees into the landscape.

~~NR 11.9 15.7~~ Achieve agricultural preservation through:

~~NR 11.9.1 15.7.1~~ Support right to farm and forest measures which protect the right to pursue farm and forestry activities.

~~NR 11.9.2 15.7.2~~ Support the continuation of preferential tax programs.

~~NR 11.10 15.8~~ Encourage an effective stewardship of the environment to conserve and protect

Commercial Agriculture lands.

[NR 11.10.1](#) ~~15.8.1~~ Prevent or correct agricultural practices that produce non-point source pollution of surface and groundwater.

[NR 11.10.2](#) ~~15.8.2~~ Take measures to minimize adverse impacts of agricultural activities, including agritourism.

[NR 11.11](#) ~~15.9~~ Protect agricultural operations from incompatible uses by using measures including, but not limited to:

[NR 11.11.1](#) ~~15.9.1~~ Ensuring that uses on adjacent lands do not interfere with continuing agricultural good management practices on resource lands.;

[NR 11.11.2](#) ~~15.9.2~~ Setbacks and buffer strips should be on land within the development unless an alternative is mutually agreed on by adjacent landowners.;

~~NR 15.9.3 Public education concerning resource activities and the common benefits derived from them.~~

[NR 11.12](#) ~~15.10~~ Protect and promote related development such as farmers markets and roadside stands, cooperative marketing, and value-added products, etc.

[NR 11.13](#) ~~15.11~~ Strengthen public disclosure of current adjacent agricultural activities by means of a “right to farm” notice on the deed, area maps, etc.

~~NR 15.12 Support the continued existence of agricultural lands by means of tax incentives or other appropriate financial aid or incentives.~~

[NR 11.14](#) ~~15.13~~ Coordinate agricultural land preservation policies with other jurisdictions, special districts and their respective programs.

[NR 11.15](#) ~~15.14~~ Coordinate agricultural land preservation policies with other Countywide Planning Policies through:

[NR 11.15.1](#) ~~15.14.1~~ Correlating agricultural land preservation policies with Urban Growth Area policies and with public facility and service provision policies to prevent the extension of urban services to areas intended for continued agricultural use;

[NR 11.15.2](#) ~~15.14.2~~ Ensuring that public facility and service extension, even if not directly serving the agricultural lands, do not stimulate the conversion of agricultural land or make its preservation and protection more difficult.

~~NR 11.16 15.15 In order to assure the rights of agricultural land owners and to provide them reasonable flexibility to modify classification of their land, owners of agricultural land may request change of agricultural lands classification under certain circumstances. In order to assure the conservation of agricultural lands, landowners wishing to request a modification to the classification of their land shall have their proposals reviewed through the comprehensive~~

plan amendment process, consistent with WAC 365-190.

NR 11.17 ~~15.16~~ Cooperative agricultural production and marketing will be encouraged.

NR 11.18 Permanently preserve prime farmland while directing growth to appropriate areas.

~~NR 15.17 Maintain and enhance natural resource based industries.~~

NR 11.19 ~~15.17.1 Assure conservation of mineral resource lands.~~ Conserve long term mineral lands to ensure the continued supply of sand, gravel, and non-renewable minerals, and their protection from urban encroachment, as well as environmental protection through appropriate siting, operation, reclamation standards and groundwater protection measures.

NR 11.19.1 ~~15.17.1.1~~ Assure that the use of lands adjacent to mineral resource lands do not interfere with the continued use, in accordance with best management practices, of lands designated for the extraction of minerals.

NR 11.19.2 ~~15.17.1.2~~ Assure that the excavated land will have an ultimate economic use which will complement and preserve the value of adjoining land.

NR 11.19.3 ~~15.17.1.3~~ Maintain the contribution of mining and processing operations to the Island County employment base.

NR 11.19.4 ~~15.17.2~~ Island County will provide for title or plat notification for property owners within 300 feet of an existing approved mining operation.

NR 11.19.5 ~~15.17.3~~ Regulate surface mining operations to minimize land use conflicts through the conditional use process.

NR 11.19.6 ~~15.17.4~~ Apply standards which consider noise levels, light pollution, dust, visual screening, transportation impacts, hours of operation, water quality and groundwater protection and consumption, to new and expanding mine operations.

~~NR 15.17.5 Encourage the purchase of development rights, by the mine developer, of the area within 300 feet of the proposed mine, thus limiting use within that area to forestry, agricultural or designated open space, for the life of the mining operation.~~

NR 11.20 ~~15.18~~ Allow extractive industries to locate where prime natural resource deposits exist, provided these sites are separated by buffers from existing residential areas and restored for appropriate reuse after removing the resource material.

NR 11.21 ~~15.19~~ Discourage new residential uses from locating near active extractive sites, unless the residential developer provides adequate buffering.

NR 11.22 ~~15.20~~ Operation of new and expanding sites will be regulated by land development standards to ensure proper siting and to minimize environmental impacts during operation.

NR 11.23 ~~15.21 There is no minimum parcel size for existing operations.~~ Future commercial

sites generally should be 10 acres or greater to provide for adequate screening. Future small-scale operations such as borrow pits (where soil, sand, gravel, and other materials are made available) may be less than 10 acres.

NR 11.24 ~~15.22~~ On sites with disturbed areas of three acres or less, site reclamation will be carried out as soon as practical, as phased operations are completed, to prevent erosion and water quality degradation, and to return the site to a natural state. Reclaimed sites can be used for any of the uses permitted in the underlying land use designation.

NR 11.25 ~~15.23~~ Surface mining is not considered to be a permanent use of the land. The land should be utilized consistent with the long-term plans of the community, and mining allowed based upon performance standards.

~~NR 15.24 Overlay policies and development regulations shall be implemented in addition to those associated with the underlying land use designation. When there is a conflict in policy statements or development regulations, the more restrictive shall apply.~~

~~NR 15.25 Island County shall notify adjacent landowners of the existence of a surface mine and to the extent known, undeveloped mineral resources, acknowledging that surface mining is market dependent, and operations may be intermittent and more or less intense at times.~~

NR 11.26 Encourage Innovative development concepts to buffer agricultural and mineral resource lands from development.

NR 11.27 Develop guidelines that require cluster developments to be separated from lands designated Mineral Resource by dedicated open space areas or by other measures.



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## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

Island County's Parks and Recreation Element was first adopted in 1998. Island County has grown since the last Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Plan was updated in 2016. The choices that confront Island County at the present time are significant and could alter the character and quality of open space, trail, and park facilities if not adequately planned.

Washington State's Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) requires the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan be updated at least every 6 years to qualify for certain state and federal park, open space, and trail grants. The Island County 2026-2036 PROS Plan update also provides the Parks & Recreation Element of Island County's Comprehensive Plan, which must be updated every 6-8 years for the County to qualify for utility, transportation, and community development grants and funds.

The 2026-2032 PROS Plan identifies Island County's specific area of focus in managing parks and natural areas for recreation and conservation. It includes policies and strategies for making the best use of existing County resources, including partnering with other providers to ensure that parks and natural areas remain vital assets.

The 2026-2032 PROS Plan synthesizes existing data from a variety of sources to create a County inventory of habitat and recreation lands. It incorporates public involvement findings that were used to identify a vision for County parks, recreation, and conservation that maintain the long-term health of the County and its residents.

Based on this vision, this Comprehensive Plan Element includes specific goals and policies for developing, protecting, and maintaining the Island County park system to address recreation and conservation needs in a fiscally-sound and sustainable manner. This Element provides the County a set of directions to concentrate efforts on core services and improve its land and facility management for current residents and future generations. In doing so, this Comprehensive Plan Element satisfies requirements of the State's Growth Management Act as specified in RCW 36.70A.070 and Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to update parks, recreation, and habitat conservation plans.

## PARKS & RECREATION GOALS

- 1** Provide a quality, diverse, and, sustainable system of park land that effectively balances recreation and habitat conservation needs. Island County is dedicated to ensuring that outdoor experiences in natural environments are accessible to all, regardless of abilities.
- 2** Provide low impact **passive** outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the County increasing access to parks near populated areas such as Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) while emphasizing those that have relatively low impact on the natural environment over others with higher impacts.
- 3** Increase public access to the County's beaches and shoreline areas, creating recreation opportunities that respect the ecological integrity of the shoreline ecosystem.
- 4** ~~Acquire lands that~~ Protect and conserve priority habitat, ~~and~~ natural resources, ~~preserve~~ open space, ~~improve~~ beach access, and maintain island character. Where appropriate, acquire public access rights or title to lands to -and improve and expand **passive** outdoor recreational opportunities for public enjoyment including ADA facilities, wildlife viewpoints, beach access, trails, boat launchers, and other recreational improvements.
- 5** Divest in parks lands that are not conformance with the County's Comprehensive Plan and stated Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Goals ~~consistent with the County's area of focus.~~

(Continued on next page)

## PARKS & RECREATION GOALS (CONTINUED)

- 6** Develop stewardship and maintenance programs that cost-effectively protect County assets, emphasize sustainable methods and design, support habitat quality, respond to local needs, and sustain resources for future generations.
- 7** Identify, secure, and develop adequate funding sources to develop, operate, maintain, and sustain County parks, habitat, and recreation facilities.
- 8** Foster partnerships and county-wide collaboration among park and habitat providers to improve the provision of habitat conservation and recreation services.
- 9** Engage Island County residents in the planning and stewardship of parks, trails, and conservation areas, and provide effective communication to improve awareness and support of County services.

### 7.1.1 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

This Comprehensive Plan Parks and Recreation Element integrates County efforts to provide recreation opportunities and conserve habitat and natural areas within the park land system. For this reason, many goals and policies noted in this Parks and Recreation Element are consistent with the County’s Natural Resources Element. However, the content of this Element does not supersede the information in the Natural Resources Element, which addresses a different context than the parks system.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the Parks and Recreation Element to be consistent with the Capital Facilities Element as it relates to park and recreation facilities. This Element includes estimates of park and recreation demand for a 10-20-year period, an evaluation of facilities and service needs, and an evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities to provide regional approaches for meeting park and recreational demand. This Element is also consistent with other Elements of the County’s Comprehensive Plan, including the Land Use Element, Shoreline Element, and the Critical Areas Ordinance.

To be consistent with other County planning documents, the Parks and Recreation Element utilizes data from the County’s Non-Motorized Trails Plan (NMTP) and Shoreline Master Program (SMP). The current update of the SMP provides direction on priority shoreline habitat for protection and acquisition, while the Parks and Recreation Element addresses recreation needs for beach and shoreline areas.

### 7.1.2 TERMINOLOGY & DEFINITIONS

This Parks and Recreation Element uses the following definitions throughout this Element of the Comprehensive Plan:

**Active (high impact) Recreation:** Activities and/or facilities that generally have a significant impact on the natural environment and/or significant disruption to the quality of the natural character (e.g. increased noise levels). Motorized recreational use (dirt bikes, snowmobiles, etc.), ball fields, playgrounds and tennis courts are examples of active recreation.

**Habitat/Habitat Area:** The area or natural environment in which an animal, plant, or ecological community normally lives, grows, or is found.

**Natural Lands:** Any land area where preservation in its existing state would conserve or enhance natural, scenic, or cultural resources; protect surface water or groundwater supplies; promote the conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches, or tidal marshes; enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, nature reservations, or other open spaces; enhance passive recreation opportunities; preserve historic sites; preserve working agricultural landscapes; or preserve visual quality or scenic vistas along transportation corridors.

**Outdoor Recreation:** Leisure activities (or the act of engaging in a leisure activity) that are typically associated with outdoor, natural, or semi-natural settings, such as a beach, forest, grassland, lake, mountain, wetland, or farmland. Hiking, boating, camping, horseback riding, bicycle riding, fishing, hunting, and nature interpretation are examples of outdoor recreation activities.

**Park Lands:** All the lands managed by Island County which are formally used for or dedicated to outdoor recreation and/or conservation including: 1) Parks; 2) Conservation Areas; and 3) Natural Recreation Areas, which can be overlapping terms.

- **Parks:** Any area that has been set aside or is managed for outdoor recreation purposes and, has associated built elements (e.g., boat ramps, picnic tables, playground equipment, or ballfields).
- **Conservation Areas:** Park lands set aside primarily for ecological conservation or environmental protection. Conservation Areas may include fish or wildlife habitat, aquifer recharge areas, significant ecosystems, ecologically critical areas, or agricultural or forest resource lands that may also support outdoor recreational uses, where these uses do not conflict with conservation efforts.
- **Natural Recreation Areas:** Park lands that offer recreational opportunities in a natural setting but do not meet the definition of a Park or Conservation Area including beach access sites without built elements, off-leash dog parks, and forest areas with a greater focus on outdoor recreational use.

**Wildlife Corridor:** Connected habitats that link larger patches of habitat, allowing the movement, migration, and dispersal of animals and plants, which may not always be linear. Connecting one habitat with another allows species to flow between larger habitat patches, interbreed, genetically mix, and access food and other resources. RCW 36.70A.160 requires identification of open space corridors, that may overlap with wildlife corridors.

## 7.2 EXISTING PARK SYSTEM

Island County is one of multiple jurisdictions and agencies responsible for managing parks and habitat in the County. To understand the role that Island County plays in providing recreation and conservation services, this section describes the planning area, the jurisdictions involved in park and habitat management, and Island County's park, facility, and habitat inventory.

### 7.2.1 JURISDICTIONS INVOLVED IN PARK/HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Island County parks planning requires an understanding of jurisdictional boundaries and responsibilities. The land management jurisdictions defined in 7.2.1 illustrate the context within which Island County operates.

#### 7.2.1.0.1 *Federal*

The United States Navy (USN) and the National Park Service (NPS) are involved in managing parks and habitat lands in the County. The Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI) on Whidbey Island protect natural acreage and provides recreation opportunities. Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (Ebey's Reserve) in Central Whidbey Island, is managed as a partnership; that includes the NPS that owns and manages approximately 400 acres within Ebey's Reserve.

#### 7.2.1.0.2 *State*

The State of Washington supports recreation and habitat conservation through the efforts of several agencies including Washington State Parks, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Fish & Wildlife (WDFW). Washington State Parks operates 9 state parks in Island County including: Deception Pass, Joseph Whidbey, Fort Ebey, Ebey's Landing, Fort Casey, Possession Point, and South Whidbey on Whidbey Island and Cama Beach and Camano Island Park on Camano Island. The Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) manages fishing and shellfish harvest areas. The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) owns forest lands but does not currently manage any commercial forest land in Island County. DNR does help manage the Naas Natural Area Preserve and maintains some conservation easements and the water around Smith and Minor Island as an aquatic reserve.

#### 7.2.1.0.3 *Cities and Towns*

Oak Harbor, Langley, and Coupeville also provide parks and natural areas on Whidbey Island. Island County's largest city, Oak Harbor, has the most park land inventory, Langley and the Town of Coupeville have several small parks and natural areas

#### 7.2.1.0.4 *Park Districts*

North Whidbey Park & Recreation District (NWPRD) manages and operates the John Vanderzicht Memorial Pool and the Clover Valley Park. South Whidbey Park & Recreation District (SWPRD) manages the Community Park & Sports Complex, Deer Lake, Lone Lake and Goss Lake public beaches, and the Trustland Trails.

#### 7.2.1.0.5 *Port Authorities*

The Port of Coupeville operates the Coupeville Wharf and owns Greenbank Farm. The Port of South Whidbey provides several parks, waterfront sites, and a marina. The Port of Mabana does not own park land or operate facilities.

#### 7.2.1.0.6 *School Districts*

The Coupeville, Oak Harbor, South Whidbey, and Stanwood 205 School Districts each provide recreation and play facilities at local schools.

#### 7.2.1.0.7 *Non-Profits*

The Nature Conservancy owns a large parcel of protected land in Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve which includes trails and natural bluff lands. The Whidbey Camano Land Trust (WCLT) acquires land and conservation easements through donation and purchase to protect coastal areas, wetlands and streams, wildlife habitat, working farmlands, scenic vistas, natural areas, and trails. The Land Trust then provides ongoing stewardship on its lands, or in some cases, transfers ownership to other jurisdictions, such as Island County, with a conservation easement in place to restrict future use.

## 7.2.2 **PARK AND HABITAT INVENTORY**

Island County's composite open space, trails, and parks inventory includes 220 sites comprising 10,356 acres owned by Island County Parks and Public Works, Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Langley, Washington State Parks & Recreation, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), NAS Whidbey, North and South Whidbey Park & Recreation Districts, Ports of Coupeville, South Whidbey, and Mabana, Oak Harbor, Coupeville, South Whidbey, and Stanwood/Camano Island School Districts, and nonprofit land trusts.

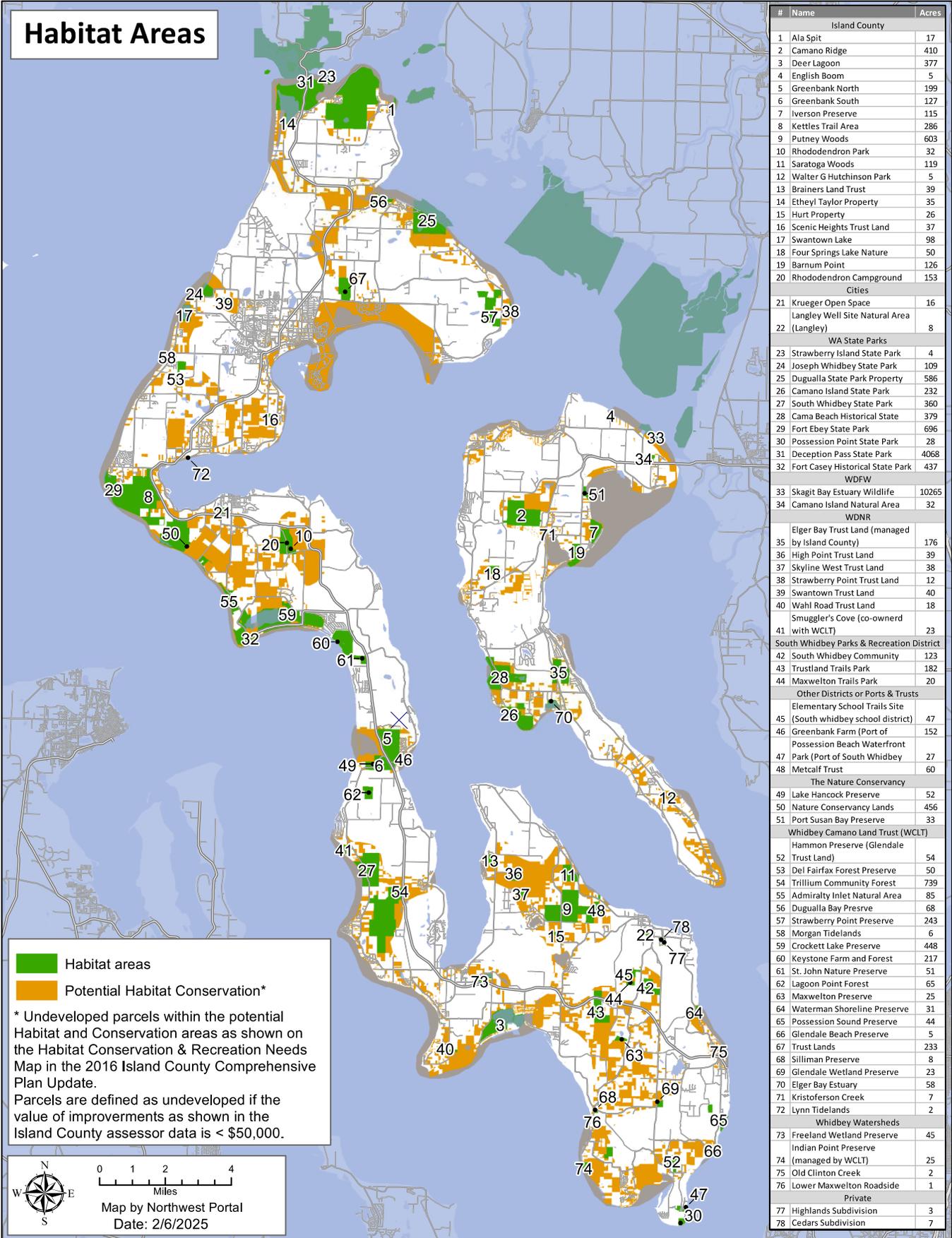
**Table 7-1 Parks and habitat land inventory**

<b>Island County</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>%</b>
Parks Department	50	2,663.8	25.7%
Public Works	7	735.2	7.1%
Unassigned	40	289.2	2.8%
Other non-parks	6	53.4	0.5%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>3,741.6</b>	<b>36.1%</b>
<b>Towns and cities</b>			
Coupeville	10	29.8	0.3%
Langley	15	24.9	0.2%

Oak Harbor	28	160.4	1.5%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>215.1</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
School Districts			
Coupeville	6	50.2	0.5%
Oak Harbor	8	160.4	1.5%
South Whidbey	7	190.7	1.8%
Stanwood-Camano	1	19.9	0.2%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>421.2</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
Other jurisdictions			
Federal	2	44.4	0.4%
State	23	4,787.3	46.2%
Port Authorities	7	229.4	2.2%
Park & Rec Districts	3	300.0	2.9%
Nonprofits/private	7	617.2	6.0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>5,978.1</b>	<b>57.7%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>10,356.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

State agencies, including Washington State Parks & Recreation, DNR, WDFW own 46.2% of the inventory followed by Island County Parks, Public Works, and unassigned with 36.1%. Towns and cities only own 2.1% and all school districts only 4.1% of the composite inventory.

Consequently, state and county agencies combined provide 82.3% of all open space and park assets and thereby affect most of the open space and park opportunities of interest to county residents and tourists.



IS

**Table 7-2 Existing habitat area acreage by jurisdiction** (also see list in the map legend to easily find the location of each of these sites.)

1	Ala Spit	17
2	Camano Ridge	410
3	Deer Lagoon	377
4	English Boom	5
5	Greenbank North	199
6	Greenbank South	127
7	Iverson Preserve	115
8	Kettles Trail Area	286
9	Putney Woods	603
10	Rhododendron Park	32
11	Saratoga Woods	119
12	Walter G Hutchinson Park	5
13	Brainers Land Trust	39
14	Ethel Taylor Property	35
15	Hurt Property	26
16	Scenic Heights Land Trust	37
17	Swantown Lake	98
18	Four Springs Lake Nature	50
19	Barnum Point	126
20	Rhododendron Campground	153
<b>Island County</b>		<b>2,859</b>
21	Krueger Open Space	16
22	Langley Well Site Natural Area	8
<b>Cities</b>		<b>24</b>
23	Strawberry Island State Park	4
24	Joseph Whidbey State Park	109
25	Dugualla State Park Property	586
26	Camano Island State Park	232
27	South Whidbey State Park	360
28	Cama Beach Historical Site	379
29	Fort Ebey State Park	696
30	Possession Point State Park	28
31	Deception Pass State Park	4,068
32	Fort Casey Historical State Park	437
<b>Washington State Parks</b>		<b>6,889</b>
33	Skagit Bay Estuary Wildlife	10,265
34	Camano Island Natural Area	32
<b>WA Dept Fish &amp; Wildlife (WDFW)</b>		<b>10,297</b>
35	Elger Bay Trust Land (1)	176
36	High Point Trust Land	39
37	Skyline West Trust Land	38
38	Strawberry Point Trust Land	12
39	Swantown Trust Land	40

40	Wahl Road Trust Land	18
41	Smuggler's Cove (2)	23
<b>WA Dept Natural Resources (DNR)</b>		<b>346</b>
42	South Whidbey Community	123
43	Trustland Trails Park	182
44	Maxwelton Trails Park	20
<b>Whidbey Parks &amp; Recreation</b>		<b>325</b>
45	Elementary School Trails Site (3)	47
46	Greenbank Farm	152
47	Possession Beach Waterfront Park (4)	27
48	Metcalf Trust	60
<b>Ports and land trust</b>		<b>286</b>
49	Lake Hancock Preserve	52
50	Nature Conservancy Lands	456
51	Port Susan Bay Preserve	33
<b>Nature Conservancy</b>		<b>541</b>
52	Hammon Preserve (5)	54
53	Del Fairfax Forest Preserve	50
54	Trillium Community Forest	739
55	Admiralty Inlet Natural Area	85
56	Dugualla Bay Preserve	68
57	Strawberry Point Preserve	243
58	Morgan Tidelands	6
59	Crockett Lake Preserve	448
60	Keystone Farm and Forest	217
61	St John Nature Preserve	51
62	Lagoon Point Forest	65
63	Maxwelton Preserve	25
64	Waterman Shoreline Preserve	31
65	Possession Sound Preserve	44
66	Glendale Beach Preserve	5
67	Trust Lands	233
68	Silliman Preserve	8
69	Glendale Wetland Preserve	23
70	Elger Bay Estuary	58
71	Kristoferson Creek	7
72	Lynn Tidelands	2
<u>73</u>	Keystone Lake Preserve	<u>216</u>
<b>Whidbey Camano Land Trust (WCLT)</b>		<b>2,462</b>
<u>74</u>	Freeland Wetland Preserve	45
<u>75</u>	Indian Point Preserve (6)	25
<u>76</u>	Old Clinton Creek	2
<u>77</u>	Lower Maxwelton Roadside	1
<b>Whidbey watersheds</b>		<b>73</b>
<u>78</u>	Highlands Subdivision	3
<u>79</u>	Cedars Subdivision	7
<b>Private parks</b>		<b>10</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>24,122</b>
(1) Managed by Island County		

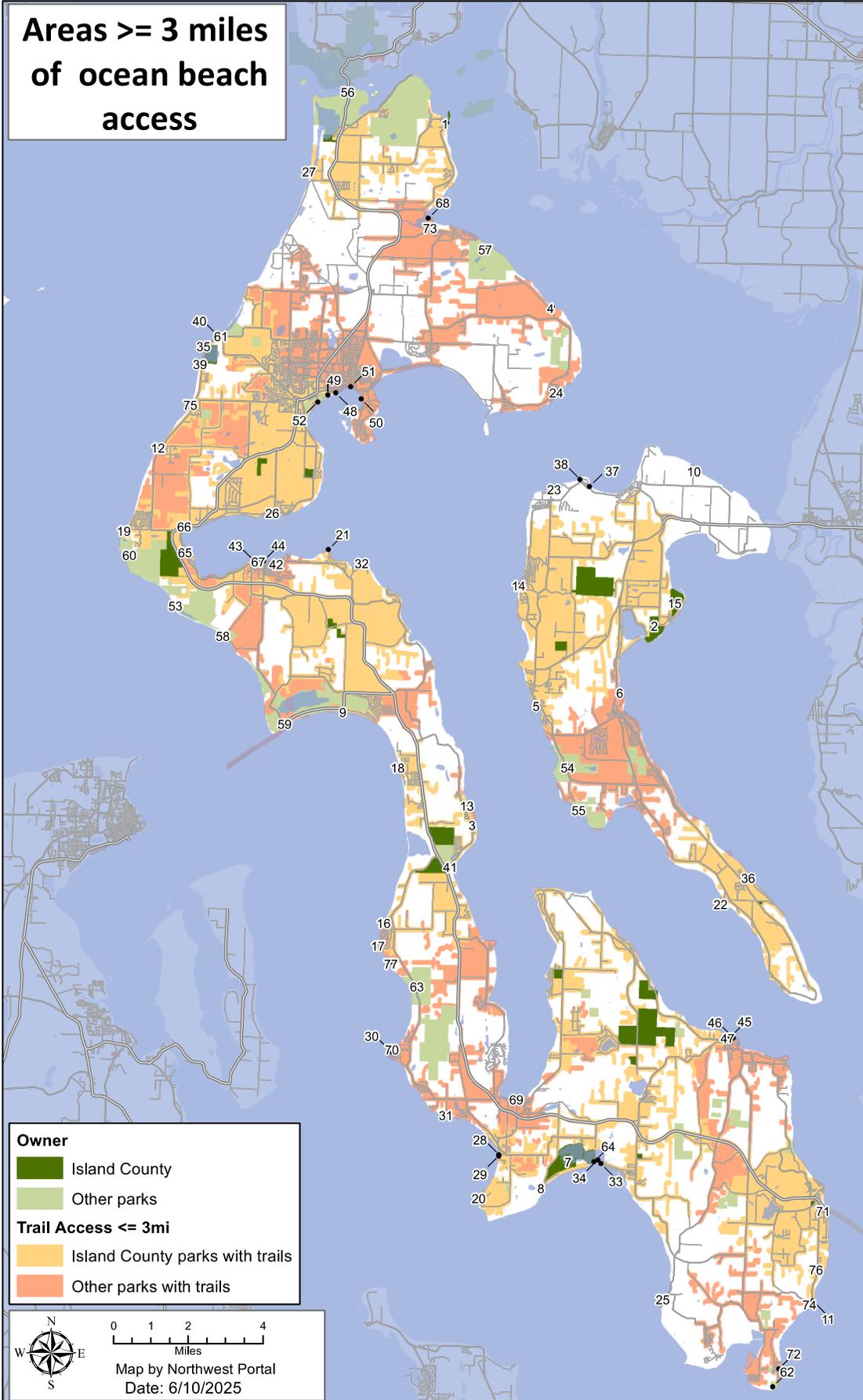
- (2) Co-owned with WCLT
- (3) South Whidbey School District
- (4) Port of South Whidbey
- (5) Glendale Trust Land
- (6) Managed by WCLT

All agencies combined own 78 sites that provide 24,122 acres of habitat of which the largest holdings are by the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) of 2 sites for 10,297 acres or 42.7% primarily due to the 10,265-acre holding for the Skagit Bay Estuary, followed by Washington State Parks of 10 sites for 6,899 acres or 28.6% due also to the 4,068-acre holdings for Deception Pass State Park.

Island County owns 20 sites for 2,859 acres or 11.9% and the Whidbey Camano Land Trust (WCLT) 21 sites for 2,462 acres or 10.2% of the total.

While all agencies own a large habitat inventory, there remain significant habitat lands in the county that are not protected especially in north, central, and south Whidbey Island.

Areas  $\geq$  3 miles of ocean beach access



#	Name
<b>Island County</b>	
1	Ala Spit
2	Barnum Point
3	Beach Combers Road
4	Borgman Road Access
5	Camano View Access
6	Cavalero Beach
7	Deer Lagoon
8	Double Bluff
9	Driftwood Park
10	English Boom
11	Glendale Road End
12	Hastie Lake Road Boat Ramp
13	Hidden Beach
14	High Road End
15	Iverson Preserve
16	Lagoon Point North
17	Lagoon Point South
18	Ledgewood Beach
19	Libbey Beach Park
20	Limpet Lane Road End
21	Long Point Beach
22	Mabana Road End Launch
23	Maple Grove Boat Ramp
24	Mariner's Cove
25	Maxwelton Park
26	Monroe Landing
27	Moran Beach
28	Mutiny Bay Boat Ramp
29	Robinson Beach
30	Sandpiper Ln Beach Access
31	Shore Meadow Beach Access
32	Snatelum Point
33	Sunlight Beach
34	Sunlight County Parcels
35	Swantown Outfall
36	Tillicum Beach
37	Utsalady Boat Ramp
38	Utsalady Vista N Comano
39	West Beach Vista
40	West Beach Vista 3
41	Wonn Road Beach Access
<b>City</b>	
<b>Coupeville</b>	
42	Captain Coupe Park
43	Coupeville Town Park
44	Front Street Stairs
<b>Langley</b>	
45	Langley Seawall Park
46	Boy and Dog Park
47	Thomas Hladkey Memorial Park
<b>Oak Harbor</b>	
48	Flintstone Park
49	Windjammer Park
50	Oak Harbor City Marina
51	Pasek St Water Access
52	Oak Harbor Park Tidelands
<b>Federal - National Park Service</b>	
53	Perego's Lagoon
<b>State</b>	
<b>Washington State Parks</b>	
54	Cama Beach State Park
55	Camano Island State Park
56	Deception Pass State Park
57	Dugualia State Park Property
58	Ebey's Landing State Park
59	Fort Casey State Park
60	Fort Ebey State Park
61	Joseph Whidbey State Park
62	Possession Point State Park
63	South Whidbey State Park
64	Useless Bay
<b>WDFW</b>	
65	Mueller Park
66	Penn Cove N
<b>Districts</b>	
<b>Port of South Whidbey</b>	
67	Coupeville Warf (Coupeville Port)
68	Dugualia Bay Beach (S Whidbey Port)
<b>Whidbey Camano Land Trust</b>	
69	Freeland Park
70	Bush Point Boat Launch
71	Clinton Beach Park
72	Possession Beach Park
<b>Whidbey Camano Land Trust</b>	
73	Dugualia Bay Preserve
74	Glendale Beach Preserve
75	Morgan Tidelands
76	Possession Sound Preserve
77	Smuggler's Cove (WDR & WCLT)

**Owner**

- Island County
- Other parks

**Trail Access  $\leq$  3mi**

- Island County parks with trails
- Other parks with trails

Map by Northwest Portal  
Date: 6/10/2025

**Table 7-3 Waterfront beach acreage and sites by jurisdiction (also see list in the map legend to easily find site locations.)**

<b>Island County</b>		<b>580.8 - 41</b>
1	Ala Spit	16.7
2	Barnum Point	24.5
3	Beach Combers Road	1.1
4	Borgman Road Access	0.1
5	Camano View Access	0.3
6	Cavalero Beach	0.6
7	Deer Lagoon	377.6
8	Double Bluff	2.7
9	Driftwood Park	0.7
10	English Boom	5.2
11	Glendale Road End	0.2
12	Hastie Lake Road Boat Ramp	0.1
13	Hidden Beach	0.6
14	High Road End	0.1
15	Iverson Preserve	115.1
16	Lagoon Point North	0.3
17	Lagoon Point South	0.3
18	Ledgewood Beach	0.6
19	Libbey Beach Park	2.7
20	Limpet Land Road End	0.1
21	Long Point Beach	1.7
22	Mabana Road End Launch	0.1
23	Maple Grove Boat Ramp	0.8
24	Mariner's Cove	0.5
25	Maxwelton Park	20.0
26	Monroe Landing	0.4
27	Moran Beach	0.4
28	Mutiny Bay Boat Ramp	0.1
29	Robinson Beach	1.3
30	Sandpiper Lane Beach Access	0.2
31	Shore Meadow Beach Access	0.1
32	Snatelum Point	0.5
33	Sunlight Beach	0.4
34	Sunlight County Parcels	0.1
35	Swantown Outfall	0.2
36	Tillicum Beach	0.2
37	Utsalady Boat Ramp	1.5
38	Utsalady Vista North Camano	0.2
39	West Beach Vista	2.0
40	West Beach Vista 3	0.1
41	Wonn Road Beach Access	0.4

<b>Towns and cities</b>		<b>123.4-11</b>
42	Captain Coupe Park	1.9
43	Coupeville Town Park	3.6
44	Front Steet Stairs	0.1
45	Langley Seawall Park	0.7
46	Boy and Dog Park	0.7
47	Thomas Hladkey Memorial Pk	0.0
48	Flintstone Park	20.5
49	Windjammer Park	33.2
50	Oak Harbor City Marina	33.8
51	Pasek Street Water Access	0.4
52	Oak Harbor Park Tidelands	28.5
<b>State and Federal</b>		<b>7,503.9 - 14</b>
53	Perego's Lagoon	17.9
54	Cama Beach State Park	379.0
55	Camano Island State Park	232.0
56	Deception Pass State Park	4,068.0
57	Dugualla State Park Property	586.0
58	Ebey's Landing State Park	28.9
59	Fort Casey State Park	437.0
60	Fort Ebey State Park	696.0
61	Joseph Whidbey State Park	109.0
62	Possession Point State Park	28.0
63	South Whidbey State Park	360.0
64	Useless Bay	560.0
65	Mueller Park	0.5
66	Penn Cove North	1.6
<b>Park &amp; Rec Districts and Ports</b>		<b>33.6 - 6</b>
67	Coupeville Wharf	0.3
68	Dugualla Bay Beach	1.9
69	Freeland Park	3.1
70	Bush Point Boat Launch	1.5
71	Clinton Beach Park	0.6
72	Possession Beach Park	26.2
<b>Whidbey Camano Land Trust (WCLT)</b>		<b>385.8 - 6</b>
73	Dugualla Bay Preserve	68.0
74	Glendale Beach Preserve	40.6
75	Morgan Tidelands	6.0
76	Possession Sound Preserve	44.0
77	Smuggler's Cove (1)	11.2
78	Keystone Preserve	216.0

**Total** **8,627.5 - 78**

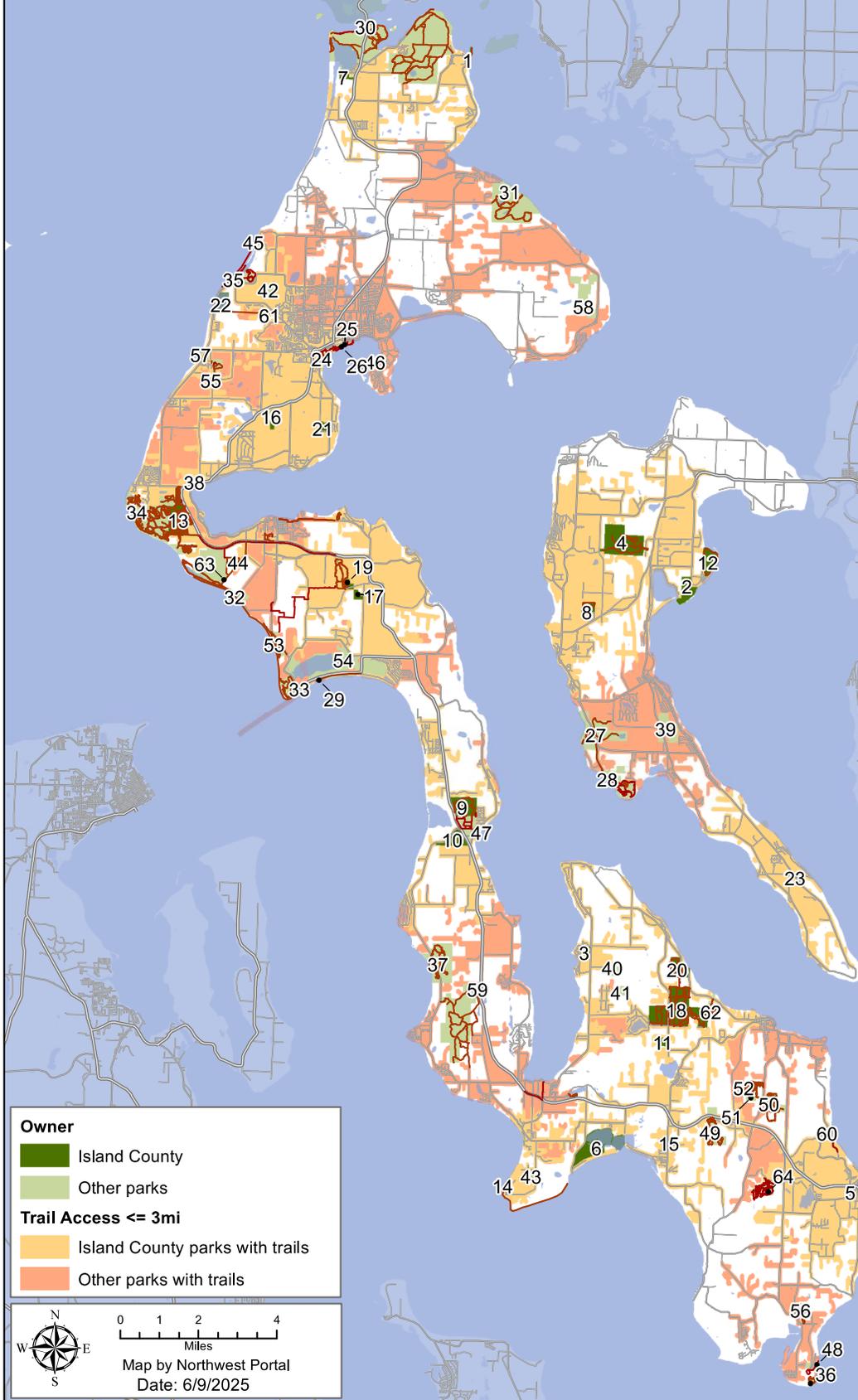
Acreage includes site areas not on the waterfront.

(1) Co-owned with Whidbey Camano Land Trust (WCLT)

All agencies combined own 77 waterfront sites of which 41 sites or 53.2% or owned by Island County, 11 sites or 14.3% by towns and cities, 14 sites or 18.1% by state and federal agencies, 6 sites or 7.8% by park and recreation districts and ports, and 5 sites or 6.5% by the Whidbey Camano Land Trust (WCLT).

While all agencies own a large inventory of waterfront access sites, there remain significant shorelines in the county that are beyond a 3-mile walk/drive zone especially in south Whidbey Island.

Areas within 3 miles of trail access



#	Name
<b>Island County</b>	
1	Ala Spit
2	Barnum Point
3	Brainers Land Trust
4	Camano Ridge
5	Dan Porter Park
6	Deer Lagoon
7	Ethel Taylor Property
8	Four Springs Lake Preserve
9	Greenbank North
10	Greenbank South
11	Hurt Property
12	Iverson Preserve
13	Kettles Trail Area
14	Limpet Lane Road End
15	Marguerite Brons Park
16	Monroe Landing Trust Land
17	Patmore Pit Dog Park
18	Putney Woods
19	Rhododendron Park
20	Saratoga Woods
21	Scenic Heights Trust Land
22	Swantown Lake
23	Walter G Hutchinson Park
<b>City (Oak Harbor)</b>	
24	Freund Marsh
25	Windjammer Lagoon
26	Windjammer Park
<b>State</b>	
<b>Washington State Parks</b>	
27	Cama Beach State Park
28	Camano Island State Park
29	Crockett Lake Trailhead
30	Deception Pass State Park
31	Dugulla State Park Property
32	Ebey's Landing State Park
33	Fort Casey State Park
34	Fort Ebey State Park
35	Joseph Whidbey State Park
36	Possession Point State Park
37	South Whidbey State Park
<b>WDFW</b>	
38	Penn Cove N
<b>WDNR</b>	
39	Elger Bay Trust Land
40	High Point Trust Land
41	Skyline West Trust Land
42	Swantown Trust Land
43	Wahl Road Trust Land
<b>Federal</b>	
44	Ebey's Landing Trailhead (NPS)
45	Joseph Whidbey Beach Trail (US Navy)
46	Naval Airstation Trail (US Navy)
<b>Districts</b>	
<b>Port Districts</b>	
47	Greenbank Farm (Coupeville)
48	Possession Beach Park (South Whidbey)
<b>South Whidbey Park &amp; Rec District</b>	
49	Maxwelton Trails Park
50	South Whidbey Park
51	Maxwelton Trust Land
<b>South Whidbey School District</b>	
52	Elementary School Trails Site
<b>Non-Profits</b>	
<b>Whidbey Camano Land Trust</b>	
53	Admiralty Inlet NAP
54	Crockett Lake Preserve
55	Del Fairfax Forest Preserve
56	Hammon Preserve
57	Morgan Tidelands
58	Strawberry Point Preserve
59	Trillium Community Forest
60	Waterman Shoreline Preserve
<b>Other Non-Profits</b>	
61	Beach View Farm Trailhead (Christian Reformed Church)
62	Metcalf Trust
63	Nature Conservancy Lands
64	Whidbey Institute Trailhead

Table 7-4 Trail miles by jurisdiction (see list in the map legend for trail locations)

<b>Island County</b>		
1	Ala Spit	0.5
2	Barnum Point	N/A
3	Brainers Land Trust	N/A
4	Camano Ridge	3.9
5	Dan Porter Park	Na
6	Deer Lagoon	Na
7	Etheyl Taylor Property	Na
8	Four Springs Lake Preserve	1.6
9	Greenbank North	3.1
10	Greenbank South	N/A
11	Hurt Property	N/A
12	Iverson Preserve	1.7
13	Kettles Trail Area	12.6
14	Limpet Lane Road End	N/A
15	Marguerite Brons Park	N/A
16	Monroe Landing Trust	N/A
17	Patmore Pit Dog Park	N/A
18	Putney Woods	13.4
19	Rhododendron Park	3.4
20	Saratoga Woods	4.2
21	Scenic Heights Trust Land	N/A
22	Swantown Lake	0.4
23	Walter G Hutchinson Park	N/A
<b>Island County total</b>		<b>44.8</b>
<b>Towns and cities</b>		
24	Freund Marsh	1.0
25	Windjammer Lagoon	0.8
26	Windjammer Park	3.0
<b>Towns and cities total</b>		<b>4.8</b>
<b>State and federal</b>		
27	Cama Beach State Park	15.0
28	Camano Island State Park	4.5
29	Crockett Lake Trailhead	1.2
30	Deception Pass State Park (3)	22.6
31	Duguala State Park Property	4.3
32	Ebey's Landing State Park	1.7
33	Fort Casey State Park	2.6
34	Fort Ebey State Park (2)	28.0
35	Joseph Whidbey State Park	5.5
36	Possession Point State Park	0.9
37	South Whidbey State Park	5.1
38	Penn Cove North	N/A
39	Elger Bay Trust Land	N/A

40	High Point Trust Land	N/A
41	Skyline West Trust Land	N/A
42	Swantown Trust Land	N/A
43	Wahl Road Trust Land	N/A
44	Ebey's Landing Trailhead	N/A
45	Joseph Whidbey Beach Trail	1.0
46	Naval Airstation Trail	0.6
<b>State and federal total</b>		<b><u>92.4</u></b>
<b>Park &amp; Rec Districts &amp; Ports</b>		
47	Greenbank Farm	1.9
48	Possession Beach Park	0.8
50	South Whidbey Park	3.6
51	Maxwelton Trust Land	3.2
52	Elementary School Trails Site	3.8
<b>Park &amp; Rec Districts &amp; Ports total</b>		<b>13.3</b>
<b>Nonprofits</b>		
53	Admiralty Inlet NAP	2.3
54	Crockett Lake Preserve	N/A
55	Del Fairfax Forest Preserve	1.0
56	Hammon Preserve	0.3
57	Morgan Tidelands	0.5
58	Strawberry Point Preserve	1.6
59	Trillium Community Forest	7.0
60	Waterman Shoreline Preserve	N/A
61	Beach View Farm Trailhead (1)	N/A
62	Metcalf Trust	1.3
63	Nature Conservancy Lands	5.8
64	Whidbey Institute Trailhead	5.8
<b>Nonprofits total</b>		<b>25.6</b>
65	Oak Harbor Waterfront Trail	3.0
66	Coupeville/SR-20 Trail	5.1
<b>Off-road multipurpose total</b>		<b>8.1</b>
<b>All total</b>		<b>189.0</b>

All agencies combined own approximately 189.0 miles of hike, bike, and horse trails of which 44.8 miles or 23.3% are owned by Island County, 4.8 miles or 2.5% by towns and cities, 92.4 miles or 48.5% by state and federal agencies, 13.3 miles or 6.9% by park and recreation districts and ports, 25.6 miles or 14.5% by nonprofits, and 8.1 miles or 4.2% or off-road.

While all agencies own a large inventory of park trails, there remain significant areas in the county that are beyond a 10-minute walk/drive zone.

### 7.2.2.1 COUNTY LAND BY DEPARTMENT

Island County manages 3,741.6 acres of park land most of which is managed by the Parks Department or Public Works , including 289.2 acres of open space properties held as potential parks or habitat areas, but currently not assigned to a particular department for management.

- The Island County Parks Department, a division of the Public Works Department, is responsible for more than half of the acreage associated with Parks and Habitat Conservation Areas in Island County (1,800 acres).
- Through other divisions, the Public Works Department manages more than 930 acres, including Deer Lagoon, North and South Greenbank Farm, the Kettles Trail System, and a few beach access sites.
- Island County also owns or holds 289.2 acres (44 parcels) that are not assigned to a particular department or division for management. These unassigned sites include wetlands, remnant prairies, beach access, and a number of tax-title lands.
- As special maintenance areas, the Parks Department co-owns with the Port of South Whidbey 3 sites through inter-local agreements including a section of Freeland Park, a section of Maxwellton Park, and Robinson Bay (Boat ramps owned by South Whidbey but maintained by Island County Parks Department).
- Through long-term lease agreements, Island County manages over 330 acres of School Trust Lands owned by the Washington State DNR that include Elger Bay Preserve, High Point Trust land, Strawberry Point Trust Land, Swantown Trust Land, Skyline West Trust Land, Smuggler's Cove Trust Land, and Wahl Road Trust Land.

### 7.2.3 BENCHMARKS

*The National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) Areas and Facilities Standards* has not been updated in more than 20 years and will never again be updated because there is not a single set of standards for parks and recreation that could encompass the uniqueness found in every park agency. Park agencies vary greatly by size, needs and desires; as should a park and recreation agency's offerings. To have the same standard for a community in Washington, Alaska, Kansas, and south Florida is unrealistic, impractical, and potentially detrimental.

Nearly a decade ago, NRPA replaced the single set of standards with a nationwide benchmarking tool for parks and recreation. **NRPA Park Metrics** is the most comprehensive source of data benchmarks and insights for park and recreation agencies. Each spring, NRPA publishes **NRPA Agency Performance Review**, an annual report summarizing the benchmarking data contributed by nearly 1,100 park and recreation agencies to the **Park Metrics** database.

The report presents the “typical” (median) nationwide benchmarking numbers based on peer agency data and the limitations of the former one-size-fits-all set of standards. For example, in the **2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review**: the typical park and recreation agency has 1 park per 2,386 residents. The report, however, indicates significant variation in the metric when the size of the jurisdiction being served by the agency is taken into consideration.

For example, jurisdictions of less than 20,000 residents have a median of 1 park for every 1,172 residents, but agencies serving more than 250,000 residents have a park for every 6,120 people served. In addition, the benchmark data within **NRPA Park Metrics** and the **2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review** break down to the lower (25%) and upper (75%) quartiles.

For example, the ratio of parks per persons for Island County’s 2025 population of 86,267 persons, or within the 50,000-99,999-peer agency population comparison, would be a median of 1 park per 2,346 persons but ranges from 1 park per 1,489 persons in the lower quartile to 1 park per 4,048 persons in the upper quartile.

There is no one-size-fits all solution for maintaining and improving a park and recreation agency. The **2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review** does not provide “standards”, but an informative evidence-based guideline. Factors such as jurisdiction population, the unique needs of each community and funding all play a major role in how an agency operates.

**7.2.3.2.1 Benchmark comparisons**

The following benchmark comparisons are for the low, median, and upper quartiles for park agencies of 50,000-99,000 population since Island County’s 2025 population of 86,267 is projected to increase to 102,639 by 2045. (Note – the next peer agency comparison is for 100,000-249,999 considerably above Island County’s projected population.).

**7.2.3.2.2 Residents per park**

	Lower	Median	Upper
NRPA benchmark	1,489	2,346	4,048
<b>PROS ratios year:</b>		<b>2025</b>	<b>2045</b>
Island County		838	996
All agencies		392	467

The inventory includes publicly accessible county, cities, school districts, federal, state, port, park and recreation districts, and nonprofits.

Island County currently provides 103 parks and open spaces or 1 park per 838 persons and all park agencies combined including the county, cities, school districts, federal, state, port, park and recreation districts, and nonprofits provide 220 parks and open spaces or 1 park per 392 persons, considerably above the ratio typical of peer agencies with 50,000-99,999 population.

If Island County does not acquire more parks by 2045 the ratio of residents per park will be 996 persons and for all agencies combined 467 residents per park which remains considerably above peer agency ratios.

Island County does not need more park property to accommodate resident needs though a considerable portion of the park inventory will be used by tourist, or non-resident interests and users.

### 7.2.3.2.3 *Acres of parkland per 1,000 population*

“Parkland” includes maintained parks and accessible open space areas which does not include conservation easements.

	Lower	Median	Upper
NRPA benchmark	4.8	10.2	17.4
<b>PROS ratios year:</b>		<b>2025</b>	<b>2045</b>
Island County		43.3	36.5
All agencies		120.0	100.9

The inventory includes publicly accessible county, cities, school districts, federal, state, port, park and recreation districts, and nonprofits.

Island County currently provides 3,741.6 acres of parklands or 43.3 acres per 1,000 residents while all park agencies combined provide 10,356.0 acres or 120.0 acres per 1,000 residents.

If Island County does not acquire more parklands by 2045 the ratio of parkland per 1,000 residents will be 36.5 acres per 1,000 residents and all agencies combined 100.9 acres per 1,000 residents which remains considerably above peer agency ratios.

Island County does not need more parkland but rather a diversification of activities on existing parks and properties.

### 7.2.3.2.4 *Acres of conservation easements per 1,000 population*

Conservation easements include purchased or agreements on privately-owned lands to protect wildlife habitat, farmlands, or forests from development. NRPA does not calculate ratios for conservation easements.

	Lower	Median	Upper
NRPA benchmark	na	na	na
<b>PROS ratios year:</b>		<b>2025</b>	<b>2045</b>
Island County		23.5	19.8
All agencies		38.0	31.9

The inventory includes publicly accessible county, cities, school districts, federal, state, port, park and recreation districts, and nonprofits.

Island County currently provides 2,023.0 acres of conservation easements or 23.5 acres per 1,000 residents while all park agencies combined provide 3,278.40 acres or 38.0 acres per 1,000 residents.

If Island County does not acquire more conservation easements by 2045 the ratio per 1,000 residents will be 19.8 acres per 1,000 residents and for all agencies combined 31.9 acres per 1,000 residents.

However, there are significant unprotected wildlife, farm, and forest acreage that needs protection from development that Island County should pursue in concert with cities, federal, state, port, park and recreation districts, and nonprofits.

**7.2.3.2.5 Miles of trail**

	Lower	Median	Upper
NRPA benchmark	8.0	18.1	37.0
<b>PROS miles year:</b>		<b>2025</b>	<b>2045</b>
<b>Island County</b>		<b>44.8</b>	
<b>All agencies</b>		<b>189.0</b>	

The inventory includes publicly accessible county, cities, school districts, federal, state, port, park and recreation districts, and nonprofits. Not all trails have been inventoried in mile.

Island County amenities	Island County	All agencies
Beach access	24	35
Hand carry launch site	2	6
Boat ramp	10	25
Dock/pier	2	4
Campground	1	7
Tent and RV campsites	15	611
Kayak overnight campsite	1	7
Bike overnight campsite		8
Dog park/off-leash areas	5	7
Community garden		3
Picnic facility	25	70
Playground	5	45
Basketball court	0.5	10
Volleyball court	1	6
Tennis court	2	26
Pickleball court	6	7
Disc golf		1
Baseball field	6	33
Soccer field		29
Football field		5
Track		4
Exercise course		3
Skateboard park		3
Pump track		2
Outdoor event space	2	7
Meeting facility	7	16
Swimming pool		2

## 7.2.3.2.6 Amenity benchmarks per median number of residents

	%	Median	2025
Beach access	*	*	2,464
Hand carry launch site	*	*	14,377
Boat ramp	*	*	3,450
Dock/pier	*	*	21,566
Campground	*	*	12,323
Tent, RV campsites	*	*	136
Kayak campsite	*	*	12,323
Bike campsite	*	*	10,783
Dog park/off-leash areas	68%	55,135	12,323
Community garden	52%	56,150	28,755
Picnic facility	*	*	1,232
Playground	93%	3,707	1,917
Basketball court	84%	8,363	8,626
Volleyball court	23%	26,612	14,377
Tennis court	72%	5,865	3,317
Pickleball court	42%	10,500	12,323
Disc golf	20%	58,603	86,267
Baseball field	85%	3,675	2,614
Soccer field	83%	4,070	2,974
Football field	*	*	17,253
Track	*	*	21,566
Exercise course	22%	35,000	28,755
Skateboard park	46%	60,904	28,755
Pump track	*	*	43,133
Outdoor event space	40%	59,000	12,323
Meeting facility	59%	52,000	5,391
Swimming pool	49%	46,353	43,133

**Inventory includes publicly accessible** county, cities, school districts, federal, state, port, park and recreation districts, and nonprofits.

\* **2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review** does not include benchmark or percent provided by comparable agencies.

Island County’s combined agencies provide more recreational facilities per residents than comparable agencies in the 50,000-99,000-population range for all activities except disc golf where NRPA identifies benchmarks. While the inventory does not identify the quality of the facilities, there is nonetheless enough recreational facilities to service the existing Island County population.

NRPA does not provide benchmarks for beach, hand carry, boating, camping, or picnicking facilities. Given the extensive state park system in the county, however, there should be more than enough to satisfy county resident interests.

#### 7.2.3.2.7 *Island County proposed amenities 2025-2045 to existing parks*

Island County Parks and Public Works currently provides an extensive network of beach and fishing access sites, hand carry and boat launch ramps, park hike, bike, and horse trails, off-leash areas and dog parks, picnic facilities, a small number of courts and fields, 2 outdoor event spaces, and 7 meeting facilities.

	2025	2045
Beach access	24	25
Hand carry launch site	2	4
Boat ramp	10	10
Dock/pier	2	2
Kayak overnight camp	0	1
Campsites	15	15
Hiking trail in park	22	25
Biking trail in park	6	6
Horse trail in park	5	6
Dog park/off-leash	5	6
Picnic facility	25	38
Playground	5	6
Basketball court	0.5	0.5
Volleyball court	1	1
Tennis court	2	2
Pickleball court	6	15
Baseball field	6	6
Soccer field	0	1
Skateboard park	0	0
Pump track	0	3
Outdoor event space	2	2
Meeting facility	7	7

This PROS Plan update proposes to add 1 beach access site, 2 hand carry boat launch ramps, 3 park hike, 1 bike, and 1 horse trails, 1 dog park, 13 picnic facilities, 1 playground, 9 pickleball courts, 1 soccer field, and 3 pump tracks to existing parks to realize opportunities to improve and diversify Island County parks.

The county may acquire through purchase or easement additional lands of opportunity containing habitat, beach, or trail connections outlined in the preceding.

**7.2.4 EXISTING COUNTY HABITAT**

All County parks protect habitat, although the amount varies greatly from site to site. Habitat types were identified using the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Northwest Regional Gap Analysis data.

The USGS Northwest Regional Gap Analysis uses remote sensing data from satellite and aerial images to identify different types of land cover in the Pacific Northwest. Although the usefulness of this data for smaller parcels is limited, the data can be used to make generalized conclusions regarding the types of habitats protected in Island County.

The data identifies 25 habitat types in Island County. Working with the Land Trust, the Project Management Team grouped these habitat types into 7 categories, as shown in Table 7-6.

**Table 7-6. Island County Habitats**

<b>Department</b>	<b># of Sites</b>
<b>Water</b>	• Open Water
<b>Developed Parkland</b>	• Developed, Open Space • Developed, Low Intensity • Developed, High Intensity
<b>Farmland</b>	• Pasture/Hay • Cultivated Cropland
<b>Shoreline/Tidal Habitat</b>	• Unconsolidated Shore • Temperate Pacific Intertidal Mudflat • North Pacific Montane Massive Bedrock, Cliff and Talus • North Pacific Maritime Coastal Sand Dune and Strand • North Pacific Hypermaritime Shrub/Herbaceous Headland • North Pacific Maritime Eelgrass Bed • Temperate Pacific Tidal Salt and Brackish Marsh
<b>Forest</b>	• North Pacific Maritime/Douglas-fir/Western Hemlock Forest • North Pacific Broadleaf Landslide Forest and Shrubland • North Pacific Lowland Riparian Forest and Shrubland • Harvested forest-regeneration
<b>Freshwater Habitat</b>	• North Pacific Shrub Swamp • North Pacific Intertidal Freshwater Wetland • Temperate Pacific Freshwater Emergent Marsh • North Pacific Bog and Fen • North Pacific Hardwood-Conifer Swamp
<b>Prairie &amp; Oak Woodlands</b>	"• North Pacific Herbaceous Bald and Bluff • Willamette Valley Upland Prairie and Savannah • North Pacific Oak Woodland"

Approximately 75% of the County’s park acreage is forested, 14% is shoreline or tidal habitat areas; 3% is freshwater habitat, and 1% is farmland. In total, approximately 98% of the Island County park system is characterized by natural land covers and habitat. Developed parkland accounts for just over 3% of the park and habitat system.

## 7.3 COUNTY AREA OF FOCUS

Using findings from public involvement activities conducted as part of the PROS planning process, the following vision, mission, and area of focus are defined for the Parks Department that are consistent with community priorities for recreation and habitat conservation.

### 7.3.1.1 VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES FOR PARKS

**Island County envisions an interconnected system of park lands that provide the best recreation, conservation, and sustainability in the state.**

**Through focused investment, site design, park development, maintenance, and stewardship, Island County Parks will provide outdoor recreation opportunities while protecting priority habitats to support the long-term health and well-being of county residents, the economy, and natural resources.**

- **Sustainability:** We value efficient and effective management and stewardship of natural resources and County park lands to sustain such lands for current and future generations.
- **Quality of Life:** We value the role that park lands play in supporting the long-term health, well-being, and safety of county residents, economy, and natural resources.
- **Recreation:** We value healthy opportunities for outdoor play and relaxation, supported through the provision of accessible park lands, trails, shorelines, natural areas, and outdoor recreation facilities.
- **Habitat Conservation:** We value maintaining and protecting the integrity of Whidbey and Camano Island's significant natural areas.
- **Long-Term Success:** We value vibrant thriving park lands and will strive for excellence in County efforts to create a better future for Island County residents.

### 7.3.2 AREA OF FOCUS

Residents and visitors to Island County have many different needs and desires associated with parks, recreation facilities, trails, and habitat areas. Given limited resources, Island County cannot meet all these needs. Island County Parks Department has defined a specific area of focus within the context of other agencies and groups who provide recreation opportunities and habitat conservation areas on one or both islands.

Island County will provide habitat and outdoor recreation, reflecting a desire to protect habitat and meet outdoor recreation needs. Island County will take a balanced approach toward addressing outdoor recreation and habitat conservation priorities that will require conscientious acquisition, design, development, maintenance, and stewardship of parks to protect critical areas from development while supporting recreation opportunities. Individual areas may be focused on habitat conservation, recreation, or both, according to the County's area of focus.

Figure 7-1. The County's Area of Focus



Island County will focus its resources on providing outdoor recreation opportunities that are compatible with habitat conservation goals. Island County Parks will phase out its interest in the following by encouraging other recreation and habitat providers to address these types of needs:

**Traditional Recreation:** Island County Parks will phase out investments in traditional recreation opportunities, such as those found at Dan Porter, Dave Mackie, the Rhododendron ball fields, and Camano Park, by finding other providers to assume responsibility for the properties who will operate more effectively for public use. The County will limit any new facilities that support active, organized, or indoor recreational opportunities, such as sports fields, basketball, tennis courts, skate parks, community centers, swimming pools, etc. However, the County will maintain the current facilities until other providers can meet these needs, should the community desire these types of opportunities.

**Conservation Areas with no Recreational Uses:** Conservation Areas are lands set aside primarily for ecological conservation purposes but may provide outdoor recreational uses that are secondary to and do not conflict with conservation values. The Island County Parks Department will only invest in lands that both protect habitat and provide for outdoor recreational opportunities. Other Island County departments may continue to protect Conservation Area lands (as provided for in the Natural Resources Element of the Comprehensive Plan) that are not appropriate for recreational uses.

### 7.3.2.1 PARK DEVELOPMENT

In areas that are suitable for outdoor recreation, Island County will support facilities that provide self-directed outdoor activities such as walking, biking, hiking, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, camping, boating, clamming, hunting, swimming and beach activities, and picnicking. The County will avoid active park uses that could damage natural resources and will limit temporary, higher intensity activities (such as large group gatherings) to appropriate sites.

The types of outdoor recreation facilities that are consistent with the County's area of focus and provide a general overview of major considerations for site selection include:

- **Appropriate Amenities and Facilities:** Amenities and facilities are consistent with the County's area of focus. The County may develop parks with any of these amenities unless a site-specific design or resource protection issue makes that amenity impractical or undesirable for a particular site.

- Amenities and Facilities to Consider: Facilities that are consistent with the County's area of focus, but, because of their greater impact, should be carefully planned and considered before development.
- Amenities and Facilities to Avoid: Those that are not consistent with Island County's area of focus and should not be included in County park development.

While not a comprehensive list of allowable or unpermitted uses, regarding the County's area of focus site characteristics and habitat needs will affect facility location, design, and development.

The County's area of focus reinforces and refines the current direction for park and habitat planning, based on community desires, existing resources, and current management strategies. Most, but not all facilities and sites within the County's existing inventory, reflect this area of focus. However, some changes in land and facility management, maintenance, and operations will be necessary to ensure best practices according to the habitat and outdoor recreation provider area of focus. Table 7-11 provides an overview of these management and operation considerations.

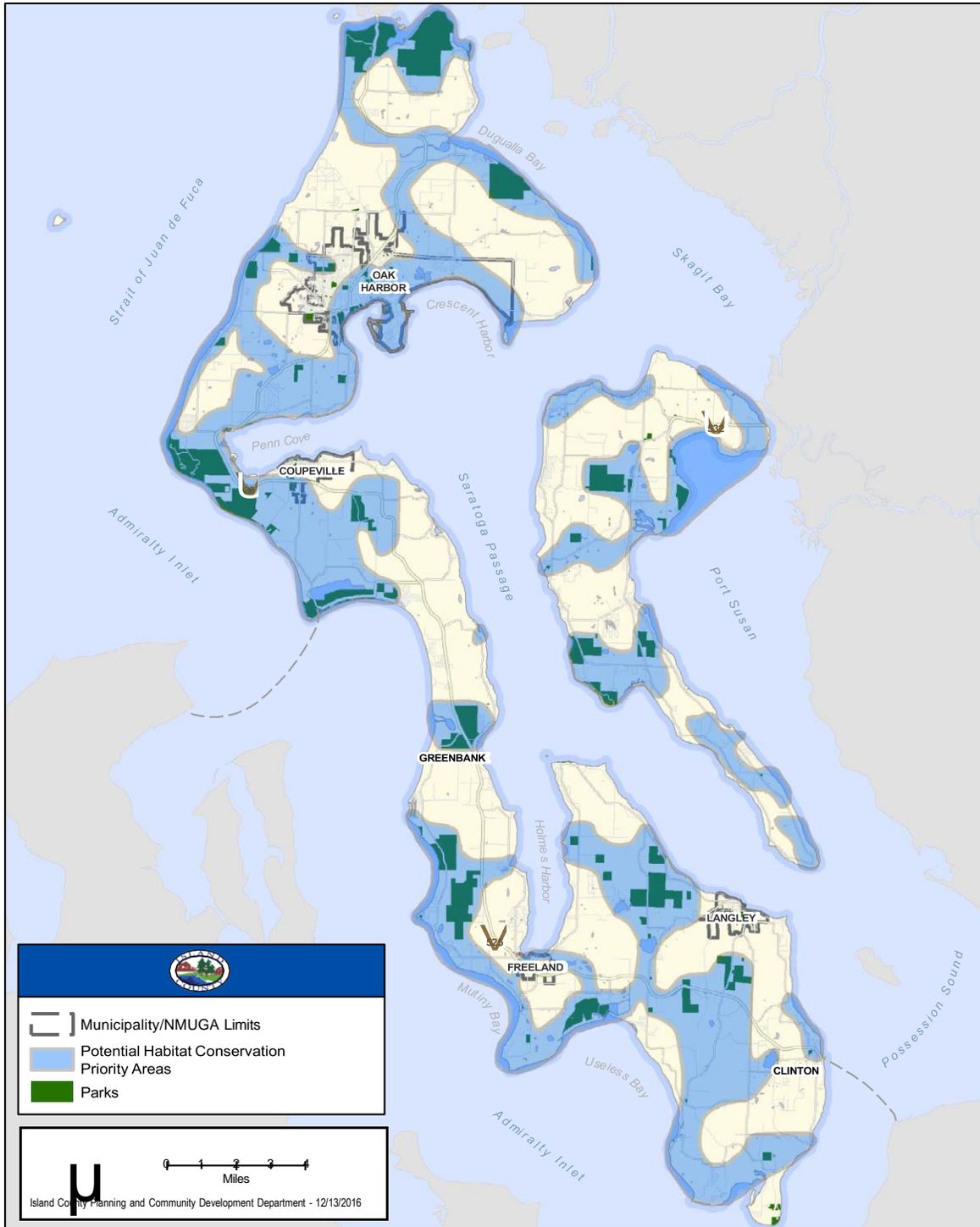
## 7.4 HABITAT CONSERVATION AND RECREATION NEEDS

A 'Community Needs Assessment' was conducted to identify outdoor recreation and conservation needs in Island County that enhance the County's area of focus. This assessment included identification of habitat conservation criteria, a GIS analysis to assess where opportunities are needed for two key County outdoor recreation focuses, and a discussion of needs for additional outdoor recreation opportunities that support the County's area of focus. This section summarizes the methodology and findings of the Community Needs Assessment. The criteria and map will be used, in conjunction with the map of existing open space (map 6E), to analyze and prioritize future potential acquisitions.

### 7.4.1 HABITAT CONSERVATION NEEDS

Island County Parks will limit its focus to habitat areas that have the capacity to address outdoor recreation needs. Island County currently owns and manages lands that support this area of focus by protecting wildlife habitat and open space, improving water and environmental quality, supporting aquifer recharge and water filtering, and protecting critical, sensitive, or ecologically important areas, such as shorelines, wetlands, prairies and oak woodlands, upland forests, while providing recreation access.

**MAP 7L. Habitat Conservation Priorities for Parks Acquisition**



This map is intended to be used as a GUIDE. Island County is providing this information as a general geographic representation that should not be used for precise measurements or calculations. Some of the features on this map are not accurately depicted. Any user of this map assumes all responsibility for use and agrees to hold Island County harmless for liability, damages, or loss incurred by use of this information. Specific questions should be directed to Island County's Department of Planning and Community Development.

Table 7-11. Habitat and Outdoor Recreation Provider Area of Focus

Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County park lands include Parks, Natural Recreation Areas and Conservation Areas that have a capacity to meet the community’s outdoor, low-impact outdoor recreation needs. These park lands contain natural resources that are managed for conservation, as well as amenities and facilities that are maintained for recreation.</li> </ul>
Site Selection:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site size and configuration should be based on habitat and/or recreation needs. Size and shape should be determined by resource conservation or recreational needs.</li> <li>• Site location should be based on the location of significant natural resources (e.g., aquifer recharge areas, habitats of local importance, critical shoreline, important ecosystems, wetlands, etc.) or the location of place-based recreation opportunities (suitable shoreline for boat launches, etc.)</li> <li>• Sites should be well-distributed on both islands to meet the recreation needs of all County residents.</li> <li>• Amenities and facilities should be limited to support the numbers and types of visitors the site can accommodate, while retaining resource value and natural character</li> </ul>
Appropriate Amenities and Facilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site identification and interpretive signs</li> <li>• Appropriate site furnishings for the intended scale and use of the park (benches, picnic tables, bike racks, trash receptacles)</li> <li>• Seasonal or permanent restrooms</li> <li>• Off-street parking</li> <li>• Trail and pathway system</li> <li>• Trailhead or entry/kiosk</li> <li>• Viewpoints or viewing blinds</li> <li>• Equestrian trailheads and staging areas</li> <li>• Motorized boat ramps and hand carry boat launches</li> <li>• Swimming beaches</li> <li>• Water access areas (for clamming, beach walks, etc.)</li> <li>• Shelters (small or medium sized)</li> <li>• Picnic areas (group areas or dispersed tables)</li> <li>• Dog parks and off-leash dog areas</li> <li>• Primitive campgrounds (no electricity, showers, etc.)</li> <li>• Deer hunting areas</li> <li>• Restoration areas for natural resource protection or regeneration</li> <li>• Other amenities compatible with the County’s area of focus</li> </ul>
Amenities and Facilities to Consider:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community gathering and event space to support large-group gatherings (e.g., community festivals, outdoor weddings, trail races, waterfront events, farmer’s markets)</li> <li>• Facilities, concessions, or vendor space to support outdoor recreation (e.g., boat storage, boat moorage, boat rental, bike rental, outdoor ropes course, riding stables, etc.)</li> <li>• Outdoor interpretive or environmental educational facilities (e.g., small amphitheatres, fire rings, shelters/kiosks for environmental programming, etc.)</li> <li>• Outdoor recreation facilities reflecting character of site (e.g., nature play areas, horseshoe pits, disc golf)</li> <li>• Temporary/permanent caretaker’s residences</li> <li>• Storage and maintenance buildings</li> <li>• Community gardens</li> <li>• Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), u-pick farms and orchards, leased agricultural lands, etc.</li> </ul>
Amenities and Facilities to Avoid:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional active use facilities (sports fields, sport courts, skate parks, etc.)</li> <li>• Indoor facilities, including community centers, recreation centers, nature centers, and museums.</li> <li>• Restaurants or indoor concessions that do not support passive outdoor recreation.</li> <li>• High-impact outdoor facilities, such as full-service marinas, RV campgrounds, ATV/OHV areas, swimming pools, golf courses, miniature golf courses, BMX racetracks, equestrian arenas, event amphitheatres, etc.</li> <li>• High maintenance landscaping, such as turf areas, annual plantings, or ornamental gardens</li> <li>• Other uses and programs that conflict with the County’s area of focus</li> </ul>

**Table 7-12. Management and Operations Habitat/Recreation Provider Area of Focus**

<b>Land &amp; Facilities Management</b>	<b>Future Acquisition</b>	Whether acquired through purchase, donation, or transfer, the Island County Parks Department should only acquire new sites that can help meet both low-impact recreation and habitat conservation needs. Other Island County Departments may acquire new sites that provide important habitat and natural resources, as provided for in the Natural Lands Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
	<b>New Facility Development</b>	The County should distribute facilities equitably to provide recreation opportunities in all service areas, while carefully considering habitat needs. Not all sites will be suitable for or have the capacity to support all types of recreation.
	<b>Implication for Existing Land and Facilities</b>	The existing inventory should be evaluated to determine: 1) Which sites and/or facilities do not fit within this area of focus. The County will need a transition strategy to determine how to address these facilities and properties. 2) Which existing sites are suitable for increased recreational development without significantly degrading site habitat function or quality. The County should increase its capital investment at appropriate sites to meet identified needs.
	<b>Maintenance/Operations</b>	This habitat conservation/outdoor recreation area of focus will require increased staffing and/or funding for facility maintenance and habitat stewardship—particularly if habitat restoration is desired. Partnerships with concessionaires and volunteers may be considered to reduce staffing needs.
	<b>Administration/Management</b>	A higher level of habitat management and facility administration is needed. This may include a half-time staff position as a volunteer coordinator and concessions manager to oversee partnerships with volunteers, non-profits, friends' groups, caretakers, lease holders, and concessionaires.
	<b>Programming/Events</b>	Island County should support programs and events that are consistent with its vision, mission, and area of focus. The County is most likely to operate as a facility provider, collaborating with community groups, partners, and concessionaires to provide appropriate programming and outdoor events, such as outdoor community events, environmental education, campground programs, facility-based programming (e.g., boating, hunting, trails), etc.

**7.4.1.1 HABITAT CONSERVATION CRITERIA**

Island County and WCLT discussed key criteria for determining habitat conservation needs and priorities. Because so many agencies and organizations are working on conservation in Island County, Island County will focus on using existing data to be an effective steward of public resources. To evaluate priorities on a County-wide scale, data that is consistent across the entire County is intended to be dynamic, not to paint a static picture of habitat needs across the County. As newer or better information is developed, the County can continue to refine its habitat conservation priorities to make decisions about specific parcels and site specific data can be incorporated if it is available.

Using existing data in Island County, the below criteria was developed to identify priority habitat conservation areas:

#### **7.4.1.1.1** *Identified as a Whidbey Camano Land Trust Priority Habitat:*

As part of the Land Trust's efforts to permanently protect the most important and irreplaceable lands and waters on Camano and Whidbey Islands, the organization has developed a Land Protection Plan and Protection Priorities Map. First created in 2003 based on known data and input from experts, the Land Protection Plan Map highlights the Land Trust's identified target areas. The Land Trust's 2024 Conservation Plan is the fourth iteration of the plan that was originally adopted in 2004 as the Land Protection Plan, and updated in 2010 and 2018. This plan guides the Land Trust's work by identifying priority areas within which to focus landowner outreach to ensure the Land Trust is saving the most important and irreplaceable lands and waters in Island County.

#### **7.4.1.1.2** *Adjacent to Other Conservation Lands:*

Larger protected areas provide better habitat than smaller isolated parcels. For this reason, the criterion included any land within 1,000 feet of Island County park land; Non-profit habitat and easements; State Parks; and NPS sites and easements. These parcels would allow existing conservation lands to expand.

#### **7.4.1.1.3** *Contains Critical Areas:*

Island County identifies and updates Critical Areas through its Critical Areas Ordinance, which includes wetlands and aquifer recharge areas as well as unstable slopes.

#### **7.4.1.1.4** *Contains Rare Habitat:*

Prairies and Oak Woodlands were identified by the Project Management Team as priority rare habitat in Island County.

#### **7.4.1.1.5** *Contains Other Significant Habitat:*

The site contains "Habitats of Local Importance" and "Protected Plant Communities" on Whidbey and Camano Islands or has been identified by the Washington DNR Natural Heritage Program as potentially containing rare plants and ecosystems.

#### **7.4.1.1.6** *Prioritized in the Shoreline Master Program:*

Shoreline areas designated as Aquatic, Natural, Rural Conservancy and Urban Conservancy within Island County, or otherwise identified for habitat conservation in the updated of the SMP.

## **7.4.2 A HABITAT CONSERVATION CONCEPT FOR ISLAND COUNTY**

Map 7L depicts an illustrative habitat conservation concept for Island County, created by applying the criteria described in the section above. This illustration presents an overall concept but does not identify specific needs or priorities for habitat acquisition.

## 7.4.2.1 The habitat conservation concept by geographic area.

### 7.4.2.1.1 *North Whidbey/Deception Pass*

This area contains important aquifer recharge areas, rare habitat, old-growth forest, wildlife habitat, critical shoreline and long stretches of public shoreline, scenic vistas, protected plant communities, unstable slopes, and wetlands.

### 7.4.2.1.2 *Northeast Whidbey Shoreline*

This elongated shoreline area on the northeast side of the island contains important aquifer recharge areas, old-growth forest, long stretches of public shorelines, wildlife habitat, farmland, scenic vistas, areas of critical shoreline, some unstable slopes, and some wetlands.

### 7.4.2.1.3 *Oak Harbor*

Oak Harbor's shoreline area and a stretch on the northeast side of the island contains important aquifer recharge areas, old-growth forest, critical shoreline, wildlife habitat, oak woodlands, significant habitat, protected plant communities and prairie soils, areas of critical shoreline, and wetlands. The Urban development in Oak Harbor on the northeast side of Whidbey Island forms a barrier to wildlife movement, and a wildlife corridor for migration around Oak Harbor should be considered.

### 7.4.2.1.4 *Swantown Lake*

The area near Swantown Lake contains important aquifer recharge areas, habitats of local importance, prime farmland, scenic vistas, wildlife habitat, mature forests, rare habitat, critical shoreline, prairie soils, unstable slopes, and wetlands that provides the opportunity for protection of a wildlife corridor around Oak Harbor on the west side of Whidbey Island.

### 7.4.2.1.5 *Penn Cove Area*

The area north and west of Coupeville contains small aquifer recharge areas, habitats of local importance, rare habitat, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, prime farmlands, critical shoreline, significant prairie soil areas, some protected plant communities, some unstable slopes, and some wetlands that extends from coast to coast, potentially providing an important corridor across Whidbey Island.

### 7.4.2.1.6 *Coupeville South*

The area south of Coupeville contains aquifer recharge areas, habitats of local importance, rare habitat, important wildlife habitat, extensive critical shoreline, scenic and historic vistas, prairie and grassland habitat, oak woodlands, protected plant communities, prime working farmlands, significant prairie soil areas, some unstable slopes, and wetlands.

#### **7.4.2.1.7 Greenbank**

The area immediately around Greenbank has important plant communities and an important aquifer recharge area to the northeast of Greenbank most of which is protected by various agencies or owned by the US Navy. Because Whidbey Island is relatively narrow from the area south of Coupeville to the Freeland area, this region is vulnerable to blockage of north-south wildlife movement over the long term and a protected wildlife corridor should be considered.

#### **7.4.2.1.8 Trillium Community Forest/Bush Point**

This elongated area on the west side of Whidbey Island contains aquifer recharge areas, rare habitat, large areas of wildlife habitat, critical shoreline (on the north side of Bush Point landform), protected plant communities, unstable slopes, and wetlands.

#### **7.4.2.1.9 Freeland**

The area around Freeland, particularly south of Freeland between Mutiny Bay and Useless Bay, includes important aquifer recharge areas, habitats of local importance, fish and wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, prime farmland, critical shoreline, some unstable slopes, and wetlands. As Freeland develops, a protected wildlife corridor should be considered.

#### **7.4.2.1.10 Putney Woods**

This area north includes important aquifer recharge areas and wetlands (especially around Lone Lake and Goss Lake), rare habitat, large areas of forest, wildlife habitat, and unstable slopes.

#### **7.4.2.1.11 Bayview Area**

This area of South Whidbey contains important aquifer recharge areas and wetlands.

#### **7.4.2.1.12 South Whidbey**

The area in South Whidbey includes important aquifer recharge areas, wetlands, critical shoreline, unstable slopes, and habitat of local importance.

#### **7.4.2.1.13 Livingston Bay**

This shoreline area on Camano Island includes some important aquifer recharge areas and wetlands that have been protected. This area is also identified as Tier 1 in the county Salmon Recovery Plan.

#### 7.4.2.1.14 *Four Springs*

The area around the Four Spring Lake Preserve has some wetlands and important aquifer recharge areas.

#### 7.4.2.1.15 *Central Camano*

There are wetlands habitat and smaller aquifer recharge areas between Elger Bay Trust Land, Camas Beach State Park, and Camano Island State Park, and is highlighted for expanding these three larger protected areas.

#### 7.4.2.1.16 *Camano Aquifer Recharge Area*

Camano Island has large aquifer recharge areas northwest of Tillicum Beach.

#### 7.4.2.1.17 *South Camano*

The southern end of Camano Island contains rare habitat and plant communities, feeder bluffs with unstable slopes, some smaller aquifer recharge areas, and wetlands.

### 7.4.3 HABITAT QUALITY RATING CRITERIA

Before acquiring new land for parks and/or habitat conservation areas, Island County should consider the habitat quality of the site. Below are descriptions of each habitat type, along with criteria, to rate the habitat's quality as high, medium, or low for purposes of acquisitions.

#### 7.4.3.1 CONIFER FOREST

Conifer forest refers primarily to upland temperate coniferous forest communities with climax associations dominated by Douglas fir, western hemlock, and western red cedar. Due to logging history, many of these forests are presently dominated by deciduous tree species, particularly red alder and bigleaf maple.

##### 7.4.3.1.1 *High Quality*

- Older aged forests (>80 years) with higher proportions of conifers
- Rare species present
- Large scale (over 50 acres)
- Connected to other forests, natural areas, or water bodies
- Few or no invasive species, especially English ivy

#### 7.4.3.1.2 *Medium Quality*

- Younger forests (40-80 years) with mixed conifers and hardwoods
- Moderate scale (25-50 acres)
- Common species
- Near other forests, natural areas, or water bodies
- Manageable levels of invasive species

#### 7.4.3.1.3 *Low Quality*

- Regenerating forests (5-40 years,) mostly hardwoods or brush
- Small scale (< 25 acres)
- Isolated patch
- Dominated by invasive species

### 7.4.3.2 **GRASSLAND**

Grassland includes native prairies and/or non-native meadows. Native prairies were historically dominated by bunchgrasses, particularly Romer's fescue. Flowering perennials are often visually dominant, and include Indian paintbrush, fritillaria, iris, lupine, and fawn lily. Non-native meadows include hay fields and pastures that may or may not have once been native prairies.

#### 7.4.3.2.1 *High Quality*

- Native prairie plants comprise 50% of flora
- Endemic or listed species are present (e.g. golden paintbrush)
- > 5 acres
- Connected to or near other prairies
- Limited invasive species, particularly Scott's broom

#### 7.4.3.2.2 *Medium Quality*

- Native prairie remnants
- Endemic or listed species recorded in past
- 1-5 acres
- Near other prairies or good environmental education opportunity
- Manageable invasive species

**7.4.3.2.3 Low Quality**

- No native prairie present
- No record of listed species in past
- 1 acre or smaller patch
- Isolated
- Overrun by invasive species, particularly Scott's broom

**7.4.3.3 WETLANDS**

Wetlands are emergent fresh or saltwater marsh, willow scrub, forested swamps, peat bogs.

**7.4.3.3.1 High Quality**

- All or mostly native species
- Natural hydrology is intact
- > 5 acres
- Connected to other natural areas, or water bodies
- Few or no invasive species, particularly reed canarygrass and knotweed

**7.4.3.3.2 Medium Quality**

- Some native species
- Hydrology functional
- < 5 acres
- Near other natural areas
- Manageable invasive species

**7.4.3.3.3 Low Quality**

- No or few native species
- Hydrology severely altered
- < 3 acres
- Isolated
- Overrun with invasive species, particularly reed canary grass or knotweed

**7.4.3.4 FRESHWATER HABITATS**

Freshwater habitat includes rivers, creeks, ponds, and lakes.

#### 7.4.3.4.1 *High Quality*

- Salmon bearing natural stream or lake (or other important species)
- High water quality, no or few point source pollutants
- Intact riparian vegetation
- Linked to other aquatic habitats upstream and down
- Few or no invasive aquatic species

#### 7.4.3.4.2 *Medium Quality*

- Historic salmon habitat (or other important species)
- Moderate water quality, few to moderate point sources
- Some intact riparian vegetation
- Linked to downstream aquatic habitats
- Low levels of invasive aquatic species

#### 7.4.3.4.3 *Low Quality*

- Unnatural water body (i.e. reservoir)
- No history of salmon or other important species
- Impaired water quality, multiple point pollution sources
- Damaged or destroyed riparian vegetation
- Not linked to other aquatic habitats
- High levels of invasive aquatic species

### 7.4.3.5 **SALTWATER (SHORELINE) HABITATS**

Saltwater habitat includes shorelines, tidal flats, beaches, bluffs, inlets.

#### 7.4.3.5.1 *High Quality*

- Important wildlife species use (marine mammals, seabirds, fish)
- Unique vegetation communities (kelp, seagrass, salt marsh)
- Well connected to inland habitats
- Absence of built facilities (docks, riprap, roads)
- Absence of invasive species

#### 7.4.3.5.2 *Medium Quality*

- Past recorded use by important species
- Native vegetation dominates
- Near inland habitats
- Small amount of built facilities
- Manageable number of invasive species

### 7.4.3.5.3 *Low Quality*

- No recorded use by important species
- Non native vegetation dominates
- Isolated from inland habitats
- Large amount of built facilities
- Large amount of invasive species

### 7.4.3.6 **OAK WOODLANDS**

Oak woodland includes groves and savannas.

#### 7.4.3.6.1 *High Quality*

- Older aged woodlands or trees (>80 years)
- Rare species present
- Over 10 acres
- Connected to other habitats, natural areas, or water bodies
- Few or no invasive species

#### 7.4.3.6.2 *Medium Quality*

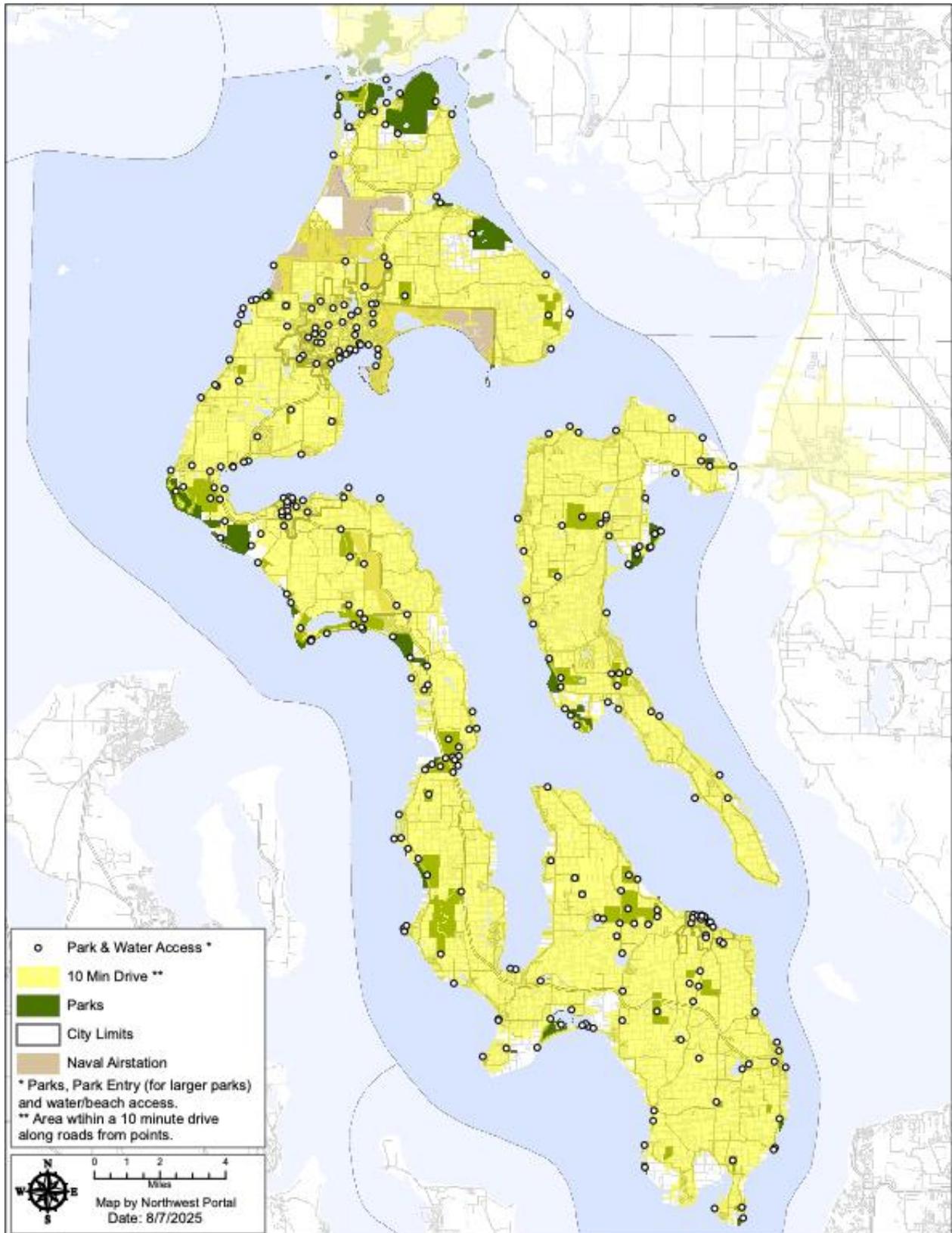
- Younger woodlands or trees (40-80 years) with conifers and hardwoods
- < 10 acres
- Common species
- Near other natural areas
- Manageable levels of invasive species

#### 7.4.3.6.3 *Low Quality*

- Regenerating stands (5-40 years,) mostly hardwoods or brush
- < 5 acres
- Isolated patch
- Dominated by invasive species

## 7.4.4 **RECREATION NEEDS**

Providing quality outdoor recreation opportunities is as important as providing quality habitat areas. The most critical needs, highly prioritized County- wide, are for water access and trail activities. A variety of other outdoor recreation needs were identified through the public involvement process.



#### 7.4.4.1 GEOGRAPHIC NEEDS ANALYSIS

Two critical needs were identified and evaluated using a GIS access analysis that are integral to the provision of outdoor recreation in Island County, and are primary recreation needs for all residents. All County residents should have beach access and an opportunity for a nature walk within 20 minutes from home.

GIS data was used to map service areas around sites that provide beach access or existing trails based on a 3-mile travel distance.

##### 7.4.4.1.1 *Nature Trails*

Combining protected habitat with public access, Island County residents most desired nature trails which were defined as a hard or soft-surfaced trail that provide at least a one-mile walk in nature.

##### 7.4.4.1.2 *Beach Access*

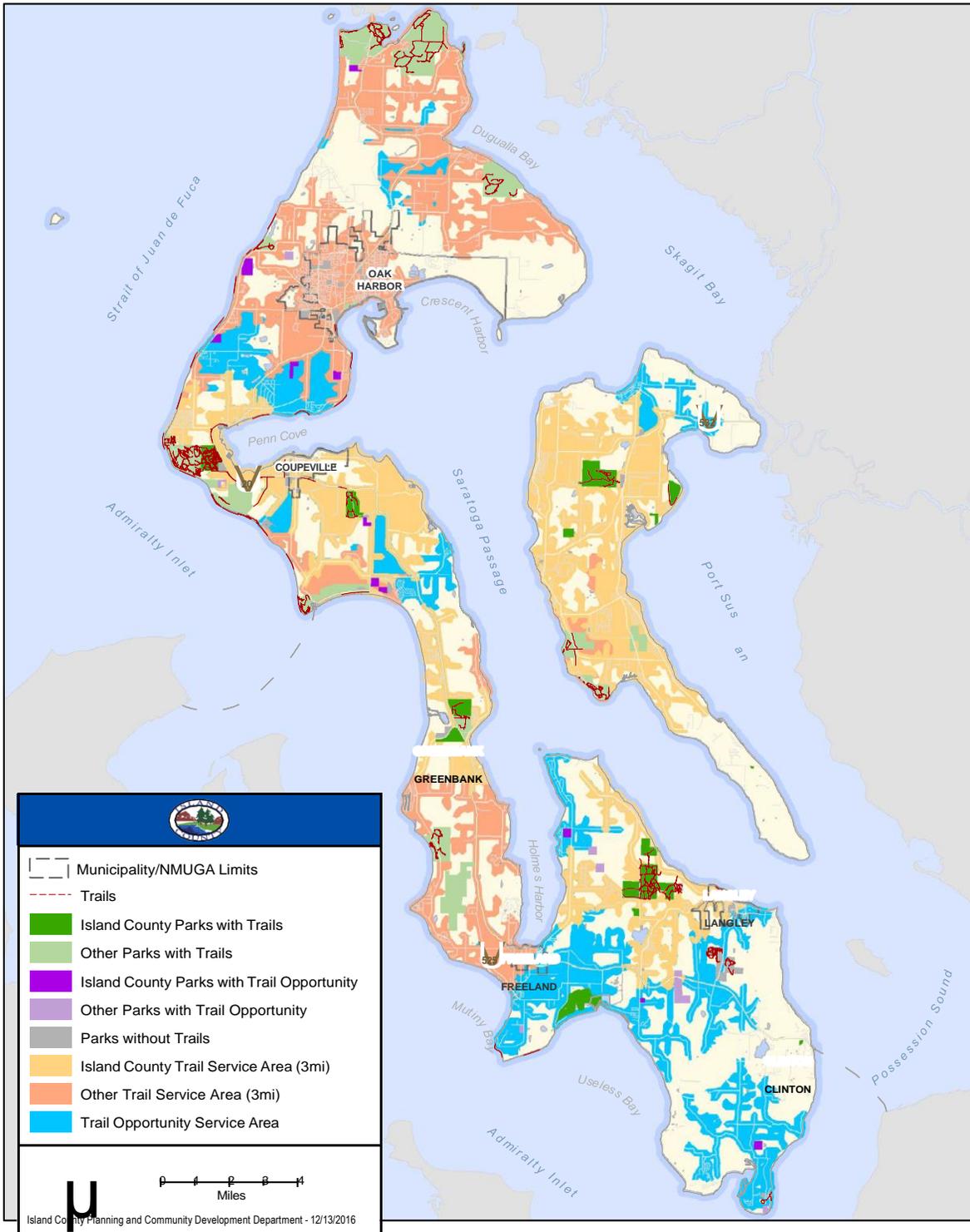
Island County residents indicated public water access is desired that includes more than just a road end, boat ramp, or viewpoint. Places where residents can touch the water and engage in beachfront recreation activities, such as boating, clamming, fishing, beach strolling, wading, etc. A public water access site should be at least one acre in size to allow space for activities.

#### 7.4.4.2 Trail Access and Needs

Island County provides unpaved, soft surfaced trails at 15 sites. While most of these sites are larger parks and habitat conservation areas, sites with trails range in size from 0.3 acres (Hidden Trail Camano View) to nearly 600 acres (Putney Woods). Several sites managed by other agencies also provide trail opportunities, including State Parks, National Parks, and to a lesser extent, habitat areas supported by the cities, town, ports, and recreation districts.

Map 7M illustrates trail access and service areas (following the road network), where residents can engage in a one mile walk in nature. Shorter trail segments, trails at sites too small to incorporate a one-mile trail, and trails in highly developed parks or transportation corridors were excluded from the analysis. As shown on the map, service areas around Island County sites with qualifying trails are shaded in pale orange. However, other jurisdictions also help meet trail needs for a one mile walk in nature. Service areas around other provider's sites with qualifying trails are shaded in pale yellow. White areas on the map indicate gaps in service, or areas where opportunities for trails should be considered.

MAP 7M. Trail Access Opportunities



This map is intended to be used as a GUIDE. Island County is providing this information as a general geographic representation that should not be used for precise measurements or calculations. Some of the features on this map are not accurately depicted. Any user of this map assumes all responsibility for use and agrees to hold Island County harmless for liability, damages, or loss incurred by use of this information. Specific questions should be directed to Island County's Department of Planning and Community Development.

GIS data was used to map service areas around “trail opportunity areas” which are areas or sites of a sufficient size (more than 10 acres), have a lower level of development, and habitat type to perhaps provide a one-mile walk in nature if a trail was appropriate. County-owned sites and sites owned by other agencies were considered as potential opportunities for trail development shown in a hatched purple color on the map.

The remaining white areas on Map 7M reflect areas that are unserved because of limited or no road access or residential development., Trail needs will have to be re-evaluated should these areas develop.

Whidbey Island has several areas where nature trail access is needed, described in more detail below.

#### *7.4.4.2.1 Northeast Whidbey*

The area between Crescent Harbor and Skagit Bay near Strawberry Point is unserved and no trail opportunity areas are present.

#### *7.4.4.2.2 Penn Cove North*

Several trail opportunity areas are present in this unserved area that include Site E (currently undeveloped), Monroe Landing Trust Land (currently lacks an access road), and/or Scenic Heights Trust Land (is currently farmed and forested).

#### *7.4.4.2.3 Coupeville South*

Trails developed in one of two opportunity areas in sites B and D (shaded in purple) would improve service.

#### *7.4.4.2.4 Greenbank/Trillium (East-Central Whidbey)*

There are gaps in the road network to the north of Greenbank, to the north of South Whidbey State Park, and around the Trillium Community Forest. However, existing sites are sufficient to provide service if these areas are further developed.

### 7.4.4.2.5 *Freeland South, between Mutiny Bay and Useless Bay*

Much of south Whidbey is unserved though the County inventory does not include formal trails at Deer Lagoon, the 378-acre site that could support a one-mile walk in nature as could the Wahl Road Trust Land.

### 7.4.4.2.6 *Putney Woods North*

Areas to the northwest (adjacent to Holmes Harbor) of Putney Woods and Saratoga Woods are unserved. While much of this area lacks road access, Whidbey Camano Lake Trust (WCLT) has developed some appropriately located trails at Brainers, High Point, and Skyline West Trust Land.

### 7.4.4.2.7 *Bayview Area*

The area around the Trustland Trails' site (owned by the South Whidbey Parks and Recreation District) and Marguerite Brons Memorial Dog Park lack access to nature trails though both sites have a trail potential. The dog park at Marguerite Brons should be maintained, which limits opportunities for a nature trail at the site.

### 7.4.4.2.8 *South Whidbey/Clinton*

South Whidbey lacks access to a one mile walk in nature although there are two opportunity areas for trail development at Glendale Trust Land and Possession Point State Park. New parks and/or habitat conservation areas are needed around Clinton to address nature trail needs.

Camano Island has good access to nature trails throughout the central portion of the island although the north and south ends are unserved.

### 7.4.4.2.9 *Livingston Bay/North Camano*

North Camano is unserved by nearby nature trails although English Boom is in this area and has trails, this site is too small to provide the desired trail opportunity. A new park or habitat conservation areas is needed to address nature trail needs.

### 7.4.4.2.10 *Camano Aquifer Recharge Area & South Camano*

The southern end of Camano Island lacks trail access although Walter G. Hutchinson Park is in this area and has trails, this site is too small to provide the desired trail opportunity. A new park or habitat conservation areas is needed to address nature trail needs.

### 7.4.4.3 Beach Access and Needs

Island County provides some type of water access at 41 sites, other providers own or manage 18-37 sites for a total of 78 sites that provide water access that include boat ramps, boat docks and marinas, swimming beaches, and other types of water access. 60% of County-owned water access sites are less than one acre in size. In addition, Island County has numerous small beach access points in the inventory that lack support facilities and infrastructure to support this use.

Map 7N illustrates service areas around sites that provide beach access that include County parks and habitat conservation areas, as well as similar public sites provided by other jurisdictions. All service areas are mapped in blue, indicating where residents have access to an applicable beach within a 3-mile travel distance from home. White areas on the map indicate where access to qualifying beachfront sites is not provided.

#### 7.4.4.3.1 *Northeast Whidbey*

The area between Crescent Harbor and Skagit Bay near Strawberry Point is unserved.

#### 7.4.4.3.2 *Penn Cove*

Gaps on the north side of Penn Cove are caused by gaps in the road network in this area.

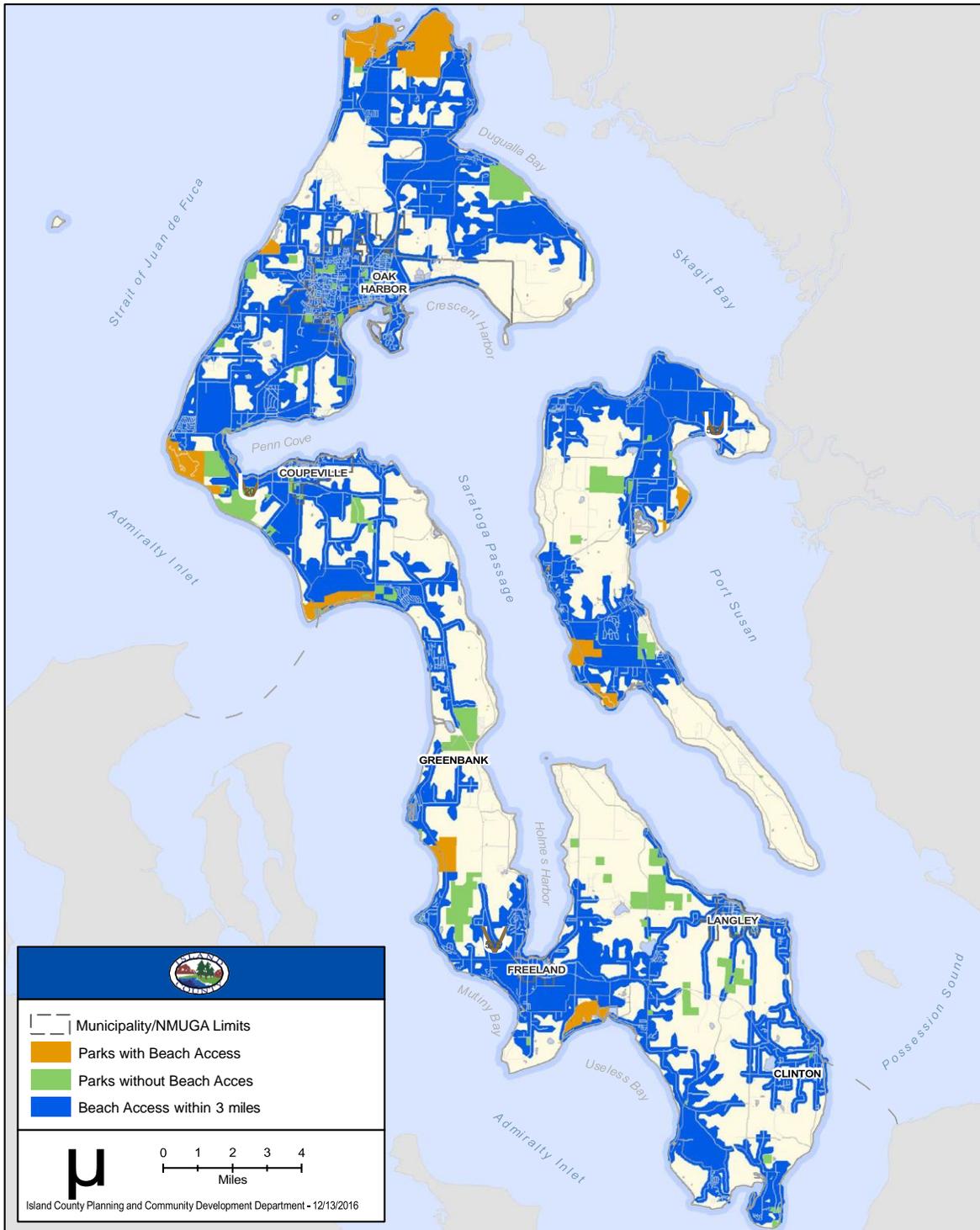
#### 7.4.4.3.3 *Greenbank (Central Whidbey)*

Much of Central Whidbey Island is unserved, especially on the east coast from Coupeville to Greenbank and nearly to Freeland. The area north of Greenbank on the west coast is unserved as well.

#### 7.4.4.3.4 *Freeland South, between Mutiny Bay and Useless Bay*

Access to Double Bluff is limited by the road network in this area, which creates a large gap Limpet Lane Road End (0.1 acres) is in this area but is too small of a site to meet primary recreation needs.

**MAP 7N. Beach Access Opportunities**



This map is intended to be used as a GUIDE. Island County is providing this information as a general geographic representation that should not be used for precise measurements or calculations. Some of the features on this map are not accurately depicted. Any user of this map assumes all responsibility for use and agrees to hold Island County harmless for liability, damages, or loss incurred by use of this information. Specific questions should be directed to Island County's Department of Planning and Community Development.

#### 7.4.4.3.5 *Putney Woods*

The area north and west of Putney Woods, between Holmes Harbor and the Saratoga Passage, lacks beach access. Baby Island Heights site is only accessible by water.

#### 7.4.4.3.6 *South Whidbey/Clinton*

The entire eastern shoreline of South Whidbey is unserved by beach access areas except for areas near Possession Point State Park.

#### 7.4.4.3.7 *Camano Island*

Camano Island lacks beach access at Livingston Bay, Four Springs, and Camano Aquifer Recharge Area.

#### 7.4.4.3.8 *Livingston Bay*

Parts of the Livingston Bay area lack beach access mainly because of road limitations or for its extensive mudflats, which limit opportunities for beach activities.

#### 7.4.4.3.9 *Four Springs*

Central Camano on the west side of the island and north of Henry Hollow is unserved because access is limited due to adjacent residential development. A stretch of the central east coast area of the island is also unserved.

#### 7.4.4.3.10 *Camano Aquifer Recharge Area*

This area lacks beach access.

#### 7.4.4.3.11 *South Camano*

South Camano is unserved by beach access areas, though this highly vegetated, feeder bluff may not provide an opportunity for beach access.

**7.4.4.4 OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS**

Washington State’s Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) develops a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) every 6 years to help decision-makers better understand statewide recreation issues and to maintain Washington’s eligibility for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funds.

RCO conducted a series of 12-month diary surveys of a random sample of Washington State residents in 2000, 2006, 2012, 2018, and 2022 to determine the type of indoor and outdoor recreation activities and events residents engaged in over the year including the resident’s age, gender, ethnicity, income, and regional place of residence.

The 2022 statewide survey was completed by 6,171 persons and collated and weighted by age, gender, region, race, and income of and weighted accordingly. The survey is within a 95% confidence level with a +/-5% confidence interval. Response by age, gender, region, race/ethnicity, and income varies.

The 2022 RCO SCORP survey recorded what residents 18 years and older participated in of 10 recreation categories consisting of over 88 different activities including the participation rate and number of occasions per year and generalized location of activity by city, county, federal, and tribal land. Island County is in the Islands region that includes Island and San Juan Counties.

The 2022 RCO survey elicited what participants did for recreational activities but not where the activity occurred. Survey participants from Island County may engage in activities but possibly outside of Island County, and conversely participants from other regions may travel to engage in activities in Island County. The survey did not control for user transpositions between regions.

Islands region’s participation rates vary slightly from Washington State partly reflecting the availability of different activities in the county, county resident preferences, and statistical variations between the smaller number of survey respondents for the Islands region compared to the state total.

Even so, there are subtle differences where Islands residents engage less in urban activities like athletics and more in farmers’ markets, shellfishing, and wildlife/nature viewing due to the county’s more rural character.

**Annual volumes 2020-2050**

Island County’s annual volume of recreation activity is determined by multiplying Washington State’s age-specific participation rates for each of the 18-0, 41-64, and 65+ age groups by the annual occasion or frequency rates by the number of persons projected to be in each age-specific category for the projection years. (Note - Washington State participation rates are used due to the larger statewide sample size statistical accuracy and identified age group collations.)

The following table itemizes the projected total annual volume in 2020, 2050, and the percent of volume increase that will occur between 2020-2050.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2050</b>	<b>Pct</b>
Scooter riding	109,847	126,502	15.2%
Inline skating	117,149	135,153	15.4%
Volleyball	92,663	106,894	15.4%
Pickleball	161,276	187,793	16.4%
Tennis	131,681	152,288	15.6%

Basketball	136,541	158,014	15.7%
Skateboarding	105,048	120,808	15.0%
Ice sport, hockey	93,710	107,994	15.2%
Golf	200,819	234,089	16.6%
Baseball/softball	154,834	179,467	15.9%
Track	106,911	123,214	15.2%
Ultimate frisbee	83,158	95,586	14.9%
Rugby	78,900	90,589	14.8%
Lacrosse	80,361	92,075	14.6%
Football	91,476	105,552	15.4%
Soccer	146,293	168,950	15.5%
BMX or pump trk	61,625	71,004	15.2%
Model aircraft	123,810	143,451	15.9%
Geocaching	143,265	165,664	15.6%
Yard games –	293,571	342,733	16.7%
Disc golf	98,290	113,508	15.5%
Dog park	409,686	478,115	16.7%
Hanging out	804,393	941,524	17.0%
Playground	346,279	403,987	16.7%
Picnic, BBQ,	470,809	552,656	17.4%
Concert/ event	286,952	335,942	17.1%
Garden, farmers’	568,244	666,771	17.3%
Splash pad	142,083	164,621	15.9%
Paintball	59,218	67,882	14.6%
Shell fishing	308,228	359,479	16.6%
Fishing in boat	325,017	379,497	16.8%
Fishing bank	274,303	320,128	16.7%
Cultural, historic	398,311	467,994	17.5%
Volunteering	332,324	389,552	17.2%
Gather nature	582,097	682,243	17.2%
Wildlife viewing	14,34,997	1,688,108	17.6%
Sledding, tubing	159,617	185,249	16.1%
Inner tubing	132,518	154,098	16.3%
Surfing	152,201	174,890	14.9%
Snorkel diving	95,015	110,414	16.2%
Canoe, kayak	496,066	580,357	17.0%
Sail boating	171,978	200,160	16.4%
Motorboat skiing	407,117	475,466	16.8%
Swim natural	412,563	481,825	16.8%
Swim pools	250,458	292,113	16.6%
Electric bicycling	232,022	270,721	16.7%
Jog, run on trails	368,724	426,826	15.8%
Jog/run on roads	443,864	514,003	15.8%
Walk on trails	1,675,167	1,966,910	17.4%
Walk on sidewalk	2,055,536	2,414,225	17.4%

The total volume that will occur in 2020 and by 2050, Pct – the percent increase the additional volume between 2020-2050 represents.

Source: 2022 RCO SCORP Survey

The total annual volume of all activities will increase from 16,407,016 occasions in 2020 to 19,167,086 occasions by 2050 or by 2,760,070 additional occasions or by 16.8%. An increase in annual occasions from 2020 to 2050, however, will not be proportionately the same for all activities due primarily to the aging of the county’s population and age-related participation rates.

For example, the greatest annual volume and percentage increase will be in walking on sidewalks (358,689 additional occasions from 2020 to 2050 or by 17.4%) and trails (291,744 additional occasions or by 17.4%), and wildlife viewing (253,111 additional occasions or by 17.6%), which are

popular with older age groups.

Conversely, the lowest annual volume and percentage increase will be in paintball (8,664 additional occasions from 2020 to 2050 or by 14.6%) and lacrosse (11,715 additional occasions or by 14.6%) which are popular with younger age groups.

### Activity location

RCO's 2022 Diary-Based SCORP Survey did not identify the specific location of each individual activity, but the survey did collate location by major activity groups by major park ownership including local parks, school districts, state and federal parks, tribal parks, and unspecified.

The location of an activity group depends on the nature of the activity and the availability of appropriate facilities.

For example, athletic, leisure, and trail-based activities are focused on local parks with 38.3% of all athletics, 38.0% of all leisure, and 32.8% of all trail and road-based activities or close to residential areas.

Comparatively, camping (60.5%) and motorized vehicle excursions (50.3%) are focused on state and federal lands where forests, wilderness, and other attractions are located.

Island County includes facilities in all ownerships that appeal to all activity groups, so it is unlikely to be able to adjust (or reduce) the projected Island County 2020-2050 annual activity volumes significantly.

### Specialized activities

Island County should support the following needs in its role as an outdoor recreation provider:

- Boating (Motorized and Non-Motorized Launches)
- Dog Parks
- Camping
- Specialty Trails (Equestrian and Mountain Biking)
- Deer Hunting

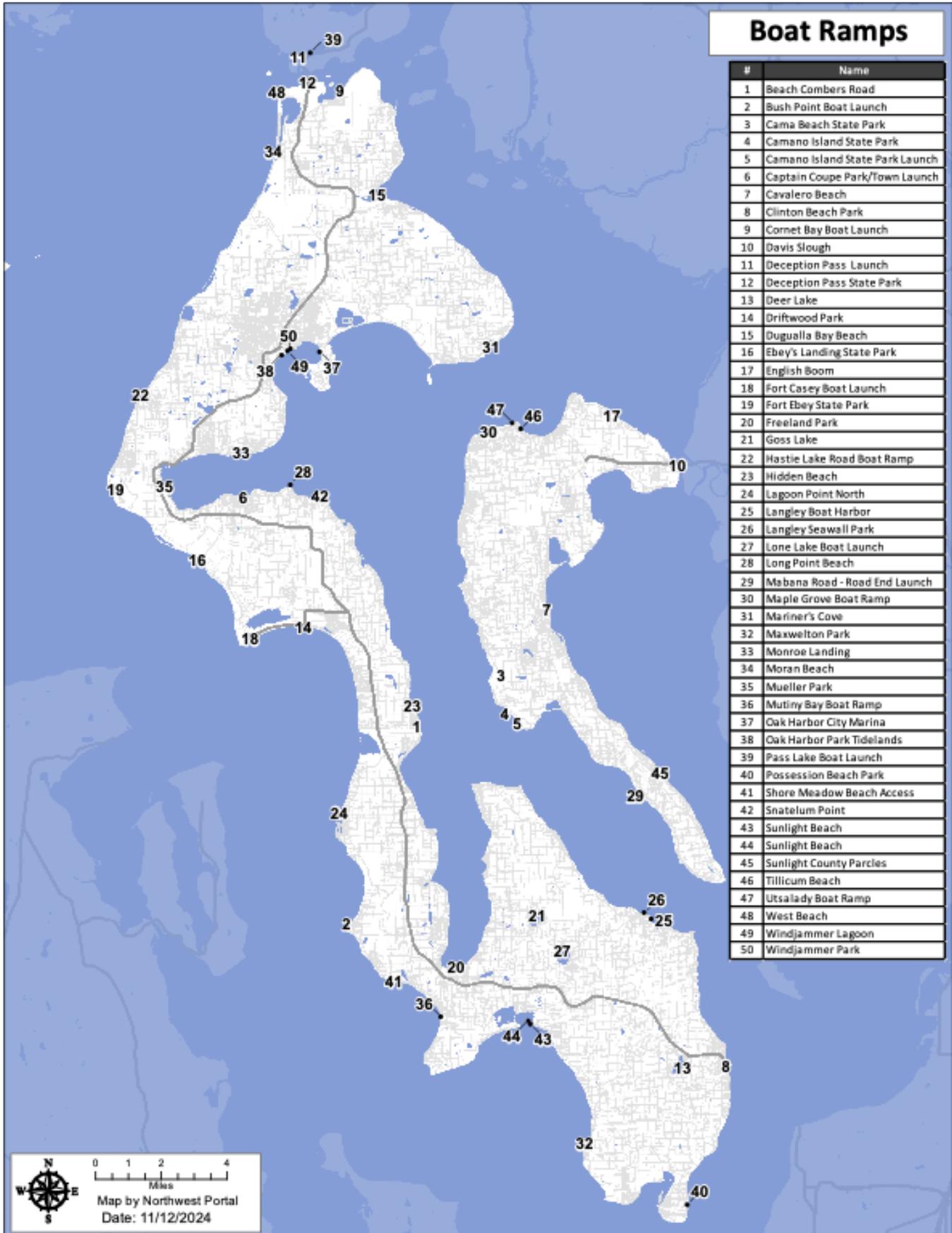
#### 7.4.4.4.1 Boating (Motorized and Non-Motorized Launches)

Island County provides 9 boat ramps and 2 docks, other agencies provide 41 boat ramps and 2 docks/marinas for a total of 50 ramps and 4 docks or piers. Island County provides 2 handcarry launch sites, other agencies provide 4 sites, for a total of 6 sites. These facilities are dispersed throughout the County, with the exception of Central Whidbey, north and south of Greenbank.

The 2026-2032 PROS Plan proposes Island County develop 2 more handcarry launch sites in existing parks to meet demand by 2045.

	Park	Boat Ramp	Pier	Handcarry
Island County	Moran Beach			1
	Mariners Cove	1		
	Monroe Landing	1		
	Coronet Bay		1	
	Hastie Lake	1		
	Freeland Park	1	1	
	Mutiny Bay	1		
	Dave Mackie	1		
	Cavalero Beach	1		
	Maple Grove	1		

	Utsalady	1		
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>



## 7.4.4.4.2 Dog Parks

Island County provides 3 dog parks and 4 off-leash areas, other jurisdictions 1 dog park and 2 off-lease areas for a total of 4 dog parks and 6 off-leash areas. Almost every Island County park, however, allows dog walking on a leash with waste receptacles. The 2026-2032 PROS Plan proposes Island County add 1 additional dog park facility in an existing park site.

	Park	Dog Park	Off-leash
Island County	Double Bluff		1
	Patmore Pit	1	
	North Greenbank		1
	Double Bluff		1
	Marguerite Brons Memorial	1	
	English Boom	1	
	Henry Hollow		1
NWPRD	Clover Valley		1
Oak Harbor	Dog Park	1	
Port Coupeville	Greenbank Farm		1
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

FETCH! (Free Exercise Time for Canines and Humans!), a nonprofit organization, maintains the County's off-leash parks at Double Bluff Beach, Marguerite Brons Memorial Park, Patmore Pit, and Oak Harbor Dog Park (also known as Technical Park).

Except for the beach park at Double Bluff, all FETCH! parks are fenced and provide a mix of amenities, such as picnic tables, shelters, a rinse station, portable toilets, and sheltered bulletin boards, which are maintained by FETCH! Volunteers and funded by membership contributions.

## 7.4.4.4.3 Camping

Island County provides 12 tent and 3 RV or a total of 15 campsites at Rhododendron Campground while other agencies, including Washington State Parks, Coupeville, US Navy, and private organizations provide 809 campsites for a total of 824 campsites including

	Campground	Tent	RV	Cabin	Biker	Kayak	Total	Group#
Island County	Rhododendron	12	3				15	
	Fairground*	15	30				45	
WA State Parks	Cranberry Lake	147	83	1	5		236	3#
	Quarry Pond	7	49	5	1		62	
	Bowman Bay	18	2				20	
	Hope/Skagit Islands					11	11	
	South Whidbey**	46	8				54	60
	Cama Beach			31			31	
	Joseph Whidbey					1	1	
	Fort Ebey		44			6	50	
	Possession Pt					1	1	
	Dugualla					1	1	
	Fort Casey	11	24				35	
Coupeville	Camano Island	88				1	89	100
	Captain Coupe					1	1	

US Navy	Cliffside RV Park***	10	56	6			<b>72</b>	30
Private	North Whidbey RV		100				<b>100</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>354</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>824</b>	

\* Fairgrounds closed during fair.

\*\* Closed indefinitely due to diseased tree hazard to campsites.

\*\*\* Cliffside RV Park is open to active and retired military, reservists, authorized DoD civilians, full-time contractors, and their guests by reservation.

Hope and Skagit Islands are boater-only.

The 2026-2032 PROS Plan proposes to add 1 kayak overnight campsite. Island County could play a larger role in meeting the demand for primitive camping by providing dispersed natural camp sites, or canoe and kayak camps that provide a quieter camping experience in nature. Several areas lack kayak campgrounds, including Camano, East Camano, and Central and South Whidbey.

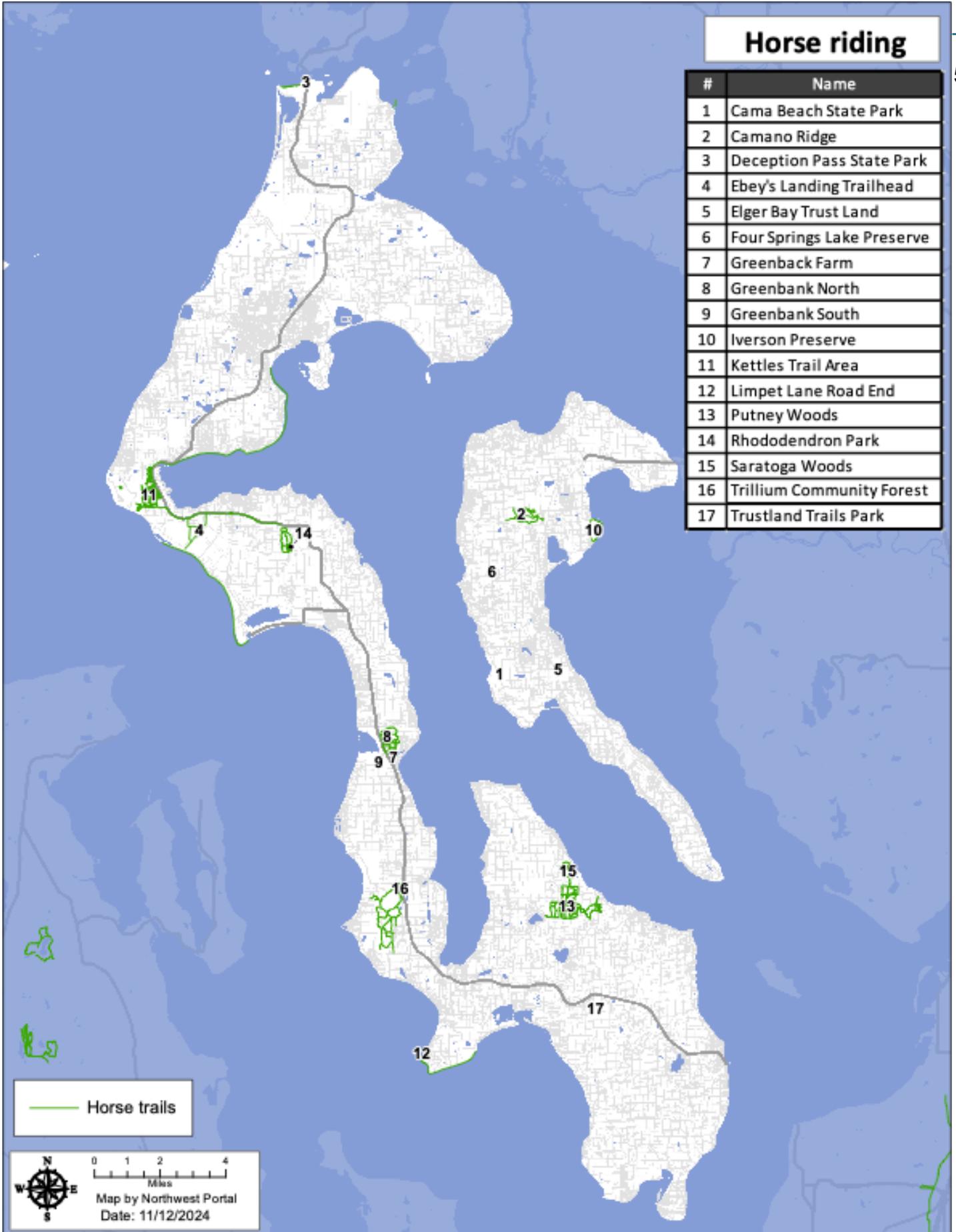
#### 7.4.4.4.4 Specialty Trails (Equestrian and Mountain Biking)

Horseback trail riding are provided at 5 Island County parks including Camano Ridge, Greenbank North, Kettles, Putney Woods, and Saratoga Woods as well as at other trust properties including Trustland Trails, Trillium Community Forest, and Metcalf Trust Trails that are multi-purpose trails for hikers and mountain bikers as well. Several lack equestrian trailheads with room for horse trailer parking, a staging area, hitching rails, or other amenities.

Island County	Hike	Bike	Horse	Miles
1 Ala Spit	X			0.5
2 Barnum Point	X			N/A
3 Brainers Land Trust	X			N/A
4 Camano Ridge	X	X	X	3.9
5 Dan Porter Park	X			Na
6 Deer Lagoon	X			Na
7 Etheyl Taylor Property	X			Na
8 Four Springs Lake Preserve	X			1.6
9 Greenbank North	X	X	X	3.1
10 Greenbank South	X			N/A
11 Hurt Property	X			N/A
12 Iverson Preserve	X			1.7
13 Kettles Trail Area	X	X	X	12.6
14 Limpet Lane Road End	X			N/A
15 Marguerite Brons Park	X			N/A
16 Monroe Landing Trust	X			N/A
17 Patmore Pit Dog Park	X			N/A
18 Putney Woods	X	X	X	13.4
19 Rhododendron Park	X			3.4
20 Saratoga Woods	X	X	X	4.2
21 Scenic Heights Trust Land	X			N/A
22 Swantown Lake	X			0.4
23 Walter G Hutchinson Park		X		N/A
<b>Island County total</b>				<b>44.8</b>

N/A – trail miles not available for these parks.

There are several sites that could be improved to support horse trails, including Greenbank Farm South, and Elger Bay if appropriate trailheads and support amenities were added.



**7.4.4.4.5 Hunting**

The State of Washington regulates hunting and allows deer hunting in season. Deer hunting is allowed at the Trillium Community Forest, Kettles, Putney Woods, North and South Greenbank, and the US Navy allows hunting for staff and residents who have access to the WNAS.

	<b>Park</b>	<b>Hunt deer</b>
Island County	Camano Ridge	Yes
	Kettles	Yes
	Putney Woods	Yes
	North Greenbank	Yes
	South Greenbank	Yes
Land Trust	Trillium Community Forest	Yes
US Navy	WNAS*	Yes
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>

\* Staff and residents who have access to the base only.

Island County has a hunting history and culture that some residents would like to see preserved. The challenge is to be able to safely maintain this use while also addressing other recreation needs.

The County’s approach is to close sites to other uses when allowing hunting. The parcels need to be large enough to accommodate safe firearms discharge during hunting season.

**7.5 FUNDING STRATEGIES**

**7.5.1 STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT PROS PROJECTS**

The funding strategy to implement priority projects in the Capital Facilities Plan is multi-faceted and includes the following:

**7.5.1.1 General fund**

The General Fund is derived from property and sales taxes, licenses and permits, intergovernmental revenues including state and federal grants, service charges and fees, fines and forfeitures, and other miscellaneous revenues. General funds are used to finance most government operations including staff, equipment, capital facility, and other requirements including Parks Department staff administration, operations, and maintenance.

Under Washington State’s constitution counties may levy a property tax rate not to exceed \$1.80 per \$1,000 of the assessed value of all taxable property within county jurisdictional limits. The total of all property taxes for all taxing authorities, however, cannot exceed 1.0% of assessed valuation, or \$10.00 per \$1,000 of value. If the taxes of all districts exceed the 1.0% or \$10.00 amount, each is proportionately reduced until the total is at or below the 1.0% limit.

In 2001, Washington State law was amended by Proposition 747, a statutory provision limiting the growth of regular property taxes to 1.0% per year, after adjustments for new construction. Any proposed increases over this amount are subject to a referendum vote.

The statute was intended to control local governmental spending by controlling the annual rate of growth of property taxes. In practice, however, the statute can reduce the effective property tax yield to an annual level far below a county's levy authorization, particularly when property values are increasing rapidly.

### 7.5.1.2 General levy rate referendums

Proposition 747, the statutory provision limiting the growth of regular property taxes to 1.0% per year, can be waived by referendum approval of a simple (50%) majority of Island County's registered voters. Voters can be asked to approve a resetting of the property tax levy rate that would adjust the amount of revenue the county can generate.

The new total revenue that can be generated by a resetting of the rate would be subject to the same 1.0% limitation, however, and the total amount of revenue and the resulting property tax rate would start to decline again in accordance with the Proposition.

However, the adjusted rate and revenue could finance specific capital improvement projects – or programs that involve construction, maintenance, and operations aspects that a majority of the voters are willing to pay for under the adjusted rate.

The resetting of the rate can be permanent, subject to the provisions of Proposition 747. Or temporary, where the rate is adjusted until a specific amount of revenue has been generated to finance a project or program – whereupon the rate reverts to the original or a specified amount defined in the referendum.

### 7.5.1.3 Special revenues

Special revenues are derived from state and local option taxes dedicated to specific expenditure purposes, such as the motor vehicle tax, motor excise tax, real estate excise tax (REET), motel and hotel tax (Lodging Tax), public art, criminal justice, paths and trails, convention center, and the like.

Some special revenues may be used to finance limited capital facilities, such as roads or parks, where the local option allows – such as the local real estate excise tax (REET) and/or under special circumstances Motel/Hotel or Tourism Taxes or Stormwater Utility Taxes where a project or program can be expensed as a direct extension or beneficiary of these accounts.

### 7.5.1.4 Debt service funds

Debt service funds are derived from a dedicated portion of the property tax or general fund proceeds to repay the sale of Councilmanic (non-voted) bonds and general obligation (voted). Both types of bonds may be used to finance park facility improvements – but not maintenance or operational costs.

**Councilmanic (limited or non-voted) bonds** - may be issued without voter approval by the Commissioners for any facility development purpose. The total amount of all outstanding non-voted general obligation debt may not exceed 1.5% of the assessed valuation of all county property. For this reason, Councilmanic bonds are usually only used for the most pressing capital improvement issues.

**Limited general obligation bonds (GO bonds)** - must be paid from general governmental revenues. Therefore, debt service on these bonds may reduce the amount of revenue available for current operating expenditures and the financial flexibility the Commissioners may need to fund annual budget priorities.

Island County may come to depend on voter referendums as a means of financing a larger portion of the capital improvement program, since limited and unlimited obligation bonds are not paid from the property tax subject to the 1.0% limitation.

### 7.5.1.5 Enterprise funds

Enterprise funds are derived from the user fees and charges levied for utility operations including water and sewer, storm drainage, regional water, solid waste, cemetery, and parks. The enterprise revenues are used to pay operating costs, retire capital facility debt, and plan future replacement and expansion projects. Enterprise funds may be created for a park or recreation activity that has a revenue source sufficient to finance all costs.

### 7.5.1.6 User fees and charges

Island County may elect to use an increasing array of special user fees, charges, and special assessments to pay facility operating and maintenance capital requirements. The user fee approach may be difficult to impose on facilities that don't have readily identifiable or chargeable users - like some park or trail systems. The approach may be very responsive, however, for facilities and services that have an identifiable user group receiving a direct proportional benefit for the charge – like fairground, picnic, marina, and RV campground facilities.

### 7.5.1.7 Special legislation

Local government representatives can seek state enabling legislation authorizing new or special revenue sources. Senate Bill 5972 (RCW 82.46) is an example of one possible legislative solution. The 1982 bill gave county governments the option of adding an additional 0.0025% increment to the real estate excise tax (REET) for the sole purpose of financing local capital improvement projects including parks, utilities, and other infrastructure except governmental buildings. Like bonds, Senate Bill 5972 funds may not be used to finance park operation and maintenance requirements.

### 7.5.1.8 Washington State grants

Washington State, through the Resource Conservation Office (RCO) funds and administers several programs for parks and recreation, and non-motorized transportation and trails purposes using special state revenue programs including the following examples:

**Endangered Species Act (ESA)** - a Department of Ecology administered water quality program provides grants for up to 75% of the cost of water quality/fish enhancement studies. Referendum 39 monies can be applied to park and open space developments that propose to restore, construct, or otherwise enhance fish producing streams, ponds, or other water bodies.

**Washington Wildlife Recreation Program (WWRP)** – provides funds for the acquisition and development of conservation and recreation lands. The Habitat Conservation Account of the WWRP program provides funds to acquire critical habitat, natural areas, and urban wildlife categories. The Outdoor Recreation Account of the WWRP program provides funds for local parks, state parks, trails, and water access categories.

**Capital Projects Fund for Washington Heritage** – initiated on a trial basis in 1999, and since renewed, provides funds for the restoration and renovation projects for historical sites and buildings by local governments and nonprofit agencies. The Heritage Resource Center (HRC) administers the program.

**Boating Facilities Program** – approved in 1964 under the state Marine Recreation Land Act, the program earmarks motor vehicle fuel taxes paid by watercraft for boating-related lands and facilities. Program funds may be used for fresh or saltwater launch ramps, transient moorage, and upland support facilities.

**Aquatic Lands Enhancement Act (ALEA)** - initiated on a trial basis in 1985, and since renewed and expanded, uses revenues obtained by the Washington Department of Natural Resources from the lease of state-owned tidal lands. The ALEA program is administered by the RCO for the development of shoreline related trail improvements and may be applied for up to 50% of the proposal.

**Washington State Public Works Commission** - initiated a program that may be used for watercraft sanitary pump-out facilities.

**Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)** – provides grants to cities, counties, and qualified nonprofit organizations for the improvement and maintenance of existing, and the development of new athletic facilities. The Community Outdoor Athletic Fields Advisory Council (COAFAC) of the RCO administers the program.

**Non-Highway & Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA)** – provides funding to develop and manage recreation opportunities for users of off-road vehicles and non-highway roads. An allocation (1%) from the state Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT) and off-road vehicle (ORV) permit fees fund the program. NOVA funds may be used for the planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, and operation of off-road vehicle and non-highway road recreation opportunities.

**Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program (FARR)** – provides funds to acquire, develop, and renovate public and private nonprofit firearm and archery training, practice, and recreation facilities. The program is funded from a portion of the fees charged for concealed weapons permits.

### 7.5.1.9 Federal grants

Federal monies are available for the construction of outdoor park facilities from the National Park Service (NPS) Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The Washington State Resource Conservation Office (RCO) administers the grants.

**NPS (National Park Service) grants** - usually do not exceed \$150,000 per project and must be matched on an equal basis by the local jurisdiction. The RCO assigns each project application a priority on a competitive statewide basis according to each jurisdiction's need, population benefit, natural resource enhancements and several other factors.

In the past few years, project awards have been extremely competitive as the federal government significantly reduced the amount of federal monies available the NPS program. The state increased contributions to the program over the last few years using a variety of special funds, but the overall program could be severely affected by pending federal deficit cutting legislation.

Applicants must submit a detailed comprehensive park, recreation, and open space plan to be eligible for NPS funding. The jurisdiction's plan must demonstrate facility need and prove that the jurisdiction's project proposal will adequately satisfy local parks, recreation, and open space needs and interests.

Due to diminished funding, however, RCO grants have not been a significant source of project monies for county or other local jurisdictions in recent years.

**TEA21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century)** - can be used to finance on and off-road non-motorized trail enhancements along major and minor arterial collector roads or sometimes, within separate trail corridors. The program was adopted in 1993 and is administered by the Regional Transportation Organization on behalf of the US Department of Transportation.

Applicants must demonstrate the proposed trail improvements will increase access to non-motorized recreational and commuter transportation alternatives.

**National Recreational Trails Program (NRTP)** – is the successor to the National Recreational Trails Act (NRFTA). Funds may be used to rehabilitate and maintain recreational trails that provide a backcountry experience. In some cases, the funds may be used to create new “linking” trails, trail relocations, and educational programs.

### 7.5.1.10 Environmental impact mitigation – subdivision regulations

Island County subdivision policies can require developers of subdivisions on the county to provide suitably designed and located open spaces, woodland preserves, trail systems, tot lots, playgrounds, and other park or recreational facilities. Such facilities may include major components of the park or recreational system that may be affected by the project's location or development.

Island County may also consider requiring developers provide acceptable long-term methods of managing and financing maintenance requirements. Attractive management systems could include:

**Ownership by a private organization** - like a tennis, swimming, or golf club, who assumes responsibility for all maintenance responsibilities and costs,

**Ownership by a homeowners or common property owners' association (HOA)** - who may contract maintenance responsibilities and assess property owner's annual costs, or

**Dedication of property** - to Island County who assumes maintenance responsibilities using county funds.

Island County should not accept title and maintenance responsibility unless the land or facility will be a legitimate park or recreation or open space element that may be supported using public financing. Island County may be contracted by any of the other agencies to provide or oversee a maintenance contract on the owner's behalf provided all Island County costs are reimbursed by an approved method of local financing.

### 7.5.1.11 Growth impact fees

Island County could adopt a park growth impact fee in accordance with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). A park impact fee could apply to all proposed residential, commercial, and industrial developments in the county as a means of maintaining existing park, recreation, and open space levels-of-service (ELOS).

The ordinance could estimate the impact each development project has on park, recreation, and open space facilities within the project's service zone and make provisions for setting aside the resources, including lands or monies, necessary to offset the project's park facility impacts.

The dollar value of the project's park, recreation, and open space impact can be offset by the project developer of an amount equal to the combined facility acquisition and development costs that Island County would incur to maintain the same existing level-of-service (ELOS).

### 7.5.1.12 Facility user fees and charges

Island County could charge an array of special user fees, charges, and special assessments to pay

facility operating and maintenance capital requirements. Proposals to recover recreation program costs could be augmented with additional or higher user fees on picnic shelters, meeting rooms, campgrounds, public gathering areas, and other facilities.

Island County could also increase the number of activities subject to user fees and charges and use the proceeds to purchase land, develop, operate, and maintain facilities where all costs are reimbursed by the revenue obtained. Essentially, Island County would become a facility developer/operator providing whatever facilities or services the market will support from user revenue.

User fees have and could be used to provide facilities for park and recreation activities whose profit margins are too low to sustain commercial operations or whose benefiting user group may extend beyond county boundaries. Possible user fee financed facilities could continue to include recreational vehicle parks and tent campgrounds, and any other facility where demand is sizable enough to warrant a user fee financing approach.

In essence, the market determines which facility's revenues equal costs, and thereby, which programs Island County would provide on a direct costs/benefit basis. While important, this source of finance will likely never pay full costs for all programs, or any operation, maintenance, or development costs.

Some programs designed for youth and family activities, may never generate fees large enough to finance full costs and will require Island County to determine to what extent the public benefits merit the subsidized fee revenues.

The user fee approach may also be difficult to impose on facilities that don't have readily identifiable or chargeable users - like some park or trail systems. The approach may be very responsive, however, for facilities and services that have an identifiable user group receiving a direct proportional benefit for the charge.

#### **7.5.1.13 Conservation Futures (CF) (RCW 84.34.240)**

RCW 84.34.210 authorizes any county, city, town, metropolitan park district, metropolitan municipal corporation, or nonprofit historic preservation corporation as defined in RCW 84.34.250 to acquire open space, land, or rights to future development by purchase, gift, grant, bequest, devise, lease, or otherwise, except by eminent domain, the fee simple or any lesser interest, development right, easement, covenant, or other contractual right necessary to protect, preserve, maintain, improve, restore, limit the future use of, or otherwise conserve, selected open space land, farm and agricultural land, and timberland as such are defined in Chapter 84.34 RCW for public use or enjoyment.

Such entity may acquire such property for the purpose of conveying or leasing the property back to its original owner or other person under such covenants or other contractual arrangements as will limit the future use of the property.

#### **7.5.1.14 Special use agreements**

Special property agreements can often be used instead of property purchases to secure public use rights for land or property at no cost or a nominal fee, particularly where the possible public use is of benefit to the private landowner. Some forms of special use agreements can provide favorable tax benefits if the use agreement can be shown to have an assigned value.

Island County could expand the use agreement concept to include complete development, operation, or maintenance responsibilities. Package lease agreements will usually provide more effectively maintained facilities than possible where Island County must staff specialized, small work crews.

Sometimes package lease agreements covering use and maintenance aspects may be the only way of resolving an equitable agreement with the private ownership. This may include trails on utility corridors

where the ownership may prefer to control development and maintenance activities, and Island County may prefer to avoid any implied responsibility or liability for the utility worthiness that Island County's maintenance of a trail system could imply.

#### **7.5.1.15 Public/private service contracts**

Private market skills and capital may be employed in a variety of ways including the use of public/private services contracts where a private party can be contracted to operate and maintain a facility for a fixed fee cost. Service contracts can be very efficient where the activities are small, scattered in location, seasonal, expert, or experimental. Service contracts are also relatively easy to initiate or terminate if area demand fails to provide sufficient use or revenue to justify continued operation.

Service contracts may be very flexible and can include agreements with the county, school district or local user groups who can or would be interested in sustaining the activity on a subsidized or sweat-equity basis in exchange for the facility.

#### **7.5.1.16 Public/private concessions**

Island County could lease a portion of a site or facility to a private party in exchange for a fixed fee or a percentage of gross receipts. The private operator assumes operation and maintenance responsibilities and costs in exchange for a profit. For certain types of facilities, such as enterprise fund account facilities like a golf course, campground, marina, gun and archery range, or community center Island County's portion of the profits may be used to pay facility development and/or operation and maintenance costs at the same or for similar facility developments.

Island County may save considerable monies on concessions where the activities are specialized, seasonal, experimental, or unproven. Concessions can be easily initiated, provide direct user benefit/cost reimbursements, and relieve Island County of a capital risk should market or user interest fail to materialize to at least break-even levels.

Concessionaires could operate a wide variety of park and recreational facilities including boating and bicycle rentals, special group and recreational vehicle campgrounds, athletic field and court facilities, and boar launches and beaches, among others.

#### **7.5.1.17 Public/private joint development ventures**

Island County can enter into an agreement with a private or public developer to jointly own or lease land for an extended period. The purpose of the venture would be to allow the development, operation, and maintenance of a major recreational facility or activity in exchange for a fixed lease cost or a percentage of gross receipts.

The developer assumes development, operation, and maintenance responsibilities, costs, and all market risks in exchange for a market opportunity providing a profitable return not otherwise available. Island County realizes the development of a facility not realized otherwise in exchange for a low minimum capital return and no or very little capital risk.

Joint development agreements represent an ultimate benefit/cost resolution that may also provide public revenue that Island County could use for other development opportunities. Examples include the possible joint development on Island County lands of recreational vehicle campgrounds, seminar retreats, special resorts, golf courses, and gun and archery ranges, among others.

#### **7.5.1.18 Self-help land leases**

There are instances where an activity is so specialized in appeal or of a service area so broad in scope that it cannot be equitably financed using public funds. Specialized user groups should be provided options for developing or maintaining facilities in ways that account for equitable public cost

reimbursements.

Examples include the use of land leases where Island County may lease land at low or no cost where a user group or club assumes responsibility for the development, operation, and maintenance of the facility. The club could provide volunteer help or use club finances to develop, operate and maintain the facility as a means of meeting user benefit/cost objectives.

Land lease agreements could accommodate organized athletics like soccer, baseball, football, softball, and rugby, or very specialized facilities like shooting ranges, archery fields, OHV trails, and ultra-light aircraft parks, among others.

#### **7.5.1.19 Self-help contract agreements**

Island County can purchase land, develop, operate, and maintain a specialized facility under a negotiated contract agreement where a special interest group agrees to defray all costs in addition to or in lieu of a user fee as a means of meeting user benefit/cost objectives. The agreements can be quite flexible and could contract the city, school district, the user group, another public agency, or a private operator to be developer/operator.

Contract agreements could accommodate a range of more expensive special purpose facility developments including high quality athletic competition facilities for league organizations; and specialized facility developments like shooting ranges and OHV trail systems, or historical or children's museums, or railroad train excursions when and where the user organization can provide financial commitments.

## 7.6 GOALS AND POLICIES

The goals and policies noted in this Element describe how Island County Parks will carry out their mission and achieve the community vision for the park system. Taken together, goals and policies can be a means of measuring Island County’s performance in providing recreation opportunities and conserving habitat areas according to their area of focus.

These goals and policies were developed based on input from staff and community members to provide policy direction for the implementation strategies and actions. All goals, policies, strategies, and actions flow from the vision for park and recreation services and advance the County’s area of focus.

### 2025 UPDATES

**REVISED/NEW**

Goals and policies that have been revised (more than minor text edits) are indicated with blue underlined for added text and ~~red cross-through~~ for removed text.

**Goal 1. Provide a quality, diverse, and sustainable system of park land that effectively balances recreation and habitat conservation needs. Island County is dedicated to ensuring that outdoor experiences in natural environments are accessible to all, regardless of abilities.**

- PR 1.1. Park land should support the mission and vision of Island County Parks with a preference towards providing ~~passive~~ outdoor recreation experiences and protecting habitat.
- PR 1.2. Provide signature park lands and high-quality recreation facilities that reflect the character of Island County, draw users from throughout the region, and establish an identity/brand for Island County Parks.
  - PR 1.2.1. Provide attractive and uniform signage at park entrances to improve the branding of Island County Parks.
  - PR 1.2.2. Improve the image of County parks through sensitive site design and development that reflects Island County’s character.
    - PR 1.2.2.1. Prior to the development of any new ~~minor~~ feature or facility, consider its design, ~~and~~ placement, and ADA access within the park.
    - PR 1.2.2.2. Prior to the development of any new major facility or park, create a site design (for smaller sites) or site master plan (for larger sites) to help achieve the County’s vision for parks lands of being the best in the state.
- PR 1.3. Continue to update the County’s facility inventory to have an accurate count of facilities within all parks, including the length of trails (in linear feet or miles) that are developed and maintained both inside and outside of parks and habitat areas.

- PR 1.4. **Ensure** Require recreational uses and development that do does not result in significant degradation of habitat, including cumulative degradation.
- PR 1.5. Residents of all abilities should have adequate access to “open space” areas. Open spaces include land which contains natural areas, habitat lands, natural drainage features, and/or other environmental, cultural, and scenic resources. Such land should be preserved and provided to residents for recreational use when appropriate. Open spaces should be linked to non- motorized transportation and public transportation.

**Goal 2. Provide low impact **passive** outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the County by increasing access to parks near populated areas such as Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) while emphasizing those that have relatively low impact on the natural environment over others with higher impacts.**

- PR 2.1. Invest in amenities and facilities that support **passive**, ADA access outdoor recreation activities, such as walking, biking, boating, camping, wildlife watching, horseback riding, beach activities, hunting, fishing, clamming, etc.
- PR 2.2. Strive to provide areas where people can walk at least one-mile 5-10-minutes in nature or within a ~~20~~ 10-minute drive from most County residences.
- PR 2.3. Provide additional recreation opportunities and ADA facilities that are consistent with the County’s area of focus, such as dog parks, boat ramps, camping, and hunting, in dispersed locations county wide where safe and appropriate opportunities exist to support these activities.
- PR 2.4. Provide diverse, non-motorized trail opportunities, including both ADA hard and soft-surfaced trails, water trails, looped trail systems, and trails with variety of lengths and access points consistent with the Island County Non-Motorized Trails Plan. Include appropriate amenities to support a variety of trail uses, including pedestrians, equestrians, bikes, non-motorized watercraft, and other appropriate uses.
- PR 2.4.1. Trail development on public lands should be completed through regional collaboration and prioritize linking multimodal transportation, schools, urban development, places of employment, and recreational facilities.
- PR 2.4.2. Development of community trails should be completed through collaboration with private landowners and prioritize providing a recreational experience in nature and lining neighborhood and recreational facilities.
- PR 2.5. Increase the level and quality of development in park lands, where appropriate, to enhance the County’s image as a premier provider of **passive** outdoor recreation opportunities in the Puget Sound area and in Washington State.
- PR 2.6. Monitor community demand for additional outdoor recreation services as the population in Island County continues to grow.
- PR 2.6.1. When a need or gap is identified, the County will look to develop plans to address these discrepancies by expanding existing recreation facilities, acquiring new land, or coordinating with other agencies or private landowners to meet those needs.

PR 2.7. Evaluate existing sites to determine which sites are suitable for increased facility development. Prioritize projects using the prioritization criteria presented in PR 4.7 and add these projects to the County's Capital Facilities Plan.

**Goal 3. Increase public access to the County's fresh and saltwater beaches and shoreline areas, creating recreation opportunities that respect the ecological integrity of the shoreline ecosystem.**

- PR 3.1. Plan, design, maintain, and develop beach access areas for ADA access, walking, beachcombing, fishing, wading, swimming, kayaking, and boating while adhering to the goals and policies set forth in the County's Shoreline Master Program.
- PR 3.2. Inform the public of existing Island County public shore accesses where recreational use does not pose a threat to public health, safety, or the environment. Once a clear County title, a physical location, a viable view, or a viable tidal access is established, the County should identify sites with signs (including from the water side for kayak and canoe pullouts and against motorized boating in sensitive waters) where appropriate and consistent with the most current County's Non-Motorized Trails Plan and Shoreline Master Program.
- PR 3.3. Identify opportunities to increase public waterfront access through the recovery of public road ends where public access is being blocked, with provisions ~~of~~ for swimming beaches, coastal and water vistas, and accesses, motorized and non-motorized boat launches, public boat moorage, and water viewpoints while being consistent with goals and policies set forth in the County's Shoreline Master Program.
- PR 3.4. Strive to provide shoreline access for beach activities where people can walk within 5-10-minutes or within a ~~20~~ 10-minute drive from most County residences.

**Goal 4. ~~Acquire lands that~~ Protect and conserve priority habitat, ~~and~~ natural resources, ~~preserve~~ open space, ~~improve beach access, maintain~~ and island character. Where appropriate, acquire public access rights or title to lands to improve and expand ~~passive~~ outdoor recreational opportunities for public enjoyment including ADA facilities, wildlife viewpoints, beach access, trails, boat launches, and other recreational improvements.**

- PR 4.1. ~~Acquire~~ Protect and conserve land that protects habitat and working landscapes that can help recharge aquifers, prevent surface and groundwater pollution, filter sediments, limit air and noise pollution, maintain wildlife habitat and other natural systems, or to address ~~addressing~~ identified recreation needs while avoiding incremental or cumulative habitat without causing degradation of habitat, including cumulative degradation.
- PR 4.2. Maintain the important ecological functions of park lands, including those provided by wetlands, stream corridors, shoreline systems, and forests.
- PR 4.3. Connect park lands by identifying and conserving wildlife habitat corridors, riparian corridors, and protected space along other elongated natural features—where such connections support trail development and connectivity.

- PR 4.4. Only accept land donations that support the County's area of focus, as well as the goals, vision and objectives noted in this [Comprehensive Plan](#) Element.
- PR 4.5. Foster Island County's economic vitality by protecting productive resources and park lands that support economic activity in industries such as tourism, agriculture, and forestry.
- PR 4.6. Ensure donations from other providers are consistent with the County's area of focus and can be sustainably managed and maintained with identified funding resources, such as a stipend, long-term stewardship fund, revenue-generation strategy, etc.
- PR 4.7. Acquire land using the following criteria:
- PR 4.7.1. The site is adjacent to a County-owned park land so that acquisition would create a larger park land and/or the site is adjacent to a trail and will provide a longer trail corridor.
  - PR 4.7.2. The site is located near park lands owned by other entities. Unlike PR 4.7.1, these parcel must be large (e.g., five acres or more), or contain important habitat, or meet a specific recreational need or wildlife corridor need to justify the County's role in this area.
  - PR 4.7.3. Larger sites typically have higher habitat value, greater recreation capacity, and a greater maintenance cost efficiency. The County should avoid acquiring small habitat parcels, unless these sites contribute to a larger protected area, contain important habitat, or provide a wildlife corridor between protected areas. Also, the County should avoid acquiring sites just large enough to address recreation needs, without space to protect habitat.
  - PR 4.7.4. The County should strive to acquire land that is considered to have a high or medium resource value, to minimize restoration requirements. Habitat quality can be measured by considering factors such as habitat age/maturity, presence of rare [versus protected](#) species, absence of invasive species, and level of degradation (e.g., development, soil compaction, pollution, impacted vegetation, etc.). A sample habitat quality criterion is presented in [section 7.4.3](#) of this Parks and Recreation Element.
  - PR 4.7.5. The land uses and quality of habitat on adjacent or nearby parcels should not negatively impact the scenic and aesthetic value and natural character of the site. The County should consider whether adjacent site characteristics or land management practices (e.g., weed control, invasive species removal, erosion and water runoff, soil contamination, etc.) will affect habitat quality on the site being evaluated.
  - PR 4.7.6. The site meets a need for a [one-mile 5-10-minute walk](#) in nature (or longer nature trail) or beach access for recreation opportunities.
  - PR 4.7.7. The site meets another [passive](#) outdoor recreation need, such as a boat ramp, boat launch, dog park, primitive camp, or equestrian and mountain biking trail and trailhead.

- PR 4.7.8. The site is well-suited for recreation development, based on site characteristics such as slope, shape, access (motorized and non-motorized transportation), amount of street frontage, amount of non-developable land, water and well availability, existing structures, existing vegetation and soil, etc.
  
- PR 4.7.9. The site has (or has a potential for) access and anticipated site use. Zoning restrictions, neighborhood or community character, and access limitations should all be considered when developing public facilities.
  
- PR 4.7.10. The site is not located within the service area of another town, city, or recreation district. The County should strive to address conservation and recreation needs in areas that are not served by another jurisdiction or viable sponsor including Urban Growth Area (UGA) and Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRD)
  
- PR 4.7.11. ~~The site is not adjacent to a site protected by another jurisdiction. If another jurisdiction is in a better position to manage and protect a site, the County may partner to support the other jurisdiction's acquisition of this land.~~ Where a site is adjacent to another jurisdiction the County may partner or support that jurisdiction where it is more effective or efficient for that jurisdiction to protect and manage the site.
  
- PR 4.7.12. If another public agency or non-profit is in a better position to leverage funding for site purchase or a conservation easement, the County may partner or support ~~should allow them~~ the agency to protect this land. ~~particularly if the provider is also able to meet recreation needs.~~
  
- PR 4.7.13. If the site is in a service area with ~~active recreation needs as well as~~ outdoor recreation needs, the County should consider collaboration with another provider who would acquire, administer, manage, and maintain outdoor recreation more effectively. ~~the site. The County does not want to be in the business of supporting active recreational uses on its lands.~~
  
- PR 4.7.14. To be considered for acquisition by the ~~managed by the~~ Island County Parks Department, the a site must satisfy ~~needs to have the capacity to address both~~ habitat conservation ~~and~~ or any proposed outdoor recreation needs.
  
- PR 4.7.15. ~~The site should be in an area of habitat conservation and recreation needs.~~ If a site is in an area where recreation and recreation needs are already met by existing park land, the County should direct its resources to other priority areas where recreation and/or conservation efforts are needed. ~~Another jurisdiction may be better positioned to meet needs in this area.~~
  
- ~~PR 4.7.16. A site can be acquired with minimal cost by the County, such as through donation or grants.~~

PR 4.7.16. The County or other provider is able to pay the annual operating and maintenance costs for the site. The County should avoid providing or accepting from others new park lands where the County is unable to fund site stewardship. If a site is transferred to the County with an operational endowment, this stipend should be on-going or sufficient to cover site land and facility maintenance costs for a minimum of 5 years. That will give Island County time to put a different funding strategy in place.

PR 4.7.17. The site can be sustainably managed using approved revenue-generating strategies to generate funds to support operations and maintenance. This may include user fees, facility rental fees, leases, and other strategies.

PR 4.7.18. The site does not have management or development restrictions in place that limit desired opportunities for revenue-generation, operation, and management within the scope of the County's ~~niche~~ purview, administrative capacity, and jurisdiction.

PR 4.7.19. There are no excessive or hidden costs or efforts needed to address site clean-up, structure removal, habitat restoration, the provision of road access, or facility development.

PR 4.7.20. Avoid providing or accepting new parks and habitat areas if the County or other provider is unable to pay for the subsequent annual operating and maintenance costs of facilities at the site.

PR 4.8. Secure access to private lands and private roads for community trail corridors through use licenses, easements, or other agreements using the following criteria:

PR 4.8.1. The corridor provides a recreational experience in nature or links to multimodal transportation, schools, urban development, places of employment, neighborhoods, or recreational facilities.

PR 4.8.2. A site can be acquired with minimal cost by the County such as ( e.g. PBRS), donations, or grants.

PR 4.8.3. Construction and maintenance will be performed predominantly by volunteers with specialized assistance from the County as resources permit.

**Goal 5. Divest in parks lands that are not in conformance with the County's Comprehensive Plan and stated Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Goals. ~~consistent with the County's area of focus.~~**

PR 5.1. Evaluate County lands to determine which sites do or do not support the vision and goals of this Parks and Recreation Element. Consider divestment of public lands that have little value for conservation or ~~passive~~ outdoor recreation.

- PR 5.2. Should an existing County property with resource restrictions (such as a conservation easement) on its title be considered for divestment, the County shall honor those restrictions. Additionally, should any existing County property with significant conservation value (that does not have any encumbrance on the title) be considered for divestment, the County should consider placing conservation restrictions on the title before divestment.
- PR 5.3. Prior to any divestment of County land, the County should consider transfer of those lands to agencies that will maintain the land for uses that meet recreation or habitat needs **which conform to the County's Comprehensive Plan or its stated Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Goals** ~~that are outside the County's area of focus~~, including, but not limited to, transferring **active** recreation sites to park districts or transferring habitat land without potential for recreational use to a land trust to protect.
- PR 5.4. Create a transition plan for sites or facilities which do not fit within the County's **Comprehensive Plan or its stated Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Goals** ~~defined area of focus~~. Identify which sites (if any) can be sold or immediately transferred to other jurisdictions, and which sites should be held until a long-term transition is feasible.
- PR 5.5. Evaluate **all** funding, actions, and projects by **their** ~~the~~ fit with the County's **Comprehensive Plan or its stated Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Goals** ~~defined area of focus~~. Pursue **projects that support this area of focus and re-evaluate plans that do not**. ~~For example, put immediate hold on any plans to improve active use facilities, such as sport fields, sports courts, and indoor facilities. Do not accept any new lands or renew any maintenance or site use agreements until a transition plan is in place.~~
- ~~PR 5.6. Discuss with the Board of Commissioners whether the County should continue to own and operate any special properties not consistent with the County's area of focus; for example facilities such as Freeland Hall and the Four Springs Lake Preserve.~~
- PR 5.6. Create site master plans for properties not consistent with the County's area of focus and parks that are not accepted by other jurisdictions. Involve site users, nearby residents, and interest groups to create a new plan or design that notes what new facilities will be developed at these sites, when older facilities not consistent with the County's area of focus age or deteriorate to the point where they are unsafe for future use. ~~For example, consider removing the tennis court and softball field at Camano Park and providing a dog park at this facility instead.~~

**Goal 6. Develop stewardship and maintenance programs that cost-effectively protect County assets, emphasize sustainable methods and design, support habitat quality, respond to local needs, and sustain resources for future generations.**

- PR 6.1. Consider a higher level of habitat stewardship to address invasive species removal, natural area restoration, and habitat preservation needs.

- PR 6.2. Increase the level of land stewardship at all County-owned sites. The County should evaluate and budget for habitat stewardship needs. The County should use the funding strategies outlined in [section 7.5 of this Parks & Recreation Element](#) as a starting point in calculating a maintenance budget for habitat stewardship.
- PR 6.3. As part of stewardship efforts, evaluate the condition of natural lands within County parks and habitat conservation areas. Identify which sites would benefit most from restoration efforts. Based on available resources, target sites where restoration is achievable, since maintenance needs will decrease after the ecosystem is stabilized. Maintain other sites at a minimum level for hazard mitigation.

### **Goal 7. Identify, secure, and develop adequate funding sources to develop, operate, maintain, and sustain County parks, habitat, and recreation facilities.**

- PR 7.1. Actively seek innovative funding methods to retain financial flexibility and increase facility services.
- PR 7.2. Consider and maintain diverse funding sources to meet community needs and provide high-quality parks and facilities. Consider impact fees; real estate excise taxes (REET); tourism taxes; conservation futures funds; bonds and levies; grants, donations, and sponsorships; facility/site use fees and rentals; land leases; sustainable resource harvesting; concessions and vendor agreements; and other options that may be available in the short and/or long term.
- PR 7.3. Reinvest revenue and/or resources obtained from park lands, back into recreation and habitat conservation services, whether directly or through a dedicated fund for system-wide conservation and recreation services. This includes any proceeds from facility/site rentals, user fees, leases, vendor or concessionaire agreements, and land divestment (sale or trade). This applies to all lease agreements, user fees, vendor fees, facility and site rentals, etc.
- PR 7.4. Increase the County's maintenance investment in terms of funding and staffing to significantly improve the maintenance level of service for parks and recreation facilities.
- PR 7.5. Revise the accounting and budgeting process for collecting and spending revenues generated through the outdoor recreation system. Rather than establishing independent funds for specific sites (such as Cornet Bay Dock) or projects (such as Camano Island boat ramp improvements), create two funds: Camano Park/Habitat Enhancement Fund and Whidbey Park/Habitat Enhancement Fund. ~~This will allow sufficient funds to accumulate to apply them to most needed projects, rather than piecemeal upgrades at individual sites.~~
- PR 7.6. Increase the level of facility maintenance and land stewardship at the most-frequently used County-owned sites.
- ~~PR 7.7. —Even though the County is moving towards low-maintenance Park facilities, the maintenance budget should be increased to ensure the County parks are maintained properly.~~
- PR 7.7. Implement low-maintenance landscaping techniques in all existing and new park sites. ~~Remove turf areas that do not support specific recreational uses. Avoid high-maintenance plantings.~~

~~PR 7.9. Identify and implement other resource-based funding strategies, tied into a marketing campaign to advertise County resources.~~

PR 7.8. Create a transition strategy that defines an appropriate level of maintenance investment in facilities that do not support the County's area of focus. ~~Define a funding threshold for repairs, but do not engage in a major capital reinvestment.~~

PR 7.9. Renovate or replace capital facilities that support the County's area of focus, as well as the goals, vision and objectives noted in this [Parks & Recreation Element](#).

~~PR 7.12. Avoid providing or accepting new parks and habitat areas (together with planned or built facilities) if the County or other provider is unable to pay for the subsequent annual operating and maintenance costs of facilities at the site.~~

PR 7.10. ~~Non-capital alternatives may be pursued~~ If operating and maintenance cost restrictions prohibit capital construction [then non-capital alternatives must be pursued.](#)

PR 7.11. Create strategies or a business plan for facilities ~~identified in PR 5-6,~~ [such as Freeland Hall and Four Springs Reserve](#) which are not consistent with the County's area of focus, to recover costs sufficient to support their maintenance and operations. ~~For example, at Freeland Hall, either charge fees for grounds maintenance or create an agreement where the Holmes Harbor Activities Club provides all site and grounds maintenance and improvements.~~

#### **Goal 8. Foster partnerships and county-wide collaboration among park and habitat providers to improve the provision of habitat conservation and recreation services.**

PR 8.1. Support a comprehensive, county-wide park and habitat system that integrates Island County lands within a larger system supported by multiple jurisdictions, organizations, and public and private agencies.

PR 8.2. Continue to cooperate with State and Federal agencies, local governments, special purpose districts, non-profits and other organizations to achieve the vision and goals set forth in this [Parks & Recreation Element](#).

PR 8.3. Acquire and manage park lands in ways that complement other public and private recreation and conservation efforts.

PR 8.4. Continue to coordinate with other County departments and jurisdictions in consolidating and defining the methods to identify, retain, and conserve natural lands and habitat areas within the County.

PR 8.5. Collaborate with others to promote Island County as a recreation destination, using a variety of public relations and marketing techniques to increase awareness of the County's parks and recreation facilities.

- PR 8.6. Partner with community groups, concessionaires, and others to provide appropriate programming and outdoor events consistent with the vision and goals in this [Parks & Recreation](#) Element. This may include but is not limited to low impact **passive** outdoor community events, environmental education, campground programs, facility-based programming (e.g., related to boating, hunting, trail use), etc.
- PR 8.7. Formalize the County's role with ongoing and new potential partners. There are many other providers in Island County who play a variety of roles in conserving habitat and providing recreational opportunities. If one of these providers is better positioned to meet identified needs, let them. If a partnership or collaborative effort is proposed with Island County, clearly define the County's role according to its area of focus including spelling out financial and management responsibilities for both parties.
- PR 8.8. Coordinate or partner with non-profit groups, vendors, businesses, or other agencies to provide outdoor recreation programming consistent with the County's area of focus.
- PR 8.9. Cooperate with other public, **and** private agencies, and [private landowners](#) to protect habitat and provide recreation opportunities before the most suitable sites are lost to development.
- PR 8.10. Explore partnerships with vendors, for-profit concessionaires, and non-profit groups to provide programs, events, and services consistent with the County's area of focus, vision and goals of this [Parks & Recreation](#) Element.

**Goal 9. Engage Island County residents in the planning and stewardship of parks, trails, and conservation areas, and provide effective communication to improve awareness and support of County services.**

- PR 9.1. Provide opportunities for public input in park planning and design decisions to keep tabs on local park and recreation preferences, needs, and trends.
- PR 9.2. Promote volunteerism to enhance community support and stewardship of parks, recreation facilities, [community trails](#), and natural resources. **In-particular**, Encourage citizen involvement and participation in maintaining, improving, and restoring parks, [trails](#), and natural areas.
- PR 9.3. Increase volunteer coordination and administration to ensure that volunteers have sufficient direction, support and recognition.
- PR 9.4. Enhance customer service and increase site use by making information more accessible to residents and visitors.

- PR 9.5. Prior to instituting ~~boat ramp and trailhead parking~~ park user fees, create press releases, website information, and email notifications with messages about “Investing in Our Parks.” Create a process ~~an email address~~ where residents can send their recommendations regarding specific small-scale improvements that are needed (and fit the County’s area of focus). Also, create an online volunteer coordination and recruitment tool where volunteers join a work party to help with identified improvements. The goal of the public information effort is to allow residents to be involved in and see the positive changes that these new funding initiatives will bring.
- PR 9.6. When funding is available, provide staff time for volunteer coordination, direction, recognition, and general involvement. Initially, this may be a part-time position that eventually expands. Ensure that volunteers are not engaging in undirected activities, such as new trail development, without permission or guidance to do so.
- PR 9.7. Increase volunteer coordination through more specifically defined volunteer programs and opportunities, including written volunteer guidelines for specific tasks, such as habitat restoration, trail building and site maintenance.
- PR 9.8. Plan a larger effort to advertise and market County sites as tourism destinations for their scenic value, outdoor facilities, camping opportunities, event capacity, etc. Replace the marketing coordinator position at Four Springs Lake Preserve with a system-wide marketing specialist who oversees all facilities.
- PR 9.9. Establish an online system for campsite and other facility reservations. Other agencies use online reservation providers that are paid for by the user.
- PR 9.10. Incorporate opportunities for historical and environmental interpretation into the park system to educate the public about the local, regional, and ecological context.

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# TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

## ISLAND COUNTY – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Prepared for:



2025

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## Introduction

The Transportation Element provides the framework to guide the growth and development of the County's transportation infrastructure. It also integrates land use and transportation by ensuring existing and future developments are adequately supported by the transportation system. The Transportation Element addresses the development of a balanced, multimodal transportation system for both the County's rural and urban areas by recognizing the regional nature of the transportation system and the need for continuing interagency and adjoining Counties coordination.

The Transportation Element establishes the County's goals and policies for developing the transportation system within the County. The Transportation Element is based on a 2024 study of the existing transportation network, combined with projections of future growth and transportation needs in 2045. The transportation element is comprised of five sections:

1. Goals and Policies
2. Existing Condition of Transportation Facilities
3. Travel Forecasts Evaluation
4. Transportation Systems Plan
5. Financing Program

The Transportation Element is intended to serve as a guide for making transportation decisions to address both short- and long-term needs. To meet Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements, the Transportation Element must identify existing transportation system characteristics, establish standards for multimodal levels of service, and identify existing and future deficiencies based on land use growth projections. The Transportation Element also discusses roadway mobility and accessibility needs, identifies improvements necessary to enhance safety, bicycle and pedestrian travel, and public transit. Consistent with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, the Transportation Element establishes a policy framework for making decisions consistent with the County's vision and describes a strategy for accomplishing the County's vision over the 20-year planning horizon.

### *Plan Development*

The purpose of the 2025 Transportation Element is to provide an update to the existing Transportation Element by identifying and evaluating the transportation improvement plans for the County through the years 2026 to 2045.

The plan was developed to address future land use growth and identify multimodal transportation needs to support the expected growth. The plan is needed to satisfy Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements and to update the County's transportation improvement projects funding program. The following sections summarize the regulatory setting and regional planning efforts that guided the development of the Transportation Element.

### *Growth Management Act Requirements*

Under the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070), referred to herein as the GMA, the Transportation Element is required to assess the needs of a community and determine how to

provide appropriate multimodal transportation facilities for current and future residents. The Transportation Element must contain:

- Inventory of existing facilities;
- Assessment of future facility needs to meet current and future demands;
- Multi-year plan for financing proposed transportation improvements;
- Forecasts of traffic for at least 10 years based on adopted land use plan;
- Multimodal Level of service (LOS) standards for arterials and public transportation, including actions to bring deficient facilities into compliance;
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies, and;
- Identification of intergovernmental coordination efforts.

Additionally, under GMA's Concurrency Mandate, development may not occur if the development causes the transportation facility to decline below the County's adopted level of service standard unless existing infrastructure exists or strategies to accommodate the impacts of the development are made *concurrently* with the development; specifically the impacts must be mitigated within six years of the development's completion. This mandate extends to include state highways in counties consisting of islands, which applies to Island County.

Finally, the Transportation Element must include a reassessment strategy to address how the plan will respond to potential funding shortfalls.

### *Countywide Planning Policies*

The GMA also requires that counties adopt Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs) to guide and coordinate issues of regional significance. The Island County Department of Planning and Community Development developed CWPPs in conjunction with the City of Oak Harbor, the City of Langley and the Town of Coupeville in 2024-2025. The policies are anticipated to be adopted by each agency in 2025. Section 3.8 of the CWPPs addresses transportation and includes nine specific policies that are intended to ensure that the transportation system evolves in a coordinated manner to best serve the diverse land uses in Island County, both now and in the future. Island County adopted [2025 Countywide Planning Policies](#) on March 26, 2024.



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# 1. Goals and Policies

Island County has developed broad goals, along with specific policies, to provide the framework for the Transportation Element. Goals and policies established through feedback solicited at public meetings conducted in 2024 and public input from the online survey and open house, and meetings with the Board of Island County Commissioners and the Island County Planning Commission. The statements were developed to be consistent with the statewide goals articulated in the [Washington Transportation Plan](#) (WTP\_2025) , Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO), and Island County’s [Countywide Planning Policies](#)<sup>1</sup>

Goals are followed by specific policies to help achieve each goal

<b>Goal No. 1</b>	<b><i>Provide a safe, comfortable, resilient, and reliable transportation system that provides adequate and equitable mobility for people, goods, and services.</i></b>
Policy 1.1	Base transportation investment decisions on clearly stated rational criteria;
Policy 1.2	Implement proven safety countermeasures and crash modification factors to reduce the number and severity of collisions;
Policy 1.3	Identify and work to reduce multimodal transportation network gaps that hinder the safe and efficient movement of people and goods;
Policy 1.4	Prioritize active, multimodal, and demand-management solutions to mobility and congestion problems over high-cost vehicle capacity capital projects;
Policy 1.5	Promote transportation facilities that provide for everybody, including people of all ages, abilities, ethnicities, incomes and neighborhoods;
Policy 1.6	Promote alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel such as walking, riding transit, carpooling, vanpooling, and bicycling.
Policy 1.7	Encourage residents living in coastal areas with limited access to work with emergency service agencies to develop local evacuation plans for natural or man-made disasters.
Policy 1.8	Coordinate with state and local agencies to implement the “safe systems approach” in the IRTPO Comprehensive Safety Action Plan to advance transportation safety for all users of the transportation system including transit, bike and pedestrian activities.
Policy 1.9	Implement the Island County Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan

<sup>1</sup> Island County Countywide Planning Policies. March 26, 2024 in [Ordinance No. C-08-24 PLG-003-24](#)

<b>Goal No. 2</b>	<b><i>Preserve prior investments in the transportation system, where feasible.</i></b>
Policy 2.1	Prioritize timely repair, maintenance, and reallocation of road space over new construction for vehicle capacity;
Policy 2.2	Emphasize the most cost-effective solutions that meet the needs of the transportation system;
Policy 2.3	Operate in compliance with the Standards of Good Practice established by the County Road Administration Board (CRAB);
Policy 2.4	Follow established maintenance and repair procedures in order to reduce the long-term costs of operating and maintaining the County’s transportation system;
Policy 2.5	Restrict new transportation projects that increase vehicle capacity unless the project proposal shows that sufficient revenues exist to adequately maintain both existing facilities and the proposed expansion.
<b>Goal No. 3</b>	<b><i>Support safety, mobility, and economic vitality by providing transportation infrastructure designed to be appropriate for the context of adjacent land uses.</i></b>
Policy 3.1	Implement a concurrency program that supports the development of the multimodal transportation system to adequately support land use development;
Policy 3.2	Provide an Annual Concurrency Report documenting the completeness of the multimodal system and Active Transportation Network to ensure the concurrency program is meeting its objective consistent with policies 6.9 through 6.14;
Policy 3.3	Transportation infrastructure and services within urban areas should be reflective of urban design, supporting urban development; Particular attention should be given to ensuring that roadway design standards in urban areas provide a high level of connectivity and promote pedestrian circulation;
Policy 3.4	Transportation infrastructure and services in rural areas should be consistent with rural design, land use context, and County funding realities.
<b>Goal No. 4</b>	<b><i>Minimize negative environmental impacts.</i></b>
Policy 4.1	Prioritize transportation investments that avoid negatively impacting critical areas;
Policy 4.2	Utilize established best management practices for storm water runoff in the planning, design, and construction of transportation infrastructure;
Policy 4.3	Identify potential environmental constraints and impacts as early as possible in the conceptual design phase of new transportation projects for mitigation sequencing requirements to minimize project costs and expedite the delivery of transportation services and facilities;

Policy 4.4	Involve environmental permitting authorities as early as possible in the design and location of new transportation projects to protect wetlands adjacent to roadways;
Policy 4.5	Proactively identify opportunities to replace road culverts to improve fish passage, wildlife habitat, and other aspects of the natural environment.
<b>Goal No. 5</b>	<b><i>Build strong relationships between Island County and other local and regional agencies to engage in cooperative planning of common transportation improvements.</i></b>
Policy 5.1	Provide regular public forums for both elected officials and staff to collaborate with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Washington State Ferries (WSF), Island Transit, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, local City and Town jurisdictions and other relevant agencies;
Policy 5.2	Explore opportunities to collaborate and develop cost effective solutions with state, county and local organizations;
Policy 5.3	Coordinate with adjoining jurisdictions and transit service providers, such as Naval Air Station Whidbey Island and Island Transit, to develop and provide better connections between Island County and regional employment centers;
Policy 5.4	Affordable housing, public services and facilities should be accessible by all transportation modes. Housing, public services and facilities serving low income or mobility impaired citizens should be located in close proximity to transit stops and in areas with a well-developed network of sidewalks and paths;
Policy 5.5	Give particular attention to improving pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities along the SR 20 and SR 525 corridor and in areas surrounding ferry terminals to facilitate a greater share of walk-on ferry passengers;
Policy 5.6	Work with WSDOT to ensure that new development in Island County is concurrent adopted MMLOS standards.
Policy 5.7	Work with local and regional municipalities to identify planned active transportation networks and multimodal transportation corridors and plan transportation needs based on land use plans within the rural county and Urban Growth Areas (UGAs).
Policy 5.8	Inform and coordinate early and often with WSDOT to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify and plan for projects on or across state facilities.</li> <li>b. Identify and plan for projects to support multimodal use along and across the regional transportation network including state highways consistent with RCW 47.04.035 Complete Streets Principles.</li> <li>c. Identify and plan for projects to support multimodal use along and across the regional transportation network including state highways consistent</li> </ul>

	<p>with and the WSDOT Active Transportation Plan to meet Bicycle and Pedestrian Levels of Traffic Stress (LTS) of 2 or better</p> <p>d. Pursue support and funding for recommended projects identified in the IRTPO Safety Action Plan, the countywide Active Transportation Network, the County 6-year TIP, and other plans.</p> <p>e. Support maintenance in state rights of way.</p> <p>f. Ensure effectiveness, connectivity, and safety of SR 532, SR 20, and SR 525. throughout Island County.</p> <p>g. Review development projects near or adjacent to state highways to coordinate local access and address transportation needs for all users.</p> <p>h. Minimize private access to state highways to enhance safety and mitigate chances of vehicle collisions.</p> <p>i. Identify multimodal transportation improvements or strategies that may be needed to maintain safety, operations, and functional traffic flow, where pm peak hour vehicle level of service cannot be maintained.</p> <p>j. Establish that proposed improvements on state facilities are consistent with the WSDOT Design Manual.</p> <p>k. Establish that alterations to landscaping in WSDOT right-of-way are consistent with WSDOT removal and replacement policies.</p> <p>l. Ensure effectiveness, connectivity, and safety of the state marine highway system.</p>
<p><b>Goal No. 6</b></p>	<p><b><i>Promote safety, physical activity, and public health by expanding options for active transportation modes.</i></b></p>
<p>Policy 6.1</p>	<p>Promote coordination between jurisdictions in the planning and implementation of bicycle, transit, pedestrian and other active transportation facilities to establish continuous networks that support healthy communities;</p>
<p>Policy 6.2</p>	<p>Install and maintain paved shoulders = or &gt; 4 feet on County arterial and collector roadways where feasible;</p>
<p>Policy 6.3</p>	<p>New projects will be designed and constructed considering ADA, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities, as well as bus stop amenities, where transit service exists;</p>
<p>Policy 6.4</p>	<p>Require ADA upgrades and connections between modes of transportation at public transit facilities;</p>
<p>Policy 6.5</p>	<p>Promote a multiuse pathway alongside SR 20, SR 525 and SR 532, as well as a connected system of multi-use paths to encourage active transportation, recreation and physical activity;</p>
<p>Policy 6.6</p>	<p>Promote public beaches for human-powered watercraft access and collaborate with other agencies on access and parking</p>
<p>Policy 6.7</p>	<p>Encourage innovative and cooperative approaches among public agencies and private parties to provide recreation opportunities and public access;</p>

Policy 6.8	Encourage linkage of parks, recreation areas and shoreline public access points with linear systems, such as hiking trails, bicycle routes, and scenic drives.
Policy 6.9	Vehicle LOS standards for Island County arterials are: Roadway LOS D (volume to capacity ratio 0.81 to 0.90) in rural areas and Roadway LOS E (volume to capacity ratio 0.91 to 1.00) in incorporated and unincorporated UGAs.
Policy 6.10	<p>Rural and Urban Pedestrian LOS Standards on the countywide Active Transportation Network are listed below:</p> <p>a) Incorporated UGA: Urban standard sidewalks both sides or shared two-way multiuse pathway on one side.</p> <p>b) Unincorporated UGA: Urban standard sidewalk one side or shared two-way multiuse pathway one side.</p> <p>c) Rural County: = or &gt; 4-foot-wide shoulder on roadway</p> <p>On the Countywide Active Transportation Network, Pedestrian LOS is depicted according to the categories below: (see Table on page 37)</p> <p><b>Dark Purple</b> = Rural (County) meets standard  <b>Light Purple</b> = Rural (County) substandard  <b>Dashed Purple</b> = Further Study Needed  <b>Dark Blue</b> = Urban (UGA) meets standard  <b>Light Blue</b> = Urban (UGA) substandard</p>
Policy 6.11	<p>Rural and Urban Bicycle LOS Standards on the countywide Active Transportation Network are listed below:</p> <p>a) Incorporated UGA: Urban standard marked bike lanes both sides or shared two-way multiuse pathway one side.</p> <p>b) Unincorporated UGA: Urban standard marked bike lanes both sides or shared two-way multiuse pathway on one side.</p> <p>c) Rural County: 4-foot-wide shoulder on roadway</p> <p>On the Countywide Active Transportation Network, Bicycle LOS is depicted according to the categories below: (see Table on page 37)</p> <p><b>Dark Purple</b> = Rural (County) meets standard  <b>Light Purple</b> = Rural (County) substandard  <b>Dashed Purple</b> = Further Study Needed  <b>Dark Blue</b> = Urban (UGA) meets standard  <b>Light Blue</b> = Urban (UGA) substandard</p>
Policy 6.12	The Transit LOS Standard is based on presence of bus shelters and marked crossings at Island Transit bus stops within the public road right-of-way. The prioritization and installation of shelters and crosswalks at transit bus stops helps to make transit safe and convenient for residents and therefore provides mutual benefit to both Island County and Island Transit.

Policy 6.13	Document Active Transportation LOS and Transit LOS standards each year in the Island County Annual Report of Transportation Facilities in advance of the Six-Year TIP.
Policy 6.14	Work with WSDOT to plan, fund, and construct Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) Type 1 or 2 (Separated/Protected) facilities on SR 20 and SR 525 in population centers as called for in WSDOT’s Active Transportation Plan – 2020 and Beyond.

## 2. Existing Condition of Transportation Facilities

The inventory of existing transportation facilities describes the foundation for the transportation and land use conditions utilized for analysis, decision-making, and the Goals and Policies (Chapter 1). This chapter contains maps, statistics, and other information that provide a picture of the transportation system in its current condition.

Personal vehicles are the predominant mode of transportation within the County, where the majority of Island County residents work. Snohomish County is the largest work destination outside of Island County, where residents may commute by personal vehicle or ferry route. For ferry routes to/from Mukilteo in Snohomish County, commuters may connect to off-island transit providers or other modes.

Island County is unique due to its composition of two disconnected islands. This arrangement creates an interesting challenge for those who need to travel between Whidbey and Camano Islands within the County. Driving between Coupeville on Whidbey Island and Maple Beach on Camano Island requires either riding the Clinton-Mukilteo Ferry and driving north through western Snohomish County or crossing Deception Pass Bridge and driving east through both Skagit County and the Northwestern corner of Snohomish County. Either way, this requires a drive of at least 90 minutes on the existing road network for a trip between two destinations that are five miles apart geographically.

The first section of this chapter provides an overview of planning standards and classification schemes used to manage the County's transportation system. The sections that follow describe the existing infrastructure in Island County's unincorporated areas by each of the travel modes (vehicles, ferries, transit, non-motorized, and other) included in the County transportation network.

### 2.1. Planning Context

Long-range transportation plans build on existing transportation facilities available for residents to travel to home, work, and other destinations, and tourists visiting Island County. There are almost 35,000 people that make up the workforce within Island County. Most of these workers are Island County residents. There are also a significant number of Islanders who travel to other nearby counties for work. Over 5,000 people commute to Snohomish County, where many are employed by Boeing at the airplane factory located adjacent to Everett's Paine Field. Skagit and King Counties are also significant employment destinations, with over 2,000 Island County workers commuting to each of those counties. In addition, there are also over 1,500 workers living in Snohomish County that come to jobs located in Island County. Skagit County also adds substantially to Island County's workforce, with almost 1,000 people arriving each workday via the Deception Pass Bridge.

Most travel within Island County occurs on roadways, which provide public space for vehicles, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. Roadways are classified by their intended function and desired service to provide a hierarchy of roadways. The County recognizes two functional

classification systems that are maintained at the County and Federal levels. This section provides an overview of the planning context for the Transportation Element and includes descriptions of functional classification systems for roadways, concurrency management, level-of-service standards (LOS), and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements.

### ***Island County Functional Classification***

The Island County Functional Classification defines the characteristics of individual roadways to accommodate the travel needs of all roadway users. The design of cross-sections for existing and planned roadways is tied to the functional classification as described in *Island County Code: Title 11.01*. Island County has classified its street system into five primary categories: State Highways, Major Arterials, Secondary Arterials, Collectors, and Local Access streets. The following sections describe the general characteristics of each functional classification designation. A map of the existing County functional classification is provided in [Figure 2-1](#).

#### **State Highway**

The State Highway system serves as the primary arterial roadway system within Island County. State Highways connect many of the subareas within the County, including Oak Harbor and Clinton on Whidbey Island and Camano Island to the City of Stanwood. WSDOT classifies certain State Highways as highways of Statewide Significance (as described later in this section). The three state highways in Island County are SR 20, SR 525, and SR 532.

#### **Major Arterial**

Major Arterials are county-maintained roadways that prioritize moving traffic efficiently on the arterial roadway system. These roadways connect State Highways and provide mobility in areas between towns and communities. Major arterials may also provide access to large land areas or serve a large traffic generator, providing the function of local access. These roadways typically have the highest traffic speeds and volumes of all county roadways.

#### **Secondary Arterial**

Secondary Arterials support the Major Arterial system by providing another tier of mobility and access between the Major Arterial and Collector networks. These roadways also connect two or more communities and may serve as an alternate route to a Major Arterial or State Highway. While still some of the busiest roadways on the county roadway network, Secondary Arterials typically have lower traffic speeds and/or volumes as compared to Major Arterials.

#### **Collector**

Collectors provide both access and mobility within Island County between the arterial network and local access streets. The predominant function of these roadways is to collect traffic from neighborhoods and local streets. They may provide for considerable local traffic that originates or is destined to points along the corridor, while providing direct access to adjacent properties.

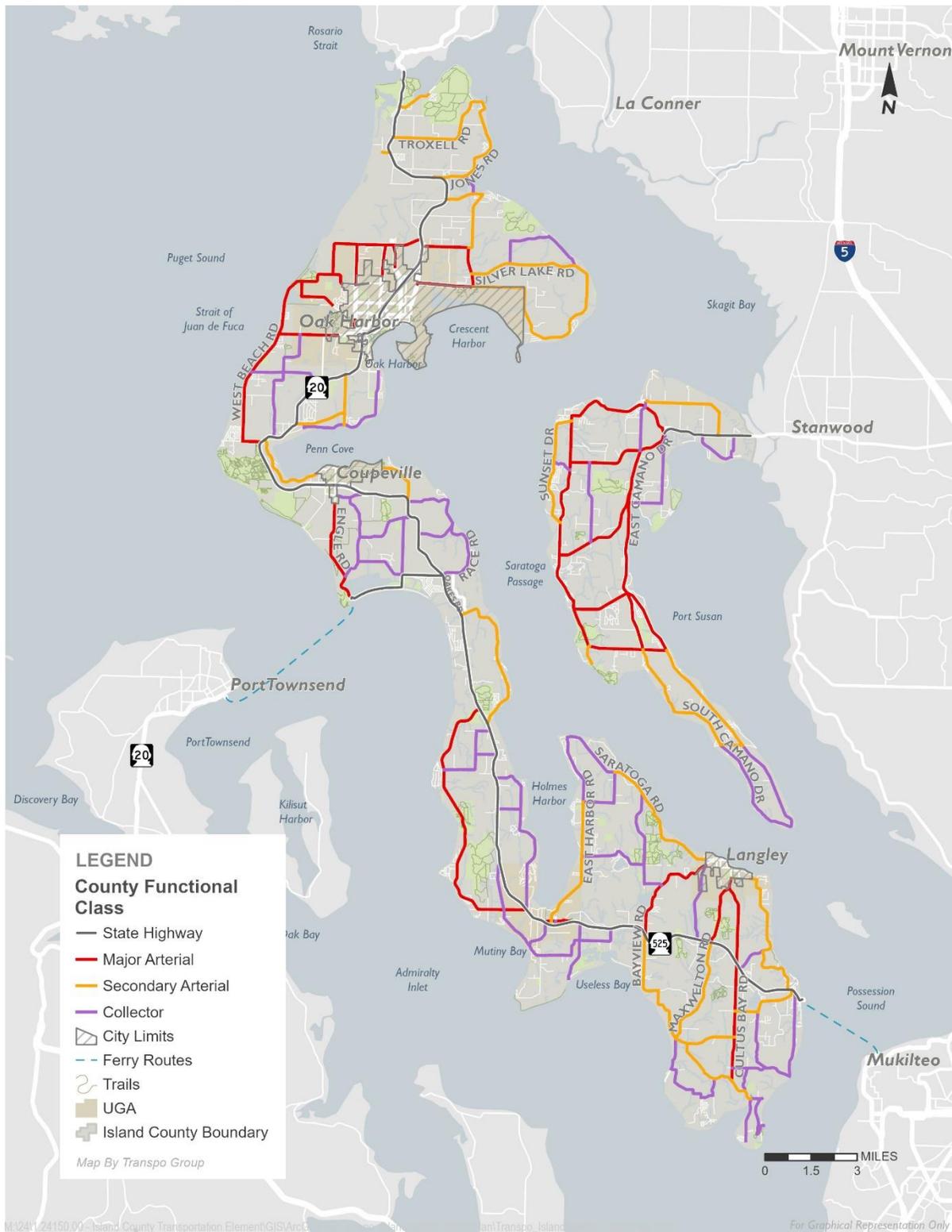
#### **Local Access**

Local access streets provide direct access to adjoining properties, commercial businesses, and similar traffic destinations. Local access roads typically carry low volumes of traffic to low activity

land uses. While these roadways typically have low speeds, some of the rural access roadways have higher posted speeds.



Figure 2-1 Island County Functional Classification Map



### ***Federal Functional Classification System***

In addition to the Functional Classification system adopted by Island County, there are Federal and State roadway designations that are used to determine funding eligibility under Federal-Aid programs. The Federal Functional Classification system provides a hierarchy of roadways as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and is maintained for Washington State roadways by WSDOT<sup>2</sup>. This classification defines the operation of roadways as a network and arranges the hierarchy of roadways based on the regional function of the system. As a result, the Federal Functional Classification includes several differences to the Island County Functional Classification, which generally focuses on the function of individual roadways as related to adjacent land uses.

Changes to the Federal Functional Classification may be requested through WSDOT with review and approval by the FHWA. Requests are submitted by the local agency for review by the Regional Local Programs Engineer and FHWA. FHWA provides approval, denial, or conditional approval for the request that is supplied back to the local agency. This process is usually completed in 3 months or less. Designations for the National Highway System (NHS) and Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS) are also maintained at the Federal and State levels. A map of the existing Federal functional classification is provided in [Figure 2-2](#)~~Figure 2-2~~.

### ***National Highway System***

The National Highway System (NHS) includes the Interstate Highway System as well as other roads important to the nation's economy, defense, and mobility as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). SR 20, from I-5 to the Coupeville Ferry Terminal, and Ault Field Road from SR 20 to Langley Boulevard are designated as NHS facilities. The Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) is a subsystem of the NHS for facilities which have strategic defense significance. SR 20, from I-5 to the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, is a designated STRAHNET facility.

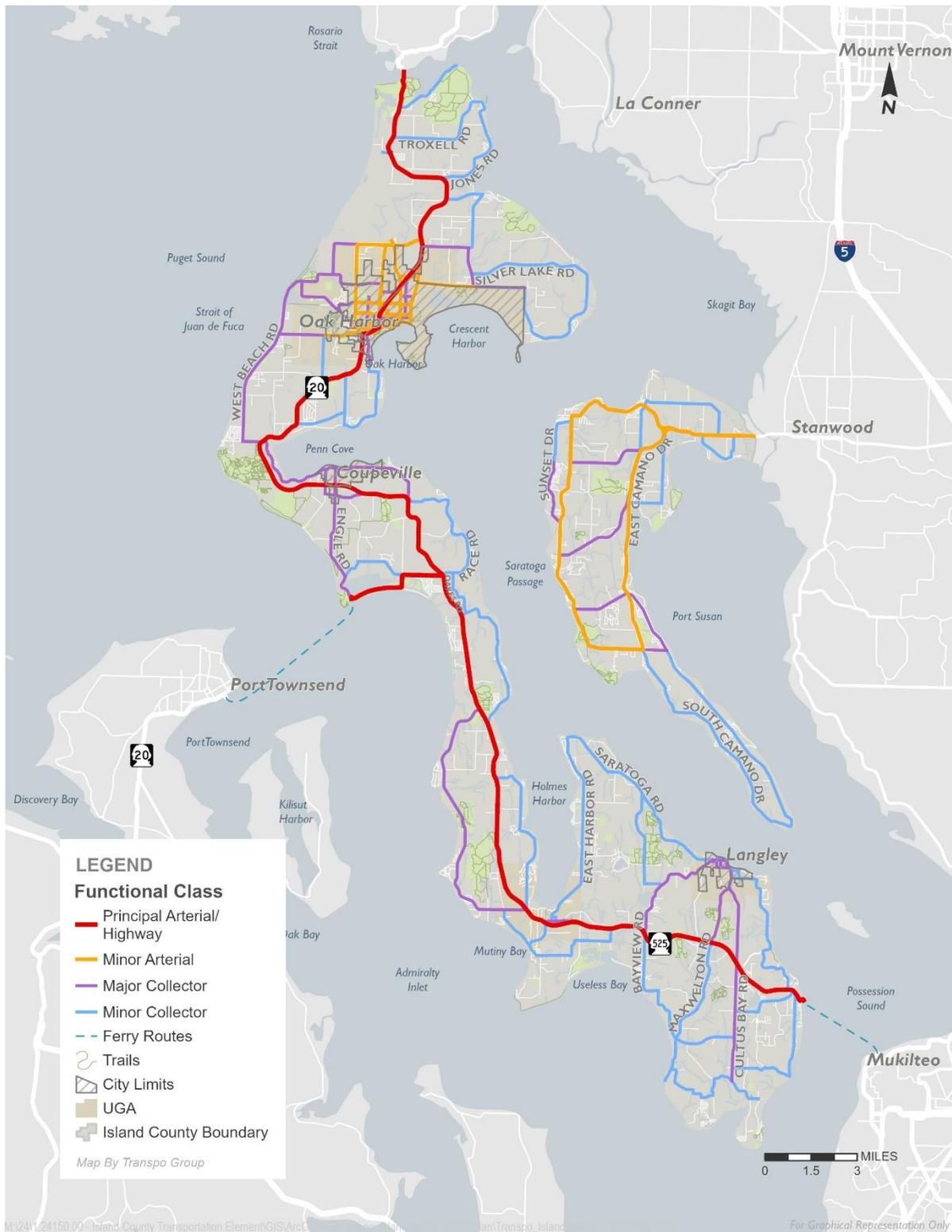
### ***Highways of Statewide Significance***

WSDOT designates interstate highways and other principal arterials that are needed to connect major communities in the state as Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS). This designation assists with the allocation of some state and federal funding. These roadways typically serve corridor movements having travel characteristics indicative of substantial statewide and interstate travel. SR 20 and SR 525 are classified as Highways of Statewide Significance.

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<sup>2</sup> WSDOT Functional Classification Map Application. Available at: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/mapsdata/travel/hpms/functionalclass.htm>

Figure 2-2 Federal Functional Classification Map



### ***Vehicle LOS Standards***

Level of service (LOS) is a qualitative measure describing the operating conditions for a given transportation facility such as a roadway or intersection. Transportation LOS can be measured by criteria such as level of congestion, travel times or speeds, volume of traffic compared to capacity, frequency of transit service, comfort and convenience, or safety. LOS standards can be based on roadway sections or on intersections, or combinations of facilities or services.

LOS standards are part of the mandatory elements of the County's Comprehensive Plan as required by the Growth Management Act (GMA) (RCW 36.70A.070). The GMA indicates that the transportation element shall include "level of service standards for all locally owned arterials and transit routes to serve as a gauge to judge performance of the system. These standards should be regionally coordinated." The transportation element needs to identify specific actions and requirements for bringing into compliance locally owned transportation facilities or services that operate or will operate below the established LOS standard.

For purposes of the Transportation Element, the County has adopted LOS standards for transportation facilities under its jurisdiction as required under GMA. Island County must also address in coordination with WSDOT LOS standards on state highways and ferry routes serving the County. Evaluating LOS for roadways with transit service is vital to maintaining the on-time performance of local transit service. Roadways with transit routes are evaluated under Island County's LOS standards for the roadway network (Section 2.2). Island Transit does not maintain transit LOS standards that pertain to the frequency and quality of transit within the County.

In addition, the County needs to review its LOS standards within the context of the regional policies established by WSDOT. Furthermore, the County needs to coordinate its LOS standards with cities located within the County, especially as they apply to development within future designated Urban Growth Areas (UGAs), and the agencies included in the Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO).

### ***Transportation Concurrency Management***

The County must ensure the transportation system meets the needs of new development. The primary regulatory mechanism to achieve this is referred to as concurrency, which is mandated in the GMA. The requirements in the GMA (RCW 36.70A.070(6)(b)) state that:

*"...local jurisdictions must adopt and enforce ordinances which prohibit development approval if the development causes the level of service on a locally owned transportation facility to decline below the standards adopted in the transportation element of the comprehensive plan, unless transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of development are made concurrent with the development... concurrent with development shall mean that improvements or strategies are in place at the time of development, or that a financial commitment is in place to complete the improvements or strategies within six years."*

The County uses a concurrency management program to ensure transportation facilities are constructed as development occurs. Island County is unique under current state law which requires counties made up of islands to apply concurrency to those facilities designated as Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS). In other counties, the concurrency requirements do not apply to HSS facilities. While this requirement might seem to unfairly penalize Island

County, the GMA offers some flexibility by allowing local jurisdictions to define, measure, monitor, and maintain LOS according to the land use and transportation system priorities adopted in their unique local Comprehensive Plan.

### **Concurrency Service Areas**

Creating Concurrency Service Areas (CSAs) allows concurrency issues to be defined by the location of the development proposal within the County. This ensures that concurrency evaluations in one part of the County do not prohibit development where different major transportation facilities are used in another part of the County. The proposed CSAs coincide with the Island County Planning Areas (Camano Island and North, Central, and South Whidbey) as shown in [Figure 2-3](#).

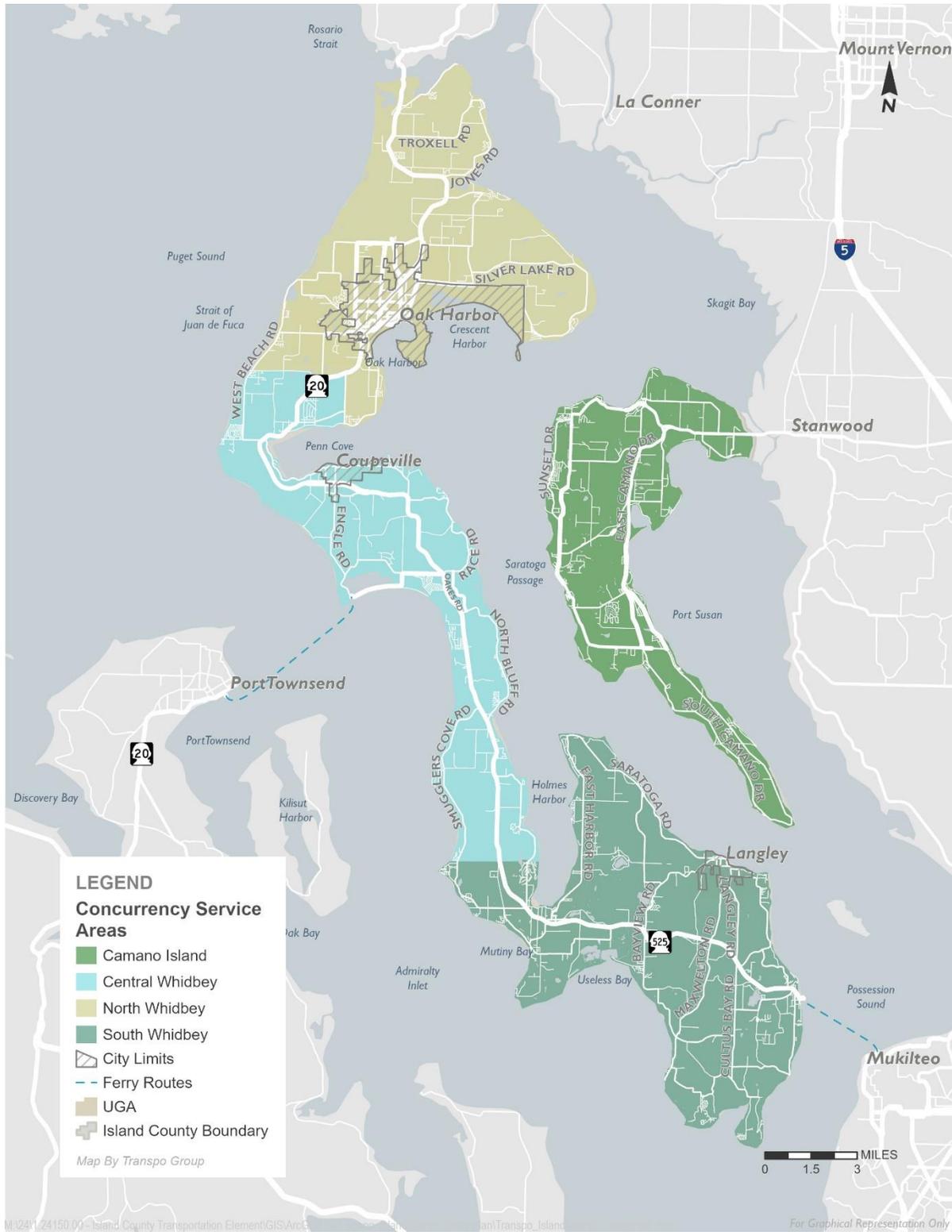
The concurrency service areas are used to apply the LOS standards to the state highways, ferry routes, and County intersections as described in the following section. The details and agreement of LOS standards on state facilities are contained in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and WSDOT.

Prior to the 2015 update of its Transportation Element, Island County used an intersection-based LOS standard for managing concurrency. For county-owned facilities located within designated urban areas, the standard was LOS D. For county-owned facilities located in outlying rural areas, the standard was LOS C. In locations where county facilities intersect non-county-owned facilities (such as city streets or state highways) the standard was LOS E for urban areas and D for rural areas.

The County determined that two components were important to defining the adequacy of its transportation system for the purposes of concurrency. The first was the ability to maintain a reasonable travel speed for major corridors serving the County. Additionally, the County wants to ensure that intersections on state highways and arterials operate without extensive delays during peak travel periods. To accommodate these two objectives, the County established a travel time-based LOS standard for designated corridors and a second standard for designated intersections.

In addition to establishing LOS standards for corridor travel speeds and designated intersections, the County periodically reviews intersection operations through updates to the Transportation Element. The most recent results from the 2015 update to the Transportation Element and a comparison to the results from the previous 2000 Transportation Element is contained in the Traffic Operations section of this chapter. This is an important methodology for assessing the overall health of the roadway network as it provides an update on how the transportation system has changed since the previous plan. Intersection safety is also part of State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements as described later in this section.

Figure 2-3 Concurrency Service Areas and Facilities



### **Concurrency LOS Standards**

As part of the Transportation Element update, the County determined that three components of the transportation network are most important to defining the adequacy of its transportation system. The facilities tested for concurrency include:

- State highway corridors serving the County are evaluated based on minimum average travel speeds during peak travel periods that correspond to LOS thresholds in the Highway Capacity Manual (Transportation Research Board, 2010);
- Ferry service to and from Whidbey Island is evaluated based on the level of service standards set by Washington State Ferries (WSF); and
- Intersections of roadways federally classified as arterials or collectors (including roadways with transit routes) with other arterials or collectors are evaluated based on intersection delays during peak travel periods.

### **Corridor Level of Service Standards**

Island County and WSDOT have agreed that weekday PM peak hour travel speeds along state highways are critical to maintaining the adequacy of these routes. Highways within Island County are generally two-lane facilities with varying densities of unsignalized intersections and driveways. These highways serve moderately developed areas and have some segments that pass-through areas with more intense development. These segments are typically differentiated by lower speed limits. These characteristics are generally consistent with the Class III two-lane highway definition in the *Highway Capacity Manual* (HCM 2010). HCM 2010 defines LOS for these facilities by the percent of free flow speed for traffic, which represents the ability of vehicles to travel at or near the speed limit, on highway segments.

The percent of free-flow speed (PFFS) range that represents LOS D for Class III two-lane highways is between 66.7 and 75 percent. LOS D was selected based on the table of *Level of Service Standards for Washington State Highways* (WSDOT Design Manual). For each concurrency corridor, a minimum average travel speed based on the PFFS will be applied to concurrency review. The average travel speeds on the corridors are set at 70 percent of the posted speed limit (within the range for LOS D). The standards are applied during the weekday evening commute, typically from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., where roadways regularly experience the highest traffic volumes and slowest travel speeds within the County. The travel speeds account for the total average speed of a vehicle, including delays at the intersections between the limits of each segment.

For each of the corridor segments, the County has established a minimum average travel speed which will be applied to concurrency review. These corridors measured for LOS consist of several segments along the three state highways within the County. The extents of the corridors end at major intersections, including at or near city limits, or CSA boundaries. The following corridors and extents are contained within one of the four CSAs and have LOS standards set as described in the *Island County Transportation Concurrency Management Program* (May 2015):

- SR 20
  - Deception Pass Bridge to Oak Harbor City Limits
  - Oak Harbor City Limits to Libbey Road

- Libbey Road to W Main Street (Coupeville)
- Main Street (Coupeville) to Race Road/Wanamaker Road
- Race Road to Coupeville Ferry Terminal
- SR 525
  - Race Road to Mutiny Bay Road (Freeland)
  - Mutiny Bay Road (Freeland) to Bayview Road
  - Bayview Road to Langley Road/Cultus Bay Road
  - Langley Road/Cultus Bay Road to Clinton Ferry Terminal

As part of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WSDOT, the status of these corridors will be updated periodically.

### Ferry Routes

For the purposes of concurrency, ferry routes are considered extensions of the roadway network and subject to concurrency LOS standards. The details of the LOS standards for the ferry routes are contained in the Ferry Service section of this chapter. Ferry routes serving the County are operated by WSDOT under the Washington State Ferries (WSF). The Port Townsend-Coupeville and Mukilteo-Clinton ferry routes are included in the Central Whidbey CSA and South Whidbey CSA, respectively.

Ferry LOS is reviewed for concurrency in the associated CSAs according to the LOS standards established in the *Final Long-Range Plan* (WSF, 2009). WSF LOS standards include two levels, where Level 1 LOS standards indicate when additional pricing and operational strategies might be needed, and Level 2 LOS standards indicate when additional service might be needed.

For purposes of implementing the County's concurrency program, "Level 2/Mitigated" is the LOS standard. This standard requires implementation of transportation mitigation when the LOS for ferry routes exceeds Level 2 standards. While WSF may implement potential mitigation strategies once Level 1 standards are exceeded, the County will require development proposals within CSAs exceeding Level 2 standards to implement mitigation measures as part of the condition of development approval. Decisions on what mitigation measures are appropriate will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Island County Public Works Director.

### Intersection Level of Service Standards

The County has established LOS standards for intersections on Arterials, Collectors, and transit routes. The standards apply to both signalized and unsignalized intersections according to the standard practices contained in the latest edition of the *Highway Capacity Manual* (Transportation Research Board).

Signalized intersection LOS is defined in terms of a weighted average control delay for the entire intersection. Control delay quantifies the increase in travel time that a vehicle experiences due to the traffic signal control as well as provides a surrogate measure for driver discomfort and fuel consumption. Signalized intersection LOS is stated in terms of average control delay per vehicle.

Unsignalized intersections LOS criteria can be further reduced into two intersection types present within Island County: all-way stop control and two-way stop control. All-way stop control intersection LOS is expressed in terms of the weighted average control delay of the overall intersection or by approach. Two-way stop-controlled intersection LOS is defined in terms of the average control delay for each minor-street movement (or shared movement) as well as major-street left-turns. The County establishes LOS standards based on the type of intersection as described below.

- **Traffic Signals, Roundabouts, and All-Way Stop Controlled Intersections** – LOS D or better based on overall average delay per vehicle.
- **Unsignalized Two-Way Stop Controlled Intersections** – LOS E or better for worst traffic movement. On a case-by-case basis, the County may allow the LOS for traffic movements from the minor streets at two-way stop controlled intersections to operate below the adopted standard, if the County determines that no significant safety or operational issues will result.

The lower LOS standard for unsignalized, two-way stop-controlled intersections reflects the desire to minimize delays on the major street and through street traffic, while supporting safe and efficient operations for minor streets. The County typically will apply the intersection LOS standard to the weekday PM peak hour. The County may, however, define additional evaluation periods for intersection review to identify if potential impacts would occur. These could include weekday AM peak hour, weekends, or other time periods depending on the type and location of a proposed development.

#### ***State Highway Level of Service Standards***

WSDOT sets LOS standards for Washington State Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS) jointly with regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) across the state. These LOS standards can also be used for SEPA evaluations and are contained in Appendix 29 of the *Development Services Manual*<sup>3</sup>.

WSDOT has established LOS standards for Urban and Rural designations in Island County based on UGA boundaries. For HSS located in Urban areas the standard is LOS E, and for HSS located in Rural areas the standard is LOS D. Within Island County, these standards apply to SR 20 and SR 525. LOS standards for state highways of non-HSS are established at the same thresholds: LOS E for Urban areas and LOS D for Rural areas. SR 532 is a non-HSS route in Island County.

#### ***State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)***

Island County will continue to use SEPA to review the impacts of new development on roadways and intersections. The SEPA review would be used to evaluate impacts on:

- Safety, such as horizontal curvature issues, sight distance, non-motorized, and other
- Intersection operations, level of service, and queue impacts

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<sup>3</sup> Development Services Manual. WSDOT. 2005. Available at: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Publications/Manuals/M3007.htm>

- Roadway congestion
- Transit and Non-motorized transportation

SEPA review is based on the development project having an adverse impact. Assessment of transportation impacts under SEPA depends on the conditions for each transportation facility or service serving a new development. If adverse impacts are identified, the County can condition the development to provide mitigation to offset or reduce its impacts. This mitigation would help improve the transportation system, at least to the extent of mitigating project impacts.

## 2.2. Roadway Network

The road and highway system provides mobility and access for most travelers and accommodates multiple types of modes. Roadways on Whidbey and Camano Island do not directly connect to one another, but both include major roadways within the transportation system. These roadways comprise the predominant routes of travel within Island County and include a range of purposes, which are analyzed for operations in this transportation plan.

- Camano Island – A series of major and minor county roadways circulate around Camano Island. These roadways connect to SR 532 on the northeast end of the island. SR 532 serves as the primary connection to the mainland across Davis Slough and the Stillaguamish River via the Camano Gateway Bridge, connecting to the City of Stanwood and I-5 in Snohomish County.
- Whidbey Island – SR 20 and SR 525 transect Whidbey Island and serve as the primary north-south facilities for roadway travel. SR 525 provides access to the Clinton Ferry at the south end of the Island. The Clinton Ferry takes passengers, bicyclists, and motor vehicles to the City of Mukilteo in Snohomish County. SR 20 provides access to the Coupeville Ferry at approximately the mid-point of the island. The Coupeville Ferry takes passengers, bicyclists, and motor vehicles to Port Townsend in Jefferson County on the Olympic Peninsula. SR 20 also provides a roadway connection to the mainland via the Deception Pass Bridge. The Deception Pass Bridge is at the north end of Whidbey Island and connects to Skagit County. Other roads feed into these state highways and connect local neighborhoods, cities, towns, and recreational areas at wider sections of the island.

Separate summaries for the traffic volumes and traffic operations at intersections are presented in the following sections.

### *Traffic Volumes*

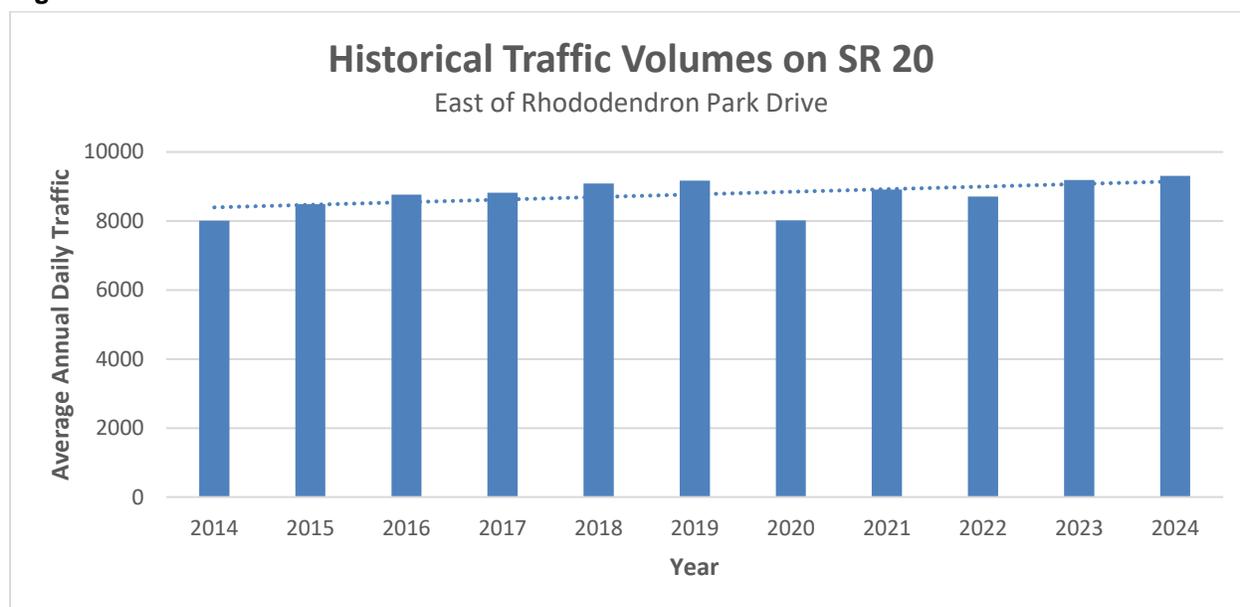
This section describes vehicle traffic volumes on Island County roadways. Traffic counts have been collected at several locations on State Highways and County roadways. Traffic counts conducted by WSDOT are continuously collected at permanent traffic recorders and maintained in a statewide database. Traffic counts on County roads are collected on occasion with tube counters and maintained in a database at the County Road Administration Board. These are typically updated on a three-year rolling basis to maintain a baseline of traffic counts throughout

the county. Traffic counts are also collected at select locations by WSDOT on an annual basis to provide traffic volumes based on seasonally adjusted traffic counts.

**State Highways**

State Highways carry the most vehicle volume in Island County. These roadways have the greatest number of travelers and are maintained by WSDOT. Traffic counts collected on these roadways are summarized into Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes that are seasonally adjusted to account for fluctuations in travel due to summer peaks or winter lows. AADTs are reported in Island County for the sole permanent traffic recorder location, which is on SR 20 east of Rhododendron Park Drive (Station #706). [Figure 2-4](#) shows the AADT for this location on SR 20 from 2014 through 2024.

**Figure 2-4 Historical AADT for SR 20**



As shown in the graph above, traffic volumes on SR 20 in Island County have grown slightly over the past decades. Traffic volumes on SR 20 at this location are around 9,000 average daily trips for the most recent year available. The linear trend line shows an average of 1.5 percent growth in roadway volumes per year. However, the upward trend in traffic volumes decreased during 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic but began increasing again. 2024 AADT values passed the 2019 pre-pandemic high.

**Island County Roadways**

An extensive data collection effort is performed by Island County for many Arterial and Collector roadways each spring. Tube counts are collected along several roadways on Whidbey and Camano Islands to collect average daily counts (ADT) and peak hour counts by direction. Traffic volumes at key locations are shown in [Figure 2-5](#) through [Figure 2-7](#). Peak hour traffic counts at major intersections throughout the County were collected periodically to support analysis of intersection traffic operations. The most recent turning movement counts (TMCs) were collected during Fall 2024.

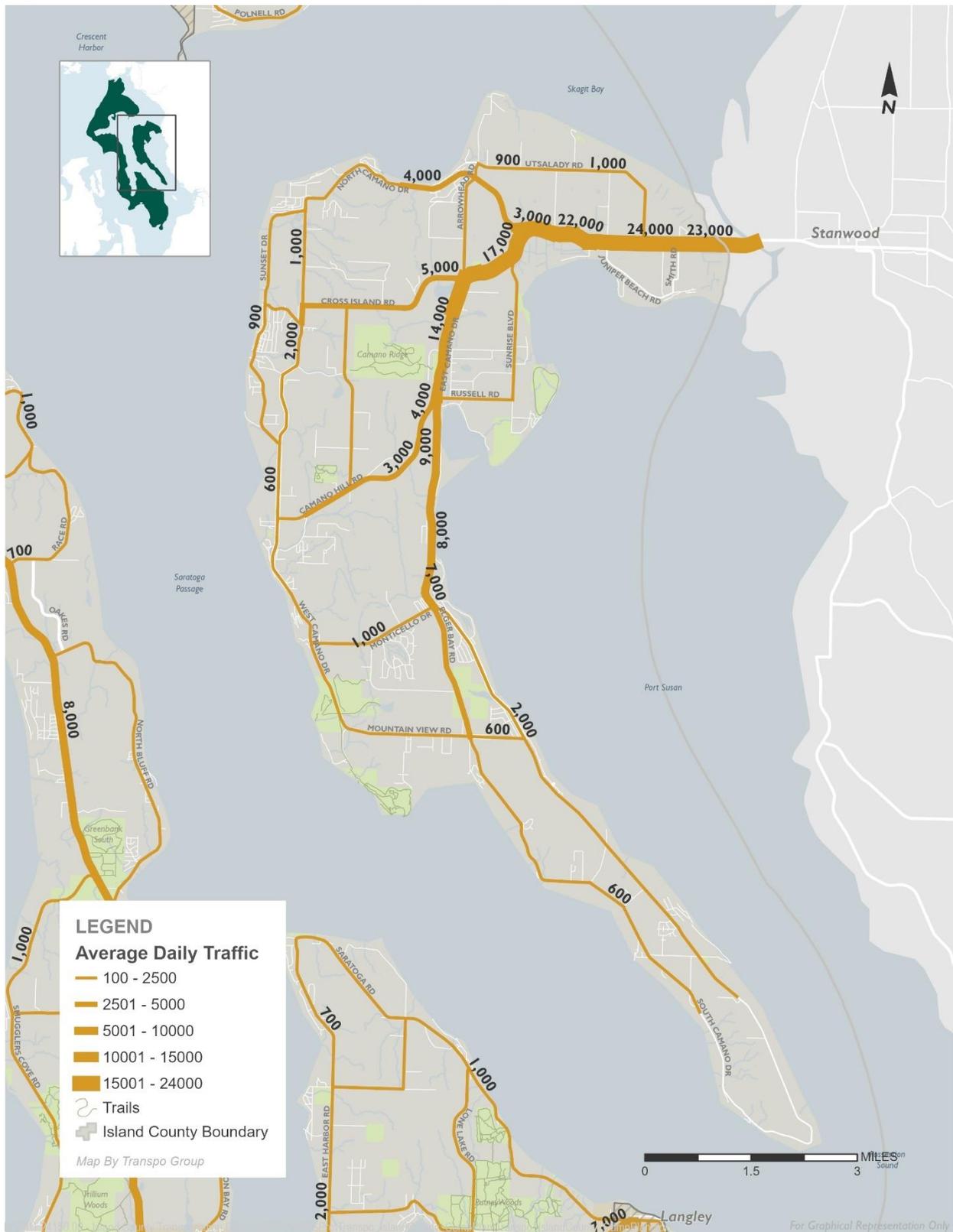
Figure 2-5 Existing (2025) Traffic Volumes (North Whidbey)



Figure 2-6 Existing (2025) Traffic Volumes (South Whidbey)



Figure 2-7 Existing (2025) Traffic Volumes (Camano)



### ***Traffic Operations***

Existing traffic operations were evaluated for intersections identified by county staff based on their knowledge of locations with potential operational or safety concerns. This is an important methodology for assessing the overall health of the roadway network as it provides an update on how the transportation system has changed since the previous plan. In addition, intersection traffic operations provide a snapshot of the health of the roadway network by providing:

- Delays experienced by drivers at intersections,
- Information on pinch points in the system, and
- A picture of active transportation mode use through counts collected at intersections.

Traffic operations include a technical analysis to evaluate how drivers experience traveling through the roadway system. It is applied to existing and forecast conditions to assist in identifying issues and potential improvement options. Traffic operations are compared to level of service (LOS) standards established by jurisdictions and local agencies.

### ***Existing Operations Results***

Intersection traffic operations were evaluated at several intersections in the County based on the standards and practices contained in the *Highway Capacity Manual* (Transportation Research Board, 7th Edition). Intersection levels-of-service were evaluated using a traffic planning and analysis software called Synchro version 12 for the PM peak hour. The evening peak hour was selected due to the higher typical traffic volumes occurring during that time period for a single hour between 4 and 6 p.m. [Table 2-1](#) ~~Table 2-4~~ shows the LOS results at key intersections in the County.

As shown in the table, all of the intersections operate at LOS D or better during the weekday PM peak hour except for the intersection of SR 525 / E Bush Point Rd / SR525 / S Honeymoon Bay Rd. This intersection operates at LOS E during the PM peak hour due to difficulty for left turn vehicles accessing SR 525 during periods of afternoon travel peaks. The 2025 PM peak hour results are also shown [Figure 2-8](#) ~~Figure 2-8~~.

**Table 2-1 Existing Intersection Level of Service**

Intersection	Jurisdiction	Intersection Control <sup>2</sup>	2025 PM Peak Hour		
			LOS <sup>1</sup>	Delay <sup>2</sup>	WM <sup>3</sup>
SR 20 / Ault Field Road	WSDOT	Signal	C	25	--
Heller Road / Clover Valley Road / Ault Field Rd	Island County	Roundabout	A	7.5	0.57
East Harbor Road / Main Street	Island County	All-Way Stop	A	9.2	
Langley Road / Maxwellton Road	Island County	Two-Way Stop	B	10.5	EBL
Cultus Bay Road / Log Cabin Road / Deer Lake Road	Island County	Two-Way Stop	B	11.1	WB
East Cross Island Drive/East Camano Drive	Island County	Signal	B	18.6	
McElroy Drive / East Camano Drive	Island County	Signal	A	9.4	
East Camano Drive / South Camano Hill Drive	Island County	Signal	A	1.5	
East Monticello Drive / E Camano Drive / South Elger Bay Road	Island County	Two-Way Stop	C	20.7	EB
SR 525 / Honeymoon Bay Road	WSDOT	Two-Way Stop	E	47.6	WBL
South Elger Bay Road / East Mountain View Road	Island County	Two-Way Stop	A	9.9	EB
North Torpedo Road / West Crescent Harbor Road	Island County	Two-Way Stop	C	19	SB

- 1 Level-of-service based on *Highway Capacity Manual* 7th Edition methodology.
- 2 Average delay in seconds per vehicle.
- 3 Worst movement reported for unsignalized intersections.

**Acronyms for Table 2.1**

Delay = Average seconds of delay per vehicle during PM Peak Hour

LOS = Level of Service

SR = State Route

PM Peak Hour = The heaviest 60 minutes of traffic volume between 4:00-6:00pm

WM = Worst Movement

WSDOT = Washington State Department of Transportation

Figure 2-8 Existing Intersection LOS



### Traffic Safety

Collision records for the most recent complete five-year period were reviewed for all collisions reported in Island County. Historical safety data was collected from WSDOT for the period of January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023. [Table 2-2](#) summarizes the collision history records by year for State Highways and County Roads.

**Table 2-2 Island County Collision History (January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023)**

Location	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5-Year Total
<i>State Highway Collisions</i>						
Fatality <sup>1</sup>	4	3	2	3	2	14
Injury <sup>2</sup>	101	80	97	74	88	440
PDO <sup>3</sup>	249	194	251	224	237	1,155
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>354</i>	<i>277</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>301</i>	<i>327</i>	<i>1,609</i>
<i>County Road Collisions</i>						
Fatality	4	3	3	2	2	14
Injury	88	75	71	67	75	376
PDO	153	153	165	136	156	763
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>245</i>	<i>231</i>	<i>239</i>	<i>205</i>	<i>233</i>	<i>1,153</i>
<i>State Highway and County Road Intersections Collisions</i>						
Fatality	8	6	5	5	4	28
Injury	189	155	168	141	163	816
PDO	402	347	416	360	393	1,918
<i>Total</i>	<i>599</i>	<i>508</i>	<i>589</i>	<i>506</i>	<i>560</i>	<i>2,762</i>

Source: WSDOT Collision Reports

1. Collisions with at least one fatality

2. Collisions with at least one injury

3. Collisions with property damage only (PDO)

As shown in the table, there were nearly 2,800 reported collisions in Island County over the five-year study period. This is an average of 560 collisions reported per year, with slightly more occurring on State Routes (average of 300 per year) than County Roads (average of 260 per year). The year with the highest number of collisions is 2009, where 610 collisions were reported on State Highways and County Roads. Many of the collisions that occurred on County and State roadways are single vehicles running off the road or striking fixed objects, such as guardrails. While some of these collisions occurred along curves on roadway, there are few discernible patterns to these types of roadway collisions.

Collision records for State Routes were further analyzed to calculate historical collision rates for comparison to statewide averages. Collision rates are calculated based on the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) derived from the roadway length and AADT volumes. This provides a common denominator for comparing the number of collisions on roadways with different traffic volumes and lengths.

[Table 2-3](#) summarizes collision rates for State Highways in Island County over the 5-year study period.

**Table 2-3 Exhibit State Route Collision Rates (January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023)**

Roadway	Length (mi.)	5-Year Total Crashes	Crashes / Year	AADT <sup>1</sup>	MVM <sup>2</sup>	Collision Rate <sup>3</sup>
<i>State Highways</i>						
SR 20	29	1,130	226	22,000	211.7	5.34
SR 525	22	379	76	10,000	96.4	3.93
SR 532	3	100	20	17,000	18.6	5.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>1,609</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>49,000</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>14.64</b>

Source: WSDOT Collision Reports

1. AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic for 2012 (from WSDOT Traffic Report)

2. MVM – Million Vehicle Miles

3. Average number of crashes per million vehicle miles traveled

As shown in [Table 2-3](#), collision rates per million vehicle miles of travel on the Principal Arterials within Island County range between 3.93 for SR 525 and 5.37 for SR 532. The severity of collisions on State Highways within Island County was summarized to determine the number of fatality, injury, and property damage collisions that were reported on the roadways. [Table 2-4](#) shows the severity of collisions on state routes recorded during the most recent 5-year period of crash data obtained from WSDOT.

**Table 2-4 State Route Collision Severity Summary (January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023)**

Roadway	Total Crashes	Number of Collisions			Number of Occupants		
		Fatality <sup>1</sup>	Injury <sup>2</sup>	PDO <sup>3</sup>	Fatalities <sup>4</sup>	Injuries <sup>5</sup>	Vehicles <sup>6</sup>
<i>State Highways</i>							
SR 20	1,130	7	307	816	7	442	2,035
SR 525	379	7	102	270	8	151	649
SR 532	100	0	31	69	0	53	188
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,609</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>1,155</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>2,872</b>

Source: WSDOT Collision Reports

1. Number of collisions with at least one fatality

2. Number of collisions with at least one injury

3. Number of collisions with property damage only (PDO)

4. Total number of fatalities

5. Total number of injuries

6. Total number of vehicles involved

As shown in the table, there were 15 fatalities on State Highways in Island County over the 5-year study period due to 14 separate collisions. Over the same period, there was an average of 1.46 injuries for each collision that resulted in an injury. Similarly, an average of more than 2 vehicles was involved in each property damage only reported collision, showing that many collisions reported during the study period involved multiple vehicles. [Figure 2-9](#) through [Figure 2-11](#) show the collision location and severity during the 5-year period.

Figure 2-9 Island County Crash History 2019 – 2023 (North Whidbey)

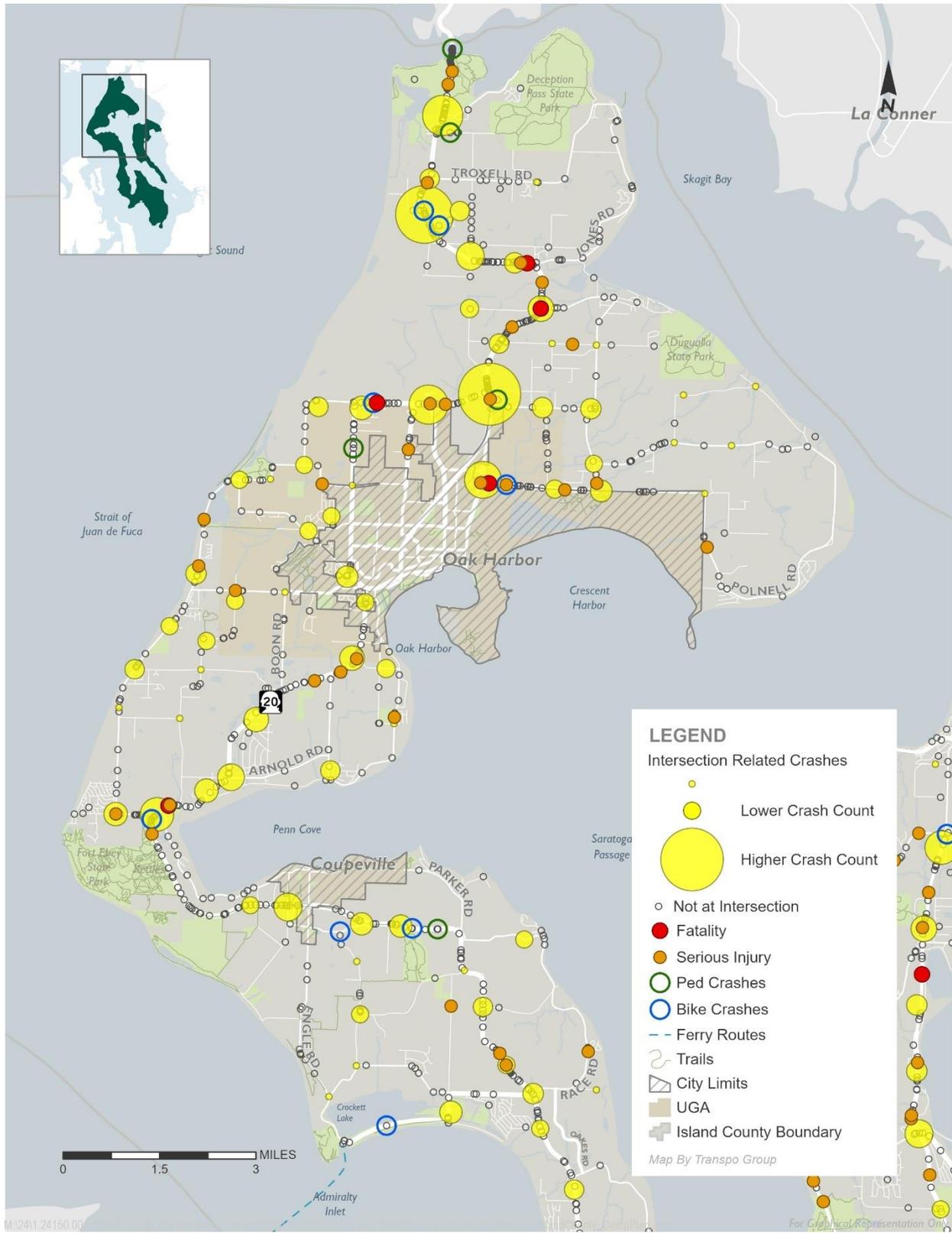


Figure 2-10 Island County Crash History 2019 – 2023 (South Whidbey)

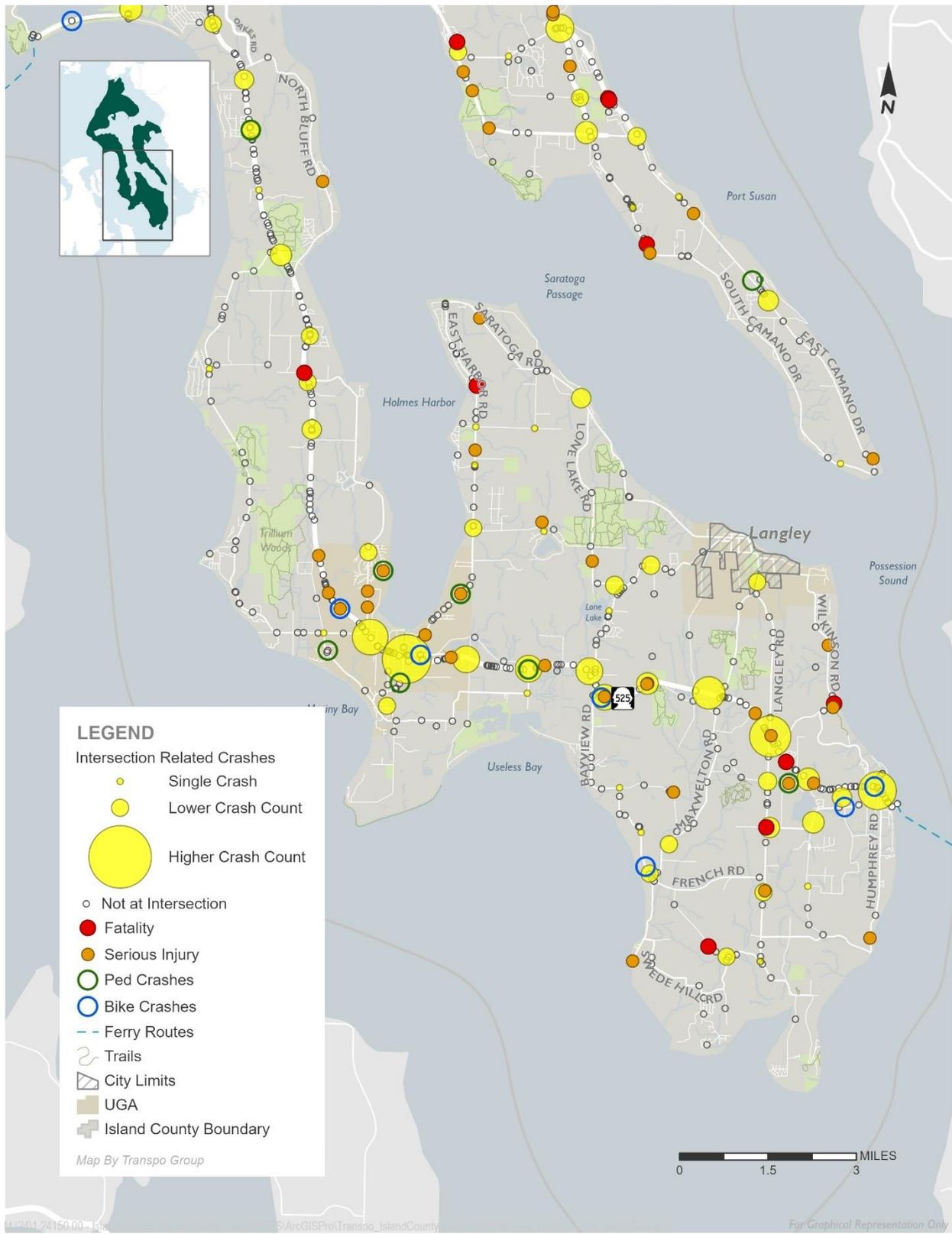
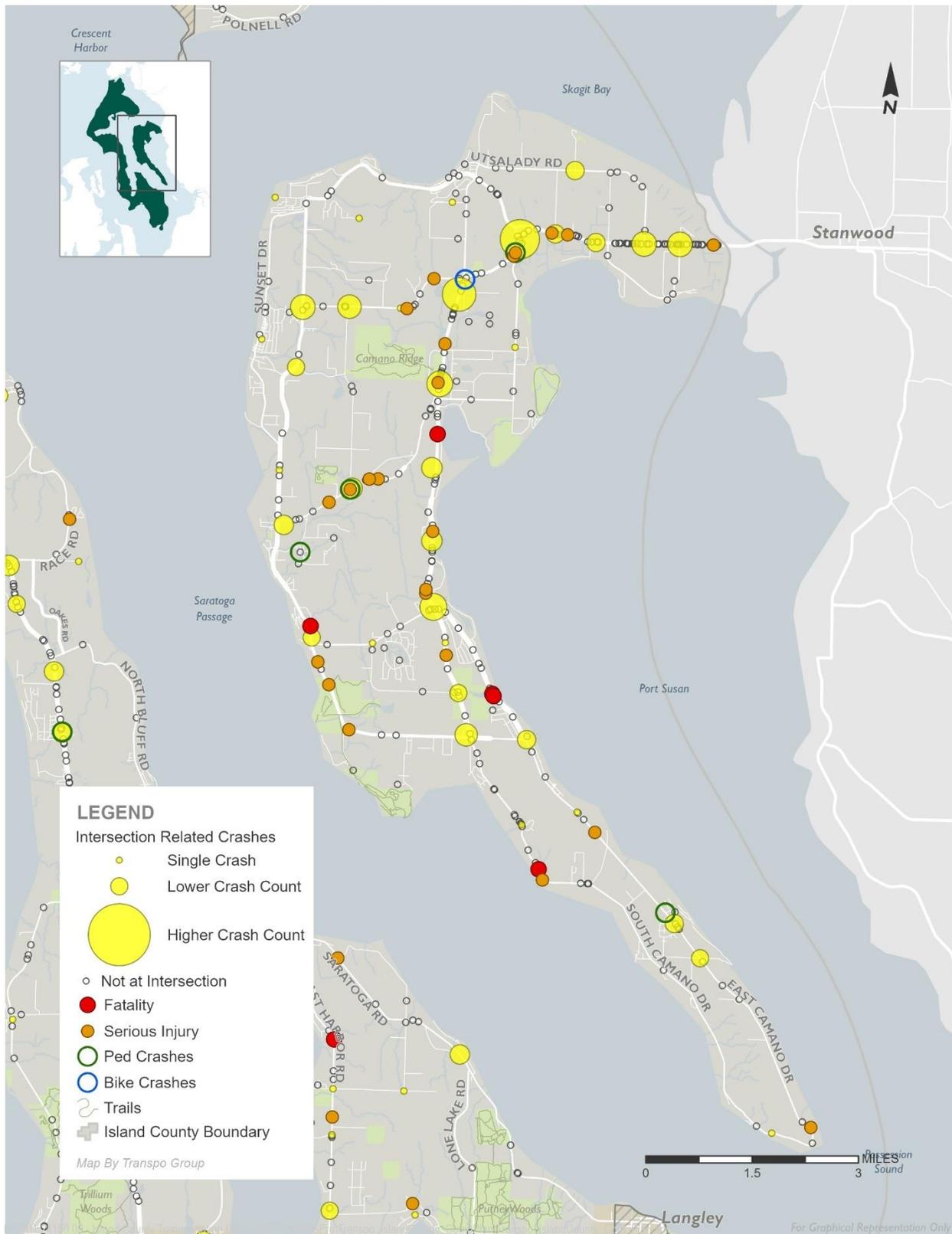


Figure 2-11 Island County Crash History 2019 – 2023 (Camano)



### *Freight Routes*

The [Washington State Freight and Goods Transportation System \(FGTS\)](#)<sup>4</sup> classifies highways, county roads, and city streets according to the average annual gross truck tonnage they carry. Truck tonnage values are derived from actual or estimated truck traffic count data that is converted into average weights by truck type<sup>4</sup>. The FGTS uses five truck classifications, T-1 through T-5, depending on the annual gross tonnage the roadway carries.

- T-1: more than 10 million tons per year
- T-2: 4 million to 10 million tons per year
- T-3: 300,000 to 4 million tons per year
- T-4: 100,000 to 300,000 tons per year
- T-5: at least 20,000 tons in 60 days and less than 100,000 tons per year

Routes with the highest annual gross tonnage, T-1 and T-2 routes, are also identified as Strategic Freight Corridors.

[Figure 2-12](#) ~~Figure 2-12~~ shows the FGTS classifications in Island County. The highest classification road in Island County is for SR 20 from Deception Pass Bridge through the City of Oak Harbor which is classified as a T-2 route. The remaining segments of SR 20, SR 525, and SR 532 are T-3 routes, along with short spurs to ferry terminals and towns. Several other important freight routes are county roads on Whidbey and Camano Islands

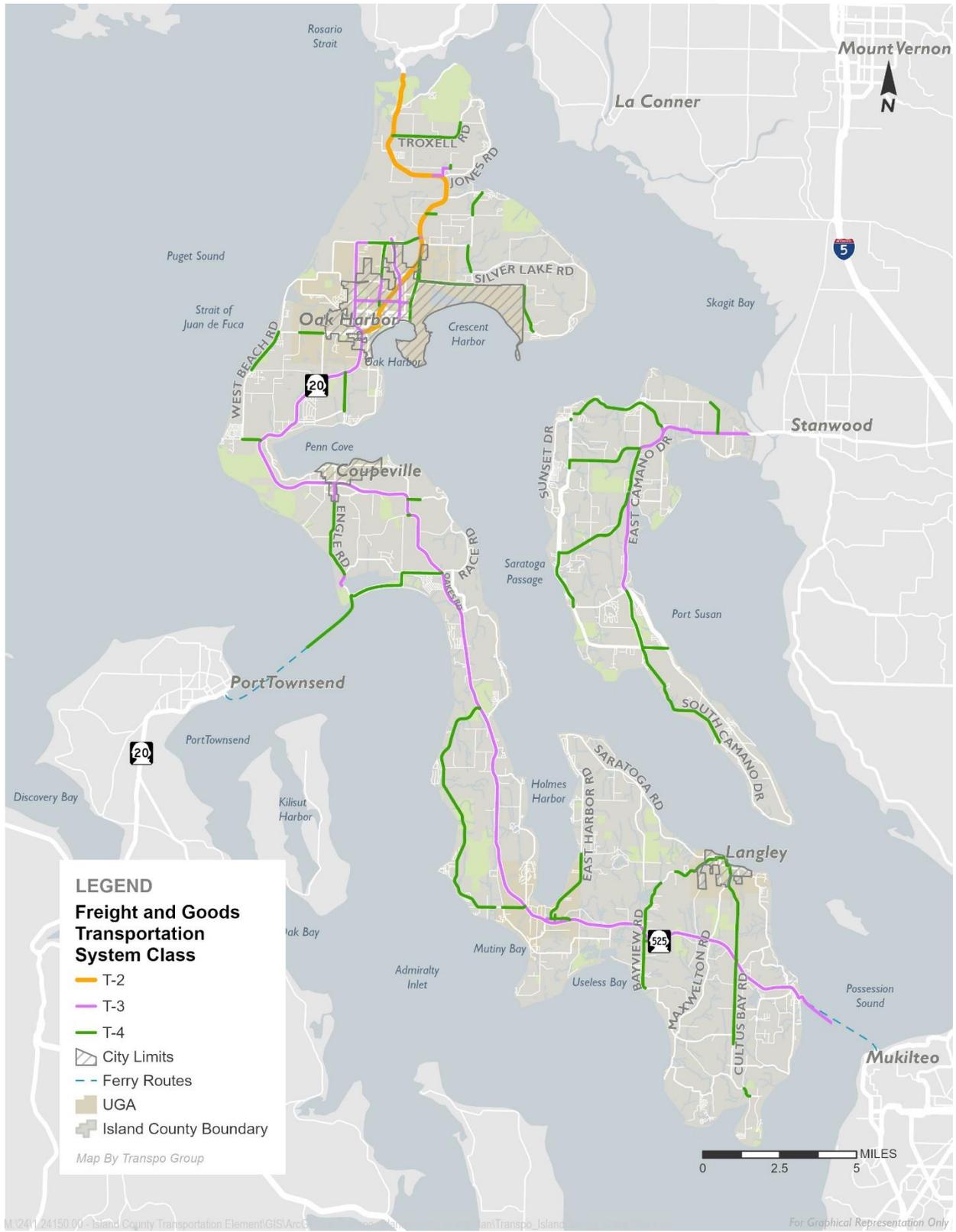
### *Freight Movements*

Most of the truck traffic originating from or destined to Island County comes from the City of Oak Harbor, the largest urban area on Whidbey Island and home to [Naval Air Station Whidbey Island](#). The predominant routes for all truck trips include SR 20, SR 525 and SR 532 for all or part of their trip within Island County.

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<sup>4</sup> [WSDOT Freight and Goods Transportation System \(FGTS\) \(December 2023\)](#)

Figure 2-12 Island County Truck Routes



### 2.3. Active Transportation

This Transportation Element establishes a long-term countywide Active Transportation Network of existing and planned designated walking and bicycle facilities. The portion of this network that can realistically be constructed over the 20-year planning period will depend on the amount of funding available for improvements to County roads, as well as WSDOT funding for improvements to State Routes.

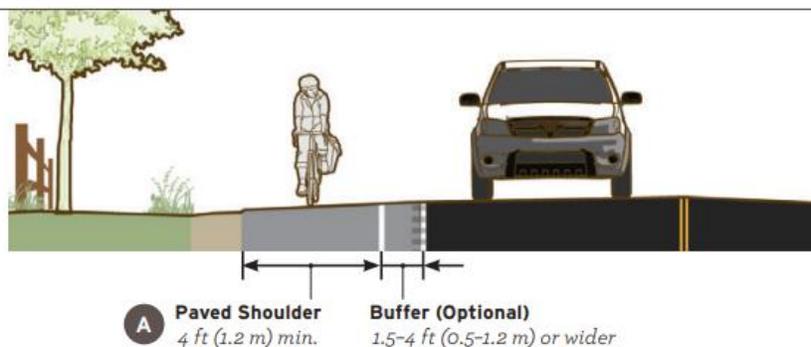
Establishing an Active Transportation Network can be very challenging for an unincorporated rural geography. The land use context and reality of living in a rural environment demands a different societal expectation for what type of walking and bicycle facilities can be provided. The first step is to take an inventory of regional walking, biking, and multiuse facilities that currently exist. The next step is to examine the physical space and constraints of the existing countywide roadway system to determine if there are opportunities to enhance what already exists, such as roadway shoulders. Some roads currently have paved shoulders, which may not be ideal for comfort and safety, but can serve as places to walk and bike outside of the vehicle travel lane.

The Active Transportation Network consists of facilities for residents and visitors to participate in active transportation and recreation activities throughout Island County. A combination of on-street facilities and off-street pathways and trails provide the core network for people walking, biking, and rolling to popular destinations. The comprehensive Active Transportation Network complements the [2018 Island County Non-Motorized Trails Plan](#) and will provide local connectivity to work, shopping, education, entertainment, and recreation and regional connectivity between communities, to ferry access points, parks and natural areas, points of interest, and other destinations. The existing non-motorized facilities documented in this section of the plan are based on an inventory conducted in 2025.

In a rural environment, a 4-foot paved shoulder is considered the minimum standard for a designated bicycle facility (Source: [FHWA Small Town and Rural Design Guide, 2017](#); Paved Shoulder illustration below). There are currently several County roads and State Routes that have shoulders equal or greater than four (4) feet in width.

## Paved Shoulder

Shoulders can improve bicyclist comfort and safety when traveling in higher speed and/or volume situations but only when adequate width is provided. If used, locate rumble strips on the edge line or within a buffer area that will not reduce usable space for bicyclists.



**Figure 12. Minimum Active Transportation LOS Standard**

### ***Active Transportation Facilities***

Active Transportation facilities vary across Island County to include a range of types that are suited for pedestrians, cyclists, and other types of active users.

#### ***Sidewalks***

Sidewalks are the primary pedestrian facility within towns and developed areas. Many of the downtown areas including Freeland, Oak Harbor, Coupeville, and Langley provide sidewalks. Along with off-street trails, sidewalks are the primary facility type for pedestrians. Cyclists may also use sidewalks within many of these jurisdictions provided they yield right-of-way to pedestrians. Because sidewalks are typically focused on serving local travel within Island County, they are not shown on any of the non-motorized system maps.

#### ***On-Street Facilities***

On-street facilities include the bicycle lanes, striped shoulders, and shared roadways that comprise the non-motorized facilities on State Highways and County Roads. These facilities are primarily used for commuter and utility travel between and within the urbanized areas of Island County. Recreational and tourist activities in the county also use these routes. The on-street facilities are shown in [Figure 2-13](#) ~~Figure 2-13~~.

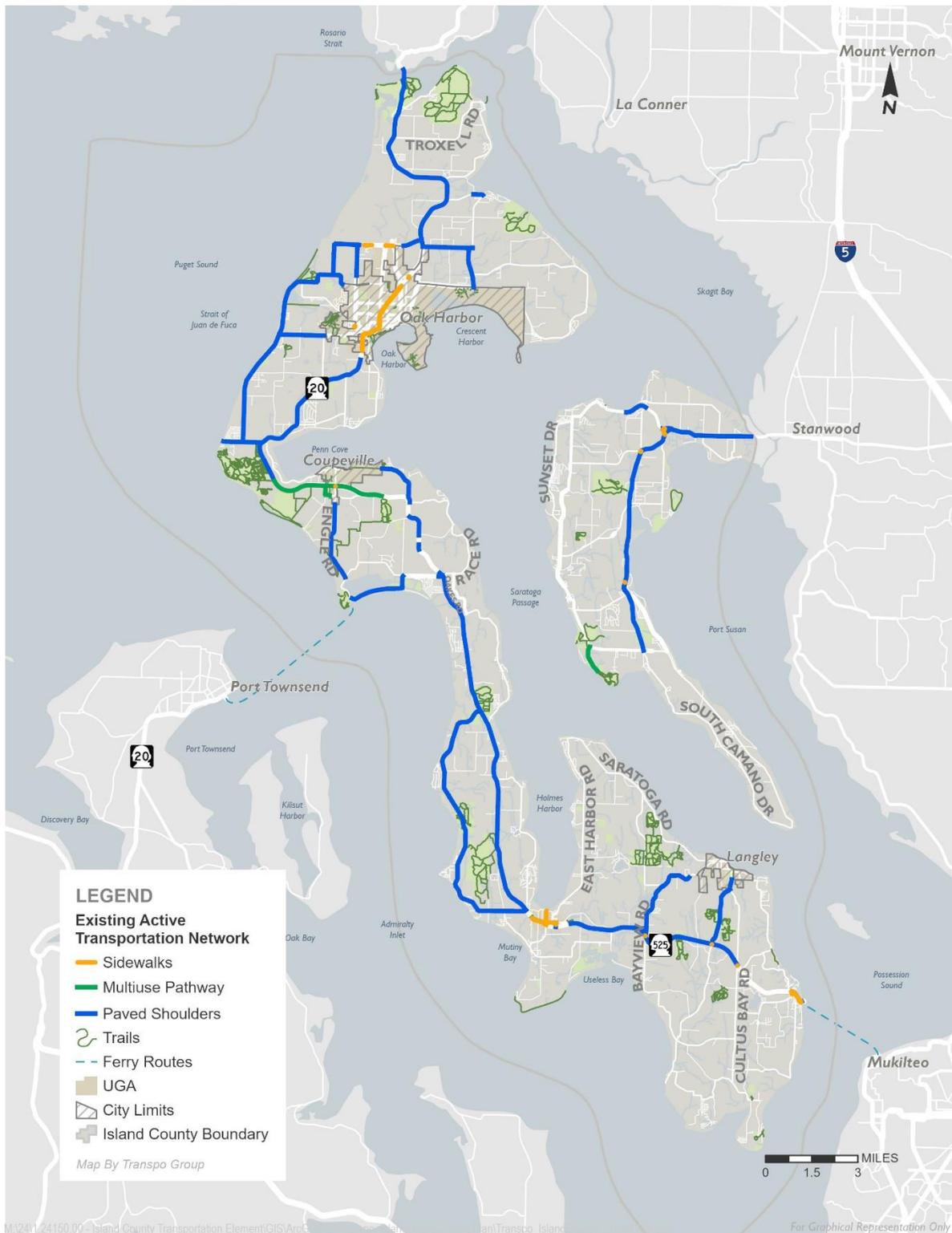
#### **Bicycle Lanes**

Dedicated bicycle lanes are a minimum of five (5) feet of physical roadway space for bicyclists that are typically in both directions on the edge of the traveled way. They are marked with a wide (4" to 8") white stripe and parking is prohibited. Main Street and Harbor Avenue in Freeland are currently the only county roads that have sections with dedicated / striped bike lanes.

#### **Paved Shoulder**

Paved shoulders are on the edge of the traveled way for vehicles. Striped shoulders are considered non-motorized facilities where there is a reasonable distance available for pedestrians and cyclists to travel with minor impact to motor vehicles. For the purposes of this plan, this facility type only includes roadways with striped shoulders greater than four (4) feet wide. Striped shoulders with more than 4 feet of usable width typically provide enough comfortable space for non-motorized users, while narrower striped shoulders often result in non-motorized users being forced into the other travel lanes.

Figure 2-13 Active Transportation Facilities



### **Shared Roadway**

Shared roadways include roadways with striped shoulders less than 4 feet wide, roadways without striped shoulders, and roadways with curbs. On shared roadways, non-motorized users share the travel lane with motor vehicles.

### ***Off-Street Facilities***

Off-street facilities include the trail network and recreational beach walks comprised of the low-tide trails in Island County. These types of facilities are generally used for recreational purposes but may also serve commuter and utility travel between urban areas in Island County. The off-street facilities are shown in Figure 2-13.

### **Trails**

The Island County Non-Motorized Plan designates both high-standard, medium standard, and Wildland Trails. For the purposes of the county-wide transportation element, standard trails are separated from the roadways and vary in width from approximately 5 feet to 12 feet wide. ADA access is provided on many trails, but not all.

### **Low-Tide Trails**

Low-tide trails, or beach walks, are regionally significant stretches of firm sand or gravel that allow for walking during low to moderate tides. These do not follow a constructed pathway but are shown as trails on the non-motorized maps. Only walkable beaches that are owned by the public, are of significant length, and have reasonable access are included in the inventory.

### Active Transportation Safety Data

Collision records were reviewed for pedestrian and bicycle crashes on State Highways and Island County roadways. Collision records during the most recent 5-year period of crash data obtained from WSDOT were analyzed for collisions that involved non-motorized users. [Table 2-5](#) shows the total and severity of these collisions within Island County.

**Table 2-5 Non-Motorized Collision Summary (January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023)**

Roadway User	Total Crashes	Fatality Collisions <sup>1</sup>	Injury Collisions <sup>2</sup>	PDO Collisions <sup>3</sup>	Number of Fatalities <sup>4</sup>	Number of Injuries <sup>5</sup>	Number of Vehicles <sup>6</sup>
<i>State Highway Collisions</i>							
Pedestrian	21	3	15	3	3	20	26
Cyclist	11	0	11	0	0	11	11
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>
<i>County Roadway Collisions</i>							
Pedestrian	12	0	11	1	0	11	12
Cyclist	11	0	11	0	0	11	11
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>State Highway and County Roads Intersection Collisions</i>							
Pedestrian	33	3	26	4	3	31	38
Cyclist	22	0	22	0	0	22	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>60</b>

Source: WSDOT Collision Reports

1. Number of collisions with at least one fatality

2. Number of collisions with at least one injury

3. Number of collisions with property damage only (PDO)

4. Total number of injuries

5. Total number of fatalities

6. Total number of vehicles involved

As shown in the table, there were 55 total crashes involving non-motorized roadway users on State Highways and Island County roadways. Over the 5-year study period, three fatalities and 53 injuries (from 48 injury collisions) were recorded.

### Active Transportation LOS Standards

The 2025 Transportation Element supplements the 2018 NMTP and the Parks and Trails Element of the Comprehensive Plan to meet current policy direction from the GMA and WSDOT by establishing an active transportation network, performance measures, and MMLOS standards.

For active (aka non-motorized) transportation, performance and prioritization measures focus on safety and comfort while LOS standards focus on network connectivity and completeness rather than design capacity or user counts. People walking, biking, and rolling in wheelchairs and mobility devices are the most vulnerable users of the transportation system because they:

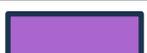
- Do not have a vehicle structure to protect them
- Are smaller and lighter than larger and heavier vehicles
- Travel at slower speeds (10-15 mph) than vehicles
- Are exposed to vehicle passing and turning conflicts
- Are at higher risk of injury in collisions with vehicles

Active Transportation LOS standards were developed for this plan in alignment with the rural character of much of the county’s road network. These rural roadways often have low vehicle volumes which can make them attractive alternatives for active users seeking to avoid the discomfort associated with higher volumes on major routes. However, rural roads often lack shoulders and may see higher traffic speeds due to a variety of factors. A person’s choice to walk, bike, or roll is primarily influenced by the availability of well-connected routes and user perception of safety and risk of conflict. For these reasons, it is important that roadways in the active network have adequate facilities to increase the safety and comfort of all users.

The Active Transportation LOS standards are presented in Table 2-6. The LOS designations are shown in blues and purples that correspond to the differing standards in rural vs. urban areas. In unincorporated areas of the county, the standard is defined primarily by the presence or absence of shoulders along designated routes. Shoulders greater than or equal to 4ft wide are the standard which is considered the minimum for a designated bicycle facility in a rural context. (Source: [FHWA Small Town and Rural Design Guide, 2017](#)) Incorporated vs. unincorporated areas of UGA within the county have differing LOS standards per Policies 6.10 and 6.11 in the goals and policies section of this document. The Urban vs. Rural designation was made using the current UGA and City boundaries for Island County.

The darker blue or purple LOS indicates a roadway or route that provides adequate shoulder width for its location and where the active network is considered complete. The lighter blue and purple LOS indicate facilities where shoulders lack sufficient width or may not be present at all. A green LOS indicates multiuse pathways which are separated from the roadway and are low stress facilities appropriate for all ages and abilities. The network of roads where these standards are applied and an existing conditions assessment is shown in section 4.2 of this plan. Specific deficiencies identified when comparing these standards to existing conditions form the basis of projects identified in section 4.6 of this plan.

**Table 2-6. Active Transportation Network LOS Standards**

LOS	Rating	Bicycle Standard	Pedestrian Standard
	Rural Meets Standard	Shoulders with width >= 4ft	Shoulders with width >= 4ft
	Urban Meets Standard	Marked Bike Lanes in both directions/Multi Use Path	Incorporated UGA: Sidewalk on Both Sides of Street Unincorporated UGA: Sidewalk on One Side of Street
	Rural Substandard	Shoulders with width < 4ft	Shoulders with width < 4ft
	Urban Substandard	No Bike Lanes	Incorporated UGA: Missing sidewalks on one or both sides Unincorporated UGA: No sidewalks
	Meets Standard – All Locations	Multi Use Path	Multi Use Path

## 2.4. Transit

Island Transit service is a fundamental part of the transportation network that operates on state highways and county arterials, as well as county collectors on both Whidbey and Camano Islands. Within Island County, Island Transit offers fare-free service. Over the past several years, transit ridership in Island County has been increasing on this fare-free system while service has remained relatively constant.

The transit services available in Snohomish and Skagit Counties are important to residents of Island County, particularly weekday commuters who work on the mainland. The primary locations where Islanders can access transit services are Mukilteo, Stanwood, and March's Point Park and Ride in Anacortes. Weekend transit service is minimal, with local service offered on some routes on Saturdays and Sundays.

Mukilteo offers the most transit options. There are currently three different transit providers with stops within walking distance of the ferry terminal.

Sound Transit's *Sounder* commuter train offers four round trips Monday through Friday into Seattle's King Street Station on the North Line.

Community Transit provides connection to and from downtown Seattle on weekdays, via the Lynnwood Transit Center. The Lynnwood Transit Center is well connected to Sound Transit's frequent express bus service, as well as a significant number of local routes that extend to major destinations throughout Snohomish County.

Community Transit also offers reliable service from Stanwood that is useful for Camano Island residents, including service to the Lynnwood Transit Center throughout the day, six days per week.

Island Transit provides a shuttle between Terry's Corner Park and Ride and Stanwood to make it easy for Camano residents to leave their cars on the island when connecting to transit.

In addition to bus service, Island Transit operates vanpools that Island County residents use to commute. Major off-island destinations include the Microsoft campus in Redmond, various other Eastside locations, and Downtown Seattle. Vanpoolers travelling aboard ferries enjoy registered high-occupancy vehicle status, making them exempt from having to wait in line at the terminals, provided they have already paid the ferry fare and arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled sailing time.

### *Fixed Route Service*

Transit service is funded through a tax-based transit district and operated by Island Transit. There are currently 16 fixed service bus routes on Whidbey and Camano Islands. These routes serve communities across the county and are summarized in [Table 2-6](#).

**Table 2-6 Existing Fixed Route Service Summary**

Route	Description	Type of Service	Midday Service Headways (min.)	Peak Service Headways (min.)
<i>Whidbey Island</i>				
1	North-south spine route connecting Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Greenbank, Freeland, Bayview and Clinton Ferry Terminal	Weekday, Express, Saturday & Sunday	60	60 <sup>1</sup>
2	West Oak Harbor Loop via Heller and Oak Harbor Roads	Weekday, Saturday & Sunday	60	60
On Demand Zone 3	East Oak Harbor Loop via Taylor Road	Weekday	120	120
411W	Tri-County Connector Route between Oak Harbor and Skagit Transit Center via Deception Pass Bridge and SR20 and SR536	Weekday, Saturday	60	60
6	Keystone-Coupeville Route with connection to Oak Harbor via West Beach Road	Weekday	90	90
On Demand Zone 6	Coupeville-Admirals Cove with connection to Coupeville ferry landing	Weekday	120	120
9	West Oak Harbor	Weekday	60	60
10	Central Oak Harbor	Weekday	30	30
60	Route connecting Clinton, Freeland and Langley	Weekday, Saturday	60	60
Clinton Commuter	Clinton Ferry to Clinton P&R	Weekday	30	30
On Demand NASWI	Shuttle connecting Victory Terrace and Crescent Harbor to NASWI base	Weekday	120	120
<i>Camano Island</i>				
1	Route serving the west region of Camano Island	Weekday	60	60
2	Route serving the east region of Camano Island	Weekday	60	60
3	Route serving Stanwood	Weekday	60	60
411C	Tri-County Connector Route between Terry's Corner and Skagit Transit Center via Stanwood	Weekday, Saturday & Sunday	120	120
412	Route between Terry's Corner and Everett Station via Stanwood P&R	Weekday	-	60

Note: 1) Route 1: 15-minute headway at weekday noon commute hour. Source: <https://www.islandtransit.org/Route1SBWeekday>

As shown in the table, there are eleven routes operating on Whidbey Island and five serving Camano Island. Island Transit does have more frequent service on some routes during peak hours, particularly those serving commuter travel. Route 1 on Whidbey Island has the shortest headways during the noon hour, with buses arriving approximately every 15 minutes. Most routes, however, operate with headways of 30 or 60 minutes throughout the day. [Figure 2-14](#) through [Figure 2-16](#) shows the transit routes currently operating in Island County.

Figure 2-14 Island County Transit Service (North Whidbey)

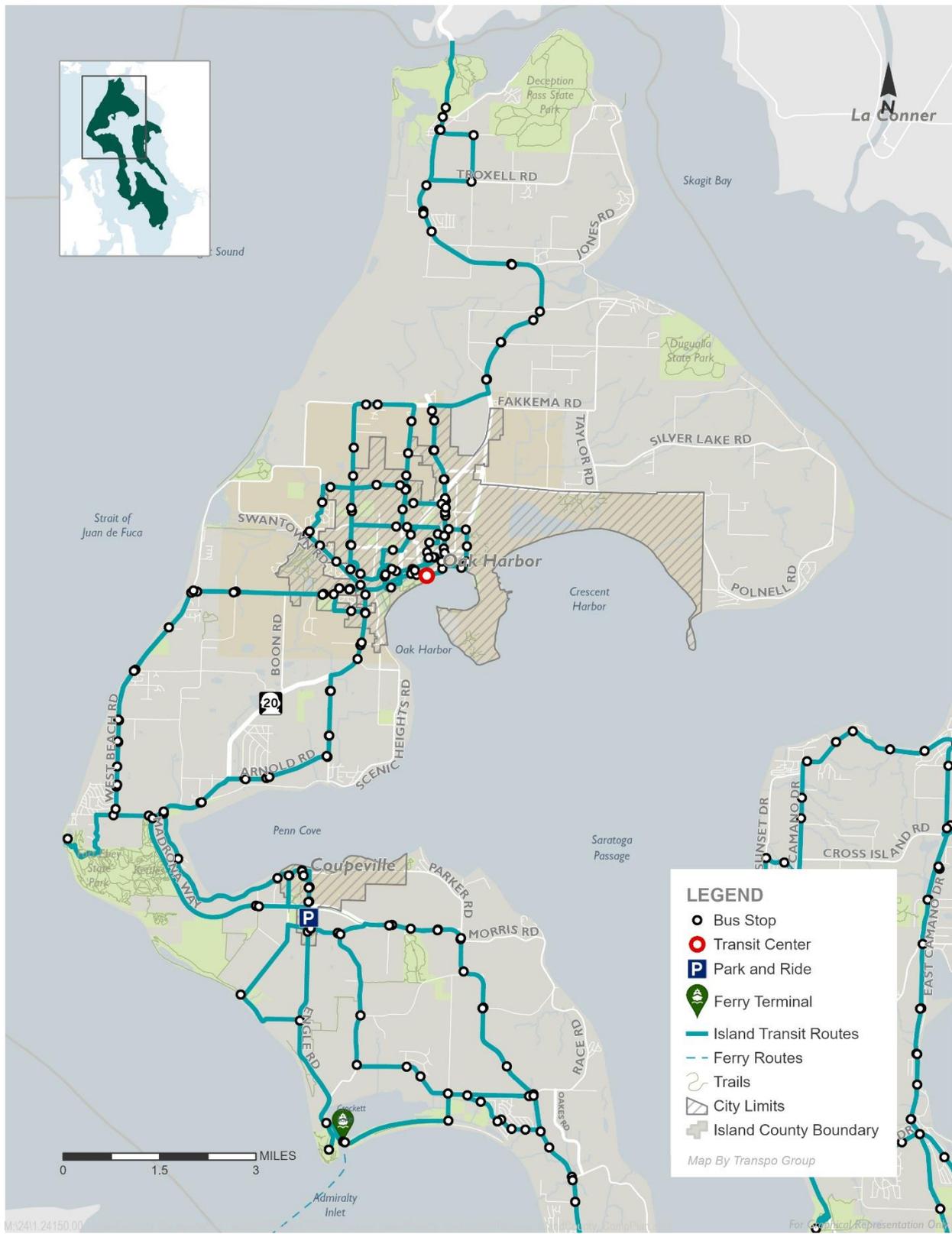


Figure 2-15 Island County Transit Service (South Whidbey)

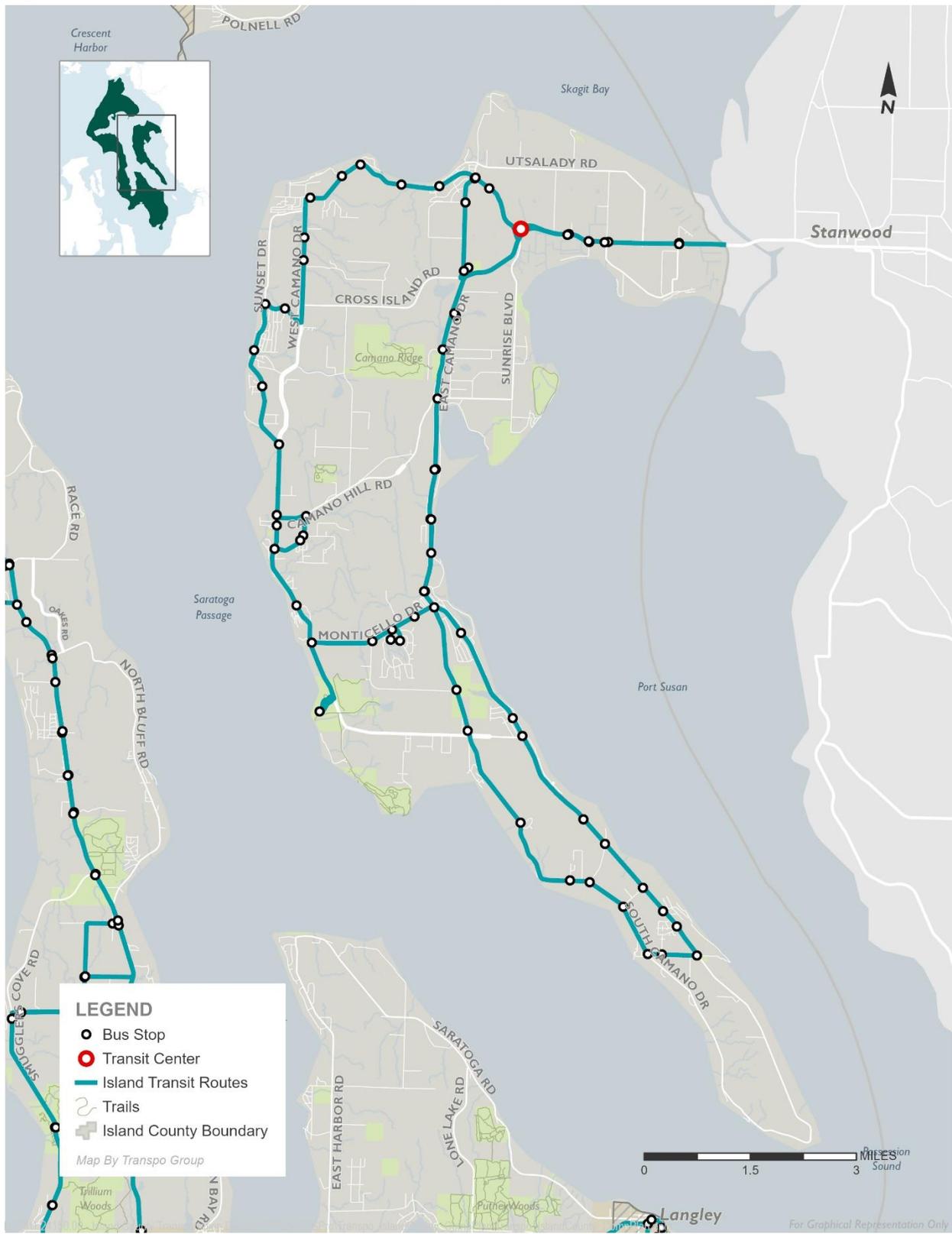


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Figure 2-16 Island County Transit Service (Camano)



### *Paratransit Service*

Paratransit service is based on fixed transit service routes that are designed to allow time for a transit vehicle to deviate up to three-fourths of a mile off the fixed route structure to pick up or drop off eligible persons with disabilities. Greater deviations will be made to serve ADA eligible individuals living outside the corridor structure on a space available, schedule permitting basis. In many cases, route deviation increases ridership on the fixed routes while serving those unable to use the regular fixed route service.

### *Vanpool Program*

Island Transit operates a vanpool program for groups of people that have similar schedules and share a commute to and from work or school. In 1988, Island Transit’s Board of Directors adopted a vanpool administration policy modeled after the policy developed by the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle’s (Metro) Commuter Pool Program. This policy provides a clear schedule of reimbursements as well as comprehensive rider and driver agreements.

### *Park-and-Rides*

Park-and-rides allow transit users to drive private vehicles to a centralized location and ride transit to their ultimate destination. In rural areas these can be a critical component of the transit system as they extend the reach of transit routes to farther origins or destinations. There are nine park-and-ride lots in Island County at the sites shown in [Table 2-7](#) and [Figure 2-14](#).

**Table 2-7 Park-and-Ride Facilities**

Name	Location	Bus Routes Served	Number of Parking Spaces
Clinton Park and Ride	SR 525 / Deer Lake Road	1, 7, 8	200
Bayview Park and Ride	SR 525 / Bayview Road	1, 7, 8	85
Freeland Park and Ride (Trinity Lutheran Church)	SR 525 / Woodard Road	1	70
Greenbank Park and Ride	SR 525 / Bakken Road	1	20
Langley Noble Creek Transit Park	Camano Avenue / Sandy Point	5, 7, 8	64
Coupeville Prairie Station Transit Park	SR 20 / S Main Street	1, 6	48
Oak Harbor Park and Ride	SR 20 / Hoffman Road	4, 411-W	33
Soundview Shopper Park and Ride	SR 20 / Troxell Road	4, 411-W	15
Terry’s Corner Park and Ride	SR 532 / Sunrise Boulevard	1, 2, 3, 411-C, 412C	80
WSDOT Clinton Ferry Parking Lot	6491 Humphrey Road		<u>209</u>
		<b>Total</b>	<b>824</b>

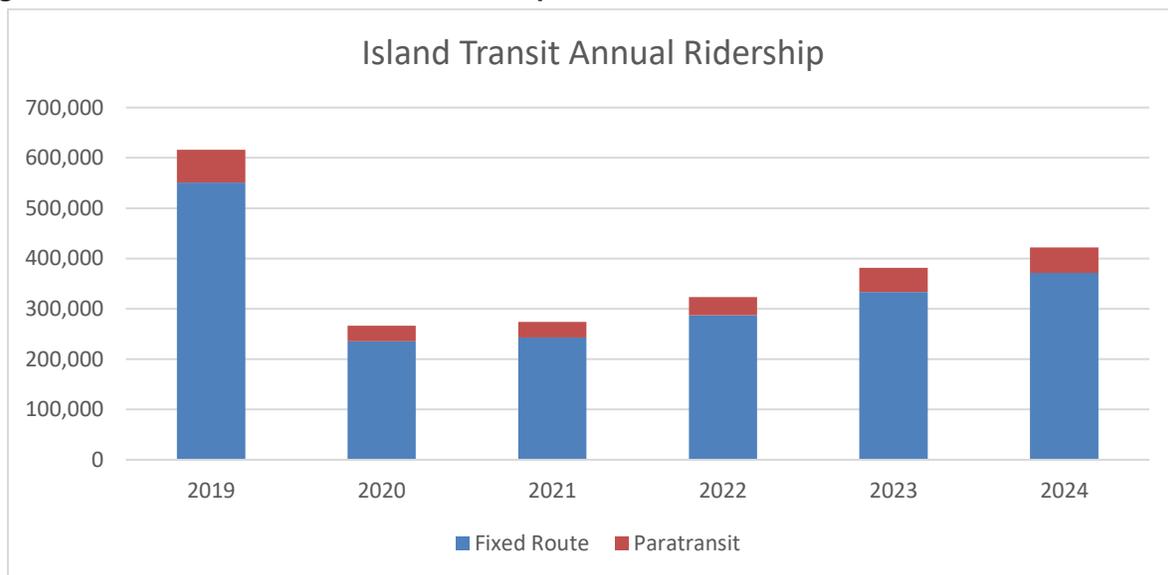
Source: WSDOT Park and Ride Database

As shown in the table, approximately 824 parking spaces are available across all park-and-ride facilities in Island County. The WSDOT Clinton Ferry Parking Lot has the highest number of total parking spaces, with 200 available for personal vehicles. No formal studies on the utilization rate of park and rides in Island County were available at the time of this report.

### Transit Ridership

Ridership information is collected by transit operators to observe the annual and seasonal trends for transit service provided. Annual system-wide ridership data was collected from Island Transit for the most recent 6 years of data available. [Figure 2-17](#) shows the annual ridership for fixed route transit services for 2019 through 2024.

**Figure 2-17 Historical Island Transit Ridership**



As shown in [Figure 2-17](#), Island Transit ridership substantially decreased because of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Island Transit systemwide ridership has been slowly recovering since the 2020 decrease but has only reached approximately 68% of the pre-pandemic peak.

### Transit LOS Standard

GMA requirements state that comprehensive plans must include measurable level of service standards for local transit systems. These standards may be based on transit access, capacity, ridership or other methods based on context, but should be created in collaboration with local transit agencies.

Transit service within Island County is maintained and operated by Island Transit, which provides Fixed Route, Vanpool, and Demand Response services on Whidbey and Camano Islands and provides connections to the Skagit Transit and Community Transit networks via shared stop locations in Stanwood, Mt. Vernon, and Anacortes, WA. Island Transit began work on its first Long Range Transit Plan as of Fall 2025 and as such does not yet have well defined LOS goals for the bus network.

In consultation with staff at Island transit, the planning team identified service goals around increasing frequency of service in urban areas, as well as increasing the safety and accessibility of transit throughout the county. Since there is little the county can do in terms of increasing

service frequency, Island County will endorse Island Transit's safety and accessibility goals at 47 priority stop locations in urban areas, near schools and at select community destinations. A map of these stop locations along with the current LOS is viewable in section 4.3.

Many stop locations in the county are characterized by high speeds and narrow shoulders with few crossing locations to allow passengers to safely travel to and from bus stops. Bus pullouts that allow buses to pull off busy roads and allow riders to board and alight away from travel lanes are frequent along major routes. However, 28 of the 47 locations lack an accompanying crosswalk nearby which means transit riders frequently attempt to cross highways where vehicles are travelling at speeds of more than 50 miles per hour. In recent years several serious or fatal accidents have occurred at state highway locations ([link](#)) in relation to riders attempting to cross the street when travelling to or from a stop location. Island County will work with Island Transit and WSDOT to consider installing ADA-complaint marked or enhanced crosswalks at bus stop locations where needed along County roads and state highways.

Additionally, of the 47 priority stop locations identified, only 13 have a bus shelter. Shelters are an important amenity and serve to increase the safety and comfort of passengers, as well as improving ADA accessibility and providing community benefits by encouraging transit use. The county proposes to coordinate with Island Transit at the remaining locations so that Island Transit can install shelter structures at stop locations where shelters are not currently installed.

## 2.5. Ferry Service

Scheduled ferry service to Island County is provided by the Marine Division of the WSDOT, generally referred to as the Washington State Ferries (WSF). This system provides two connections to Whidbey Island via the following routes:

- **Mukilteo–Clinton Route** links southern Whidbey Island at Clinton to the Everett/Seattle metropolitan area at Mukilteo in Snohomish County.
- **Coupeville–Port Townsend Route** links the central portion of Whidbey Island near Coupeville to the Olympia Peninsula at Port Townsend in Jefferson County.

These two routes serve several trip purposes, including recreational-related and tourist trips, commuter-related and business trips, and freight movements as an extension of the highway system. In 2013, WSF completed a comprehensive origin-destination study that documents the travel patterns of their customers. The study was intended to help WSF better match services with customer needs, make ferry operations as efficient as possible, and capture more data that will feed into the ferry travel model for use in the upcoming update of the WSF Long-Range Plan. The complete 2013 study is available on the WSF website<sup>5</sup>.

### *Mukilteo-Clinton Ridership*

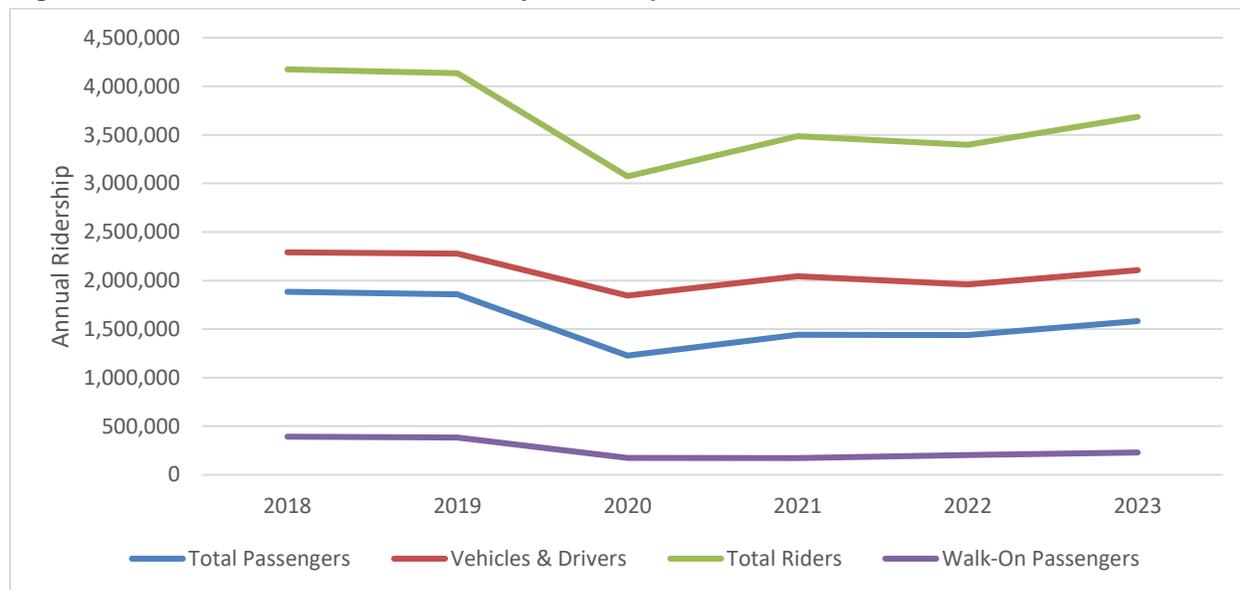
WSF provides ferry service for vehicles and pedestrians directly to Whidbey Island from Mukilteo through the ferry terminal located in Clinton. Historically, ferry ridership grew rapidly

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<sup>5</sup> The website for the 2013 study was <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-10/WSF-2013OriginDestinationSurvey-FullReport.pdf> at time of writing.

between the mid-1970s and late-1990s until reaching a generally steady state since about 2000. Ferry ridership to and from Whidbey Island, via the Clinton and the Mukilteo Terminals for the most recent 6 years of available data is shown in [Figure 2-18](#)~~Figure 2-18~~.

**Figure 2-18 Mukilteo/Clinton Annual Ferry Ridership**

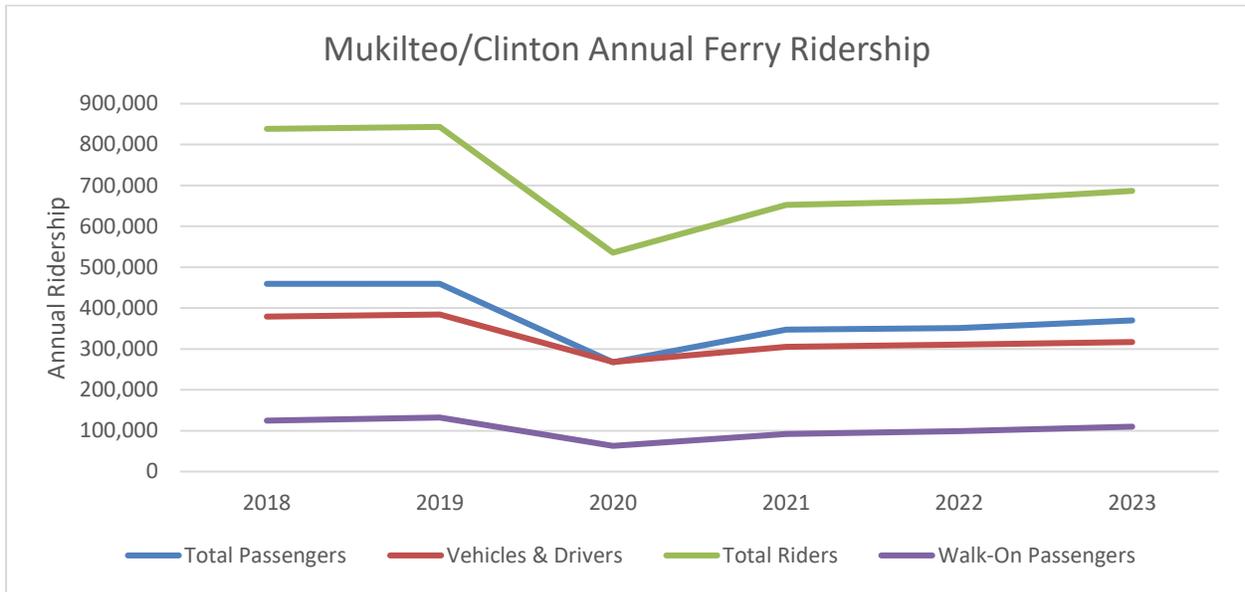


As shown in the chart, there have been approximately 4 million annual riders on the Mukilteo-Clinton route before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Ridership dropped to approximately 3.1 million during 2020 and has slowly increased to about 3.7 million (88% pre-pandemic levels) in 2023. The Mukilteo-Clinton route has historically catered slightly more to commuters. Pre-pandemic, there were approximately 390,000 annual walk-on passengers. While overall passenger values have increased, walk-on passengers have increased the slowest, back to approximately 230,000 (~60% pre-pandemic levels) in 2023. These ferry riders access the terminal via transit, active transportation modes, or the park-and-ride facilities located near the Clinton terminal.

***Coupeville-Port Townsend Ridership***

WSF provides ferry service for vehicles and pedestrians directly to Whidbey Island from Port Townsend through the ferry terminal located near Coupeville. Like the Mukilteo-Clinton route, ferry ridership grew rapidly between the mid-1970s and late-1990s. Ferry ridership to and from Whidbey Island, via the Coupeville and the Port Townsend terminals, for the most recent 6 years of available data is shown in [Figure 2-19](#)~~Figure 2-19~~.

Figure 2-19 Coupeville/Port Townsend Ridership



As shown in the figure, there was a significant dip in the number of total passengers during the 2020 COVID pandemic, when overall ridership was down from approximately 840,000 annual passengers to 535,000 (63%). Annual ridership has increased back to approximately 687,000 in 2023 (82% of pre-pandemic levels).

## 2.6. Other Modes

This section of the report covers other transportation modes that are not explicitly present within Island County but may be included in the future. These modes include air, rail, and equestrian facilities.

### *Air Transportation*

Island County has three privately-owned airfields, Camano Island Airfield, DeLaurentis Airport, and Whidbey Airpark. In addition to these locations, there are two naval airfields located at the Whidbey Naval Air Station and Coupeville Naval Outlying Field. WSDOT's Aviation Division provides general characteristics of the commercial facilities, including the total number of aircraft based at each location.

Camano Island Airfield is a privately-owned airport that allows public use of its single runway. DeLaurentis Airport is also a privately-owned public use airport located about three miles from Oak Harbor. The airport previously had scheduled passenger service provided by Kenmore Air, which ended operations to Oak Harbor in 2008. Whidbey Airpark is a privately-owned public use airport with a single runway and is located two miles southwest of Langley.

The Whidbey Naval Air Station is the major air facility in Island County with an air traffic control tower and an instrument approach system. At present, it is used exclusively by military aircraft. Coupeville's Naval Outlying Field is also used exclusively by military aircraft for Navy pilots practicing aircraft carrier landings.

### *Rail*

No rail service presently exists within Island County, although rail terminals are within close proximity of Whidbey Island and Camano Island at nearby towns. Passenger rail service in the region is provided by Sound Transit and Amtrak. While not within the county, rail lines provide key connections for freight and passenger service to the region. Connection to nearby rail facilities may only be made via the highway system or water transportation routes extending out from Island County.

Sound Transit operates *Sounder* regional commuter transit service. The closest Sounder train station is located in Mukilteo, which is served by the north line that operates between Everett and Seattle. Sounder trains make four roundtrips per weekday and it takes approximately 50 minutes to travel from Mukilteo to Seattle. The closest Amtrak rail stations are located in Everett, Mount Vernon, and Stanwood. Intercity passenger rail service is available on the *Cascades* route that operates between Vancouver, BC and Eugene, Oregon.

### *Equestrian Facilities*

Currently, there are no public equestrian facilities located in the unincorporated areas of Island County; however, there are multi-use trails including the Kettles Trail in Coupeville, the Putney Woods Trails in Langley, and the Trillium Woods Trails in Greenbank that permit equestrian use. There are also some private riding facilities and trails throughout the County and Langley that have separate horseback riding trails, such as along Anderson Road right-of-way and within

a separate easement through Cedars Trail residential development. In addition, there are exercise and riding areas at the county fairground near Langley.

### *Motorcycles*

Motorcycles are a popular option for ferry commuters, particularly with Boeing employees who contend with substantial parking lots surrounding the campus. Due to their small footprint, motorcycles are allowed to park closer to the factory worksite and, like vanpools, are also permitted to bypass long lines of cars at the ferry terminals that are typical during the peak tourist season. These perks make riding a motorbike a reliable way to streamline the commute time for Whidbey Island residents.

A map of existing ferry, and air facilities is shown in [Figure 2-20](#)~~Figure 2-20~~.

Figure 2-20 Ferry Service Routes and Air Facilities



### 3. Travel Forecasts Evaluation

The County maintains its transportation system to accommodate future growth and development. The Growth Management Act (GMA)<sup>6</sup> requires that the transportation planning horizon be at least ten years in the future. For the 2025 Transportation Element, the County selected 2045 as the forecast year for consistency with the overall comprehensive plan. The longer-range horizon year allows the County to better plan for and scale transportation facilities that are needed as the County grows over the next two decades.

A travel demand model was built to support the County's transportation planning efforts. The model provides a means for forecasting traffic volumes based on population and employment growth allocations for the County.

Ferry service is another important component of the transportation system for Island County that is operated and maintained by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Planning for the two ferry routes operating between Mukilteo-Clinton and Port Townsend-Coupeville is contained in WSF's *Long-Range Plan*<sup>7</sup>. However, the long-range plan was developed in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted ferry ridership. As such, the ridership forecasts developed in 2019 are out of date and will be updated as part of WSF's next long-range plan. More discussion of ferry operations is provided in Section 3.3.

#### 3.1. Land Use Forecasts

Land use forecasts are based on anticipated changes in population and employment within Island County. The travel demand model utilizes forecast land use assumptions to estimate various types of trips that are applied to the transportation network. The land use forecasts included in the travel demand model are intended for planning purposes only. They represent an estimate of future conditions rather than a planned or desired outcome and do not restrict or require specific land use actions.

The land use assumptions are based on the zoning available at the time the model was created. Future forecasts must also incorporate growth in travel demand entering and exiting the County. These travel demands are based on regional population and employment trends. Detailed assumptions for land use growth within the County are available in the Land Use Element of the Island County 2025 Comprehensive Plan.

#### 3.2. Forecast Travel Conditions

Forecast travel conditions determine where future bottlenecks may occur on the roadway network based on 2045 forecast travel demand and fully funded transportation system projects. Forecast travel demand is based on the forecast land use contained in the travel model and allocated to Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs). TAZs are defined geographies that contain a

<sup>6</sup> Washington State 36.70A RCW. Available at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=36.70A>.

<sup>7</sup> Washington State Department of Transportation, Ferries Division. Available at <https://wsdot.wa.gov/travel/washington-state-ferries/about-us/washington-state-ferries-planning>

mix of land uses and generate trip estimates based on population and employment forecasts. The aggregation of those trips on County roadways provides planners with a future snapshot of the future operating conditions of the multimodal transportation system.

### ***2045 Baseline Traffic Volumes & Improvements***

The travel demand model was calibrated with 2024 traffic counts and used to forecast 2045 traffic volumes and travel patterns based on anticipated changes in land use. The forecast traffic volumes show small changes in overall growth on roadways within Island County. The highest areas of traffic growth are north of Oak Harbor, with minor traffic growth in the City of Oak Harbor. Roadways within the communities of Langley and Freeland also are anticipated to have additional traffic volumes due to future land use growth concentrated in these communities. 2045 average daily traffic volumes are shown in [Figure 3-1](#)~~Figure 3-1~~ through [Figure 3-3](#)~~Figure 3-3~~.

The 2045 baseline model and LOS results were developed assuming no roadway or intersection improvements from the existing roadway network.

Figure 3-1 Forecast 2045 Traffic Volumes (North Whidbey)



Figure 3-2 Forecast 2045 Traffic Volumes (South Whidbey)





### *Forecast Evaluation*

The evaluation of the forecast travel model includes an operations analysis of key intersections within the County. The intersections included in the forecast evaluation are the same locations evaluated with the *Highway Capacity Manual* (7th Edition) methodology described in the Inventory of Existing Transportation Facilities (Chapter 2). The outcomes of the forecast evaluation are typically used to identify future project locations to improve safety, mobility, and access on County roadways outside of any potential projects driven by concurrency.

The forecast evaluation showed that the majority of traffic continues to travel along state routes. There is one intersection along state routes forecast to have notable change in intersection LOS:

- **SR 525 / Bush Point Road & SR 525 / Honeymoon Bay Road**– This intersection operates at LOS E under existing conditions and degrades to LOS F under forecast conditions. The stop-controlled westbound minor leg from Freeland experiences moderate delays, with the majority of the traffic turning left onto SR 525. With additional traffic volumes on SR 525 more of these drivers will have fewer breaks in traffic to turn onto the highway. The side street traffic volumes are relatively low compared to the overall traffic at the intersection

### **3.3. Ferry Service Forecasts**

In 2019, WSF finalized its 2040 Long Range Plan (LRP). The LRP provided a twenty-year plan for ferry service expansion and enhancements to accommodate anticipated ferry ridership growth. However, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, limited vessel availability and an ongoing shortage of U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) credentialed crew has presented significant challenges for WSF. While WSF has made some service improvements since 2019, WSF has primarily been focused on restoring ferry capacity to pre-pandemic levels, as noted in the 2023 Long Range Plan Progress Report.

The Washington State Ferry Service Contingency Plan, published in January 2024 (updated March 2025), outlines WSF's immediate plans to restore and enhance service. The plan notes that WSF requires at least 26 vessels to provide pre-pandemic level service, but currently WSF only has 21 vessels in operation that range from 7 to 66 years old. WSF has funding for five new ferries needed to meet baseline service levels, but the vessels are unlikely to enter service until 2029.

Operating existing "full service" on every route requires 19 vessels in the summer, 18 in the spring and fall "shoulder" seasons (generally Mother's Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day) and 17 in the late fall/winter/early spring. Throughout 2023, WSF operated with 14-16 vessels in service for extended periods of time, and in 2024 operated with 15-16 vessels in service the entire year. Due to the increasing age of the fleet and a long history of deferred vessel maintenance, WSF believes planning for a baseline of 17 vessels in service, with up to 18 available during the peak season, is the most reasonable projection until new vessels enter service in 2029. With limited vessel availability, WSF will be unable to operate full service on every route until new vessels are constructed and delivered.

The plan specifically notes that if WSF is unable to meet the 18-vessel peak / 17-vessel off-peak baseline, that WSF will likely have to reduce the Port Townsend / Coupeville service to one-boat (down from two) in the shoulder/summer seasons. This will increase delays and reduce overall ferry ridership to/from Port Townsend and Coupeville.

The WSF Service Contingency Plan also outlines planned staffing increases and other priority investments needed to bring service levels back to pre-pandemic levels and minimize trip cancellations.

As a result, WSF service in Island County is likely to face some disruption, cancellation and service cuts for the next few years while the WSF staffing and vessel quantities reach pre-pandemic levels. Given these disruptions, further forecasting of ferry ridership growth is not included due to the overall uncertainty with the WSF service. Once the WSF LRP is updated again (in 2029 or before), the forecasts and estimated impacts to the Coupeville-Port Townsend and the Clinton-Mukilteo routes will be included in the next update of the Transportation Element.

### 3.4. Transit Service

Transit service is anticipated to continue serving as a fundamental piece of the transportation network. The COVID-19 pandemic substantially impacted transit services and ridership. Transit services across the country reduced capacity and restricted services, partially due to staffing issues and partially to maintain social distancing. Island Transit's fixed route and paratransit ridership dropped off significantly in 2020 and has not fully recovered.

Island Transit recently began the process of developing its first Long-Range Plan. The plan will include a robust and meaningful public outreach to better understand the needs of both county residents and visitors to guide Island Transit service over the next twenty years. Island Transit has recently been delivering on the Island Transit Maximized initiative that identified areas of improvement, leading to enhancements in regular and seasonal services, including Sunday service, new on-demand zones, later hours, and new fixed routes. Island Transit has also pivoted away from transitioning to hydrogen buses due to changes in federal priorities.

The Island Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) was updated in 2022. The plan focuses on the transportation needs of people with special needs, including seniors, people with low-income, and people with disabilities. The HSTP documents existing services, identifies needs/service gaps, and defines regional priorities and recommends projects for state and federal grant funding. Plan implementation projects include the following:

- Sustain Rural Public Transportation Service North Sound Regional Connector (Island Regional Connector)
- Sustain mobility management programs
- Implement first/last mile on-demand service
- Continue funding Snow Goose Transit – fixed route with deviations in Camano, Stanwood and Arlington
- Regional Mobility Management Coordination for all of Island County and off-island needs
- Whidbey Island Veterans Transportation Services and Healthcare Access Coordination
- Establish Ongoing Coordination between project partners (healthcare providers, transit agencies, non-profits, government organizations, etc.)

## 4. Transportation Systems Plan

The transportation systems plan provides a long-range strategy for Island County to address future transportation issues and needs. Transportation system improvements are necessary to accommodate the travel needs of the projected population and employment growth as described in the Forecast Travel Evaluation. Because only modest growth is expected, the County's emphasis should be on preserving the existing transportation system and implementing safety projects rather than adding more roadway capacity.

Additionally, opportunities to enhance the connectivity of the transportation network should be considered. The connectivity of transportation systems is increasingly important as local, state, and federal planning agencies who seek to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of transportation systems. System connectivity is also important for increasing physical activity and integrating transportation system planning with broader land use planning objectives.

This chapter begins with a description of the travel characteristics for the range of modes that comprise the transportation system. Roadways are used by nearly every travel mode, not just personal vehicles, and represent the bulk of the transportation improvements described later in the chapter. Highways in the County make key connections to the ferry system which is a critical component for inter-County travel. While ferry service is the primary function of the State of Washington, connections to ferry terminals are impacted by projects initiated by the County. The non-motorized transportation network supports commute, utility, and recreational trips throughout the County. The following sections describe the common characteristics among these transportation modes within the County.

### 4.1. Road and Highway Systems Plan

Roads and state highways are the core of the transportation system serving the County and its communities. Major routes connect Island County to surrounding communities via bridges and ferry terminals. The road network provides for the overall movement of people and goods, for a wide range of travel modes that includes private vehicles, transit, vanpools, carpools, trucks, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Planned improvements to the state highway and county roadway system are implemented on an annual basis through the development of six-year Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) by Island County and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). In these six-year programs, emphasis is given to safety improvements and roadway preservation.

### 4.2. Active Transportation Systems Plan

The countywide Active Transportation Network includes facilities for both pedestrians and bicyclists. These modes have many different characteristics but share many facilities throughout the County including roadway shoulders, multiuse pathways, unpaved trails, sidewalks, and shared roadways in certain locations.

### **Pedestrians**

Every trip begins and ends with a walk. People walk to their cars and drive somewhere where they will walk into a building or facility. Or they need to walk to the bus stop. The County hopes to connect more destinations with walking paths to encourage walking between trip destinations. Walking paths not only help people get from “Point A to Point B” but also promote physical activity and recreation. The County will continue to develop pedestrian and bicycle facilities as part of its transportation system improvements and has adopted street standards that provide for a range of facilities including sidewalks, wider roadway shoulders, and multiuse pathways.

A viable pedestrian network consists of connections to pedestrian generators, such as major employers, schools, residential areas, parks, and transit stops through a system of pedestrian facilities. Land use and neighborhood street design patterns can also form barriers to pedestrian travel. For example, overly large blocks and the lack of mid-block crossings cause pedestrians to travel further to reach local destinations, often resulting in a decision to utilize a vehicle for short trips that could otherwise be completed on foot. The Active Transportation Network.

### **Bicycles**

Bicycling is an important and growing mode of travel for people in Island County. When appropriately planned, bicycle routes have a role in reducing congestion, improving air quality, providing travel choices, encouraging exercise and recreation, and providing greater mobility for those both with and without access to a motor vehicle. Encouraging or facilitating bicycle tourism may also represent an important economic development opportunity for the County. The County encourages the use of bicycles; endeavors to coordinate linkages between off-road and on-road bicycle facilities; considers impacts on bicycles when designing and engineering roadways; and emphasizes continuous bicycle linkages to existing facilities. The County is interested in incorporating adjacent bicycle lanes, wide shoulders, and other design treatments, as appropriate, into roadway construction projects whenever the right-of-way is sufficient and funding can be secured.

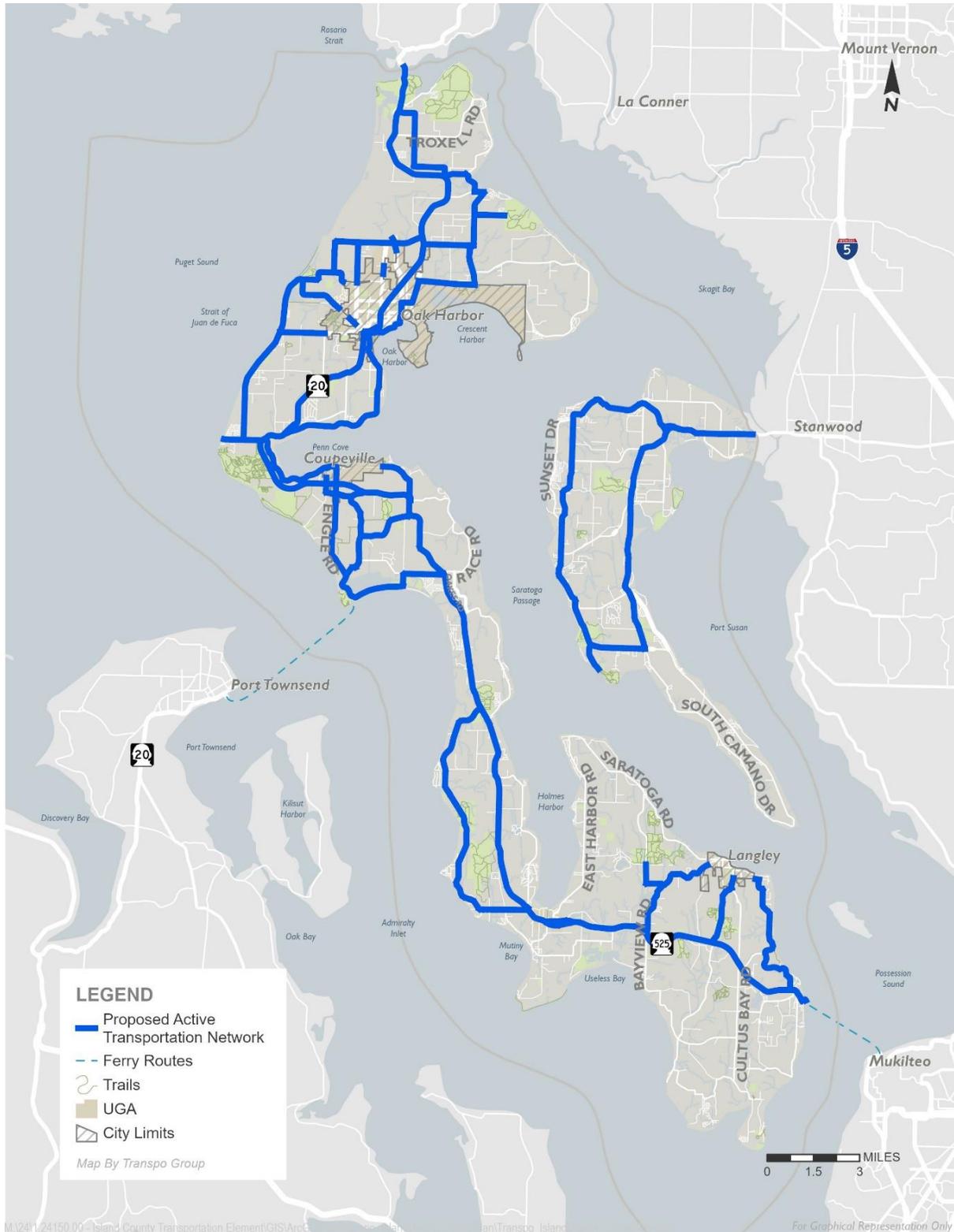
The bicycle network includes a range of transportation enhancement investments on these corridors to facilitate and increase the number of bicycling trips. Specific bicycling improvements may include widening shoulders on existing or planned roadways, installing signs to assist cyclists with wayfinding and to alert drivers to the likelihood of cyclist presence, or developing on street and off-street bicycle paths. For many corridors in the County’s bicycle network, specific roadway improvements have not yet been identified.

### **Active Transportation Network**

**Figure 4-1** ~~Figure 4-1~~ shows the planned active transportation network which includes both planned and existing facilities. Developing new facilities for active modes can be difficult in a rural context. Limited right-of-way available for shoulder widening, along with prohibitively high construction costs must be taken into consideration. Additionally, the land use context and reality of living in a rural environment demands a different societal expectation for what type of walking and bicycle facilities can be provided. In developing the active network, efforts were made to ensure that roadways with existing shoulders formed the backbone of the network. Additionally, multiuse pathways or designated bike routes that already existed were

incorporated into the network. The planned facilities are all multi-use and can be assumed to accommodate all active modes, including walking and bicycling and micromobility vehicles.

Figure 4-1 Planned Active Transportation Network



**Active Transportation Network – Existing Levels of Service**

~~Figure 4-2~~ ~~Figure 4-2~~ through ~~Figure 4-4~~ ~~Figure 4-4~~ show the current level of service along the planned active transportation network using the criteria described in section 2.3 of this plan. Notably, US Bike Route 97 is included in the active network. This bike route was established in 2011 and approved by AASHTO, however no comprehensive study of the suitability of the included roads was completed at that time. USBR97 is therefore included in the network, but all sections are symbolized with a yellow dash to indicate “further study needed” since in many cases bringing the route up to the county’s LOS standards for bicycles may not be feasible. Segments identified as substandard are included in the 20-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) list where specific deficiencies are identified and associated planning level costs have been calculated.

Figure 4-2 Active Transportation Level of Service (North Whidbey)



Figure 4-3 Active Transportation Level of Service (South Whidbey)

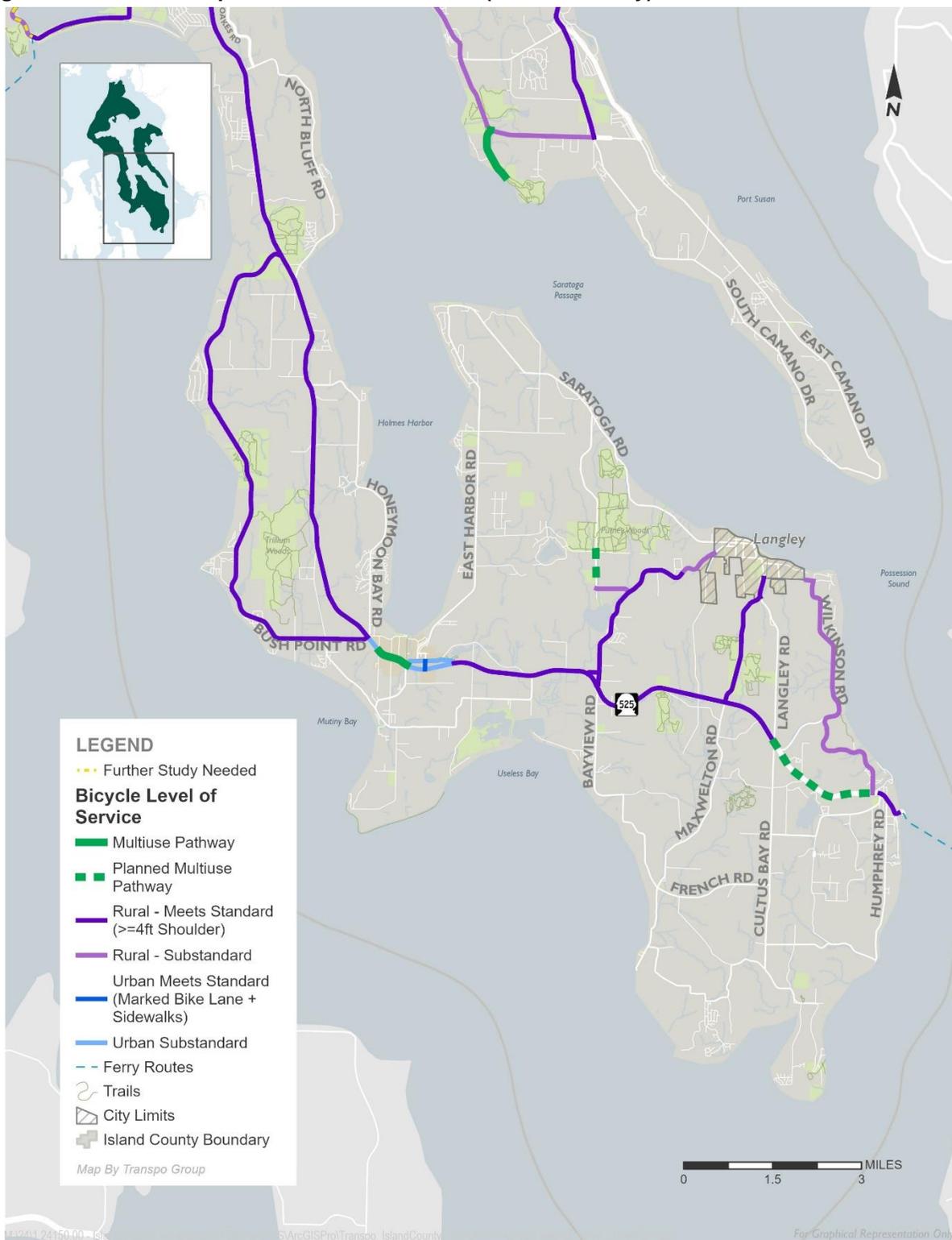
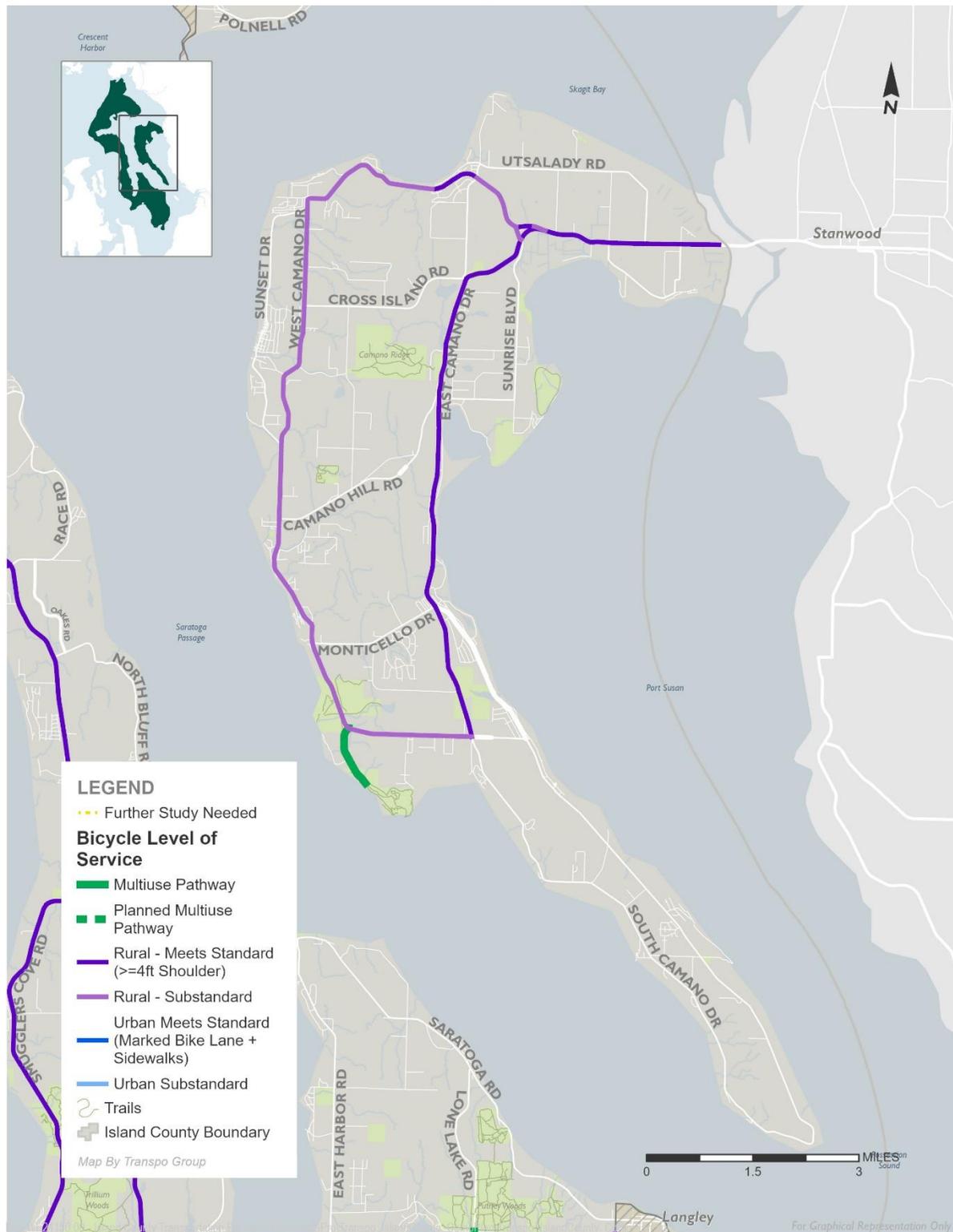


Figure 4-4 Active Transportation Level of Service (Camano)

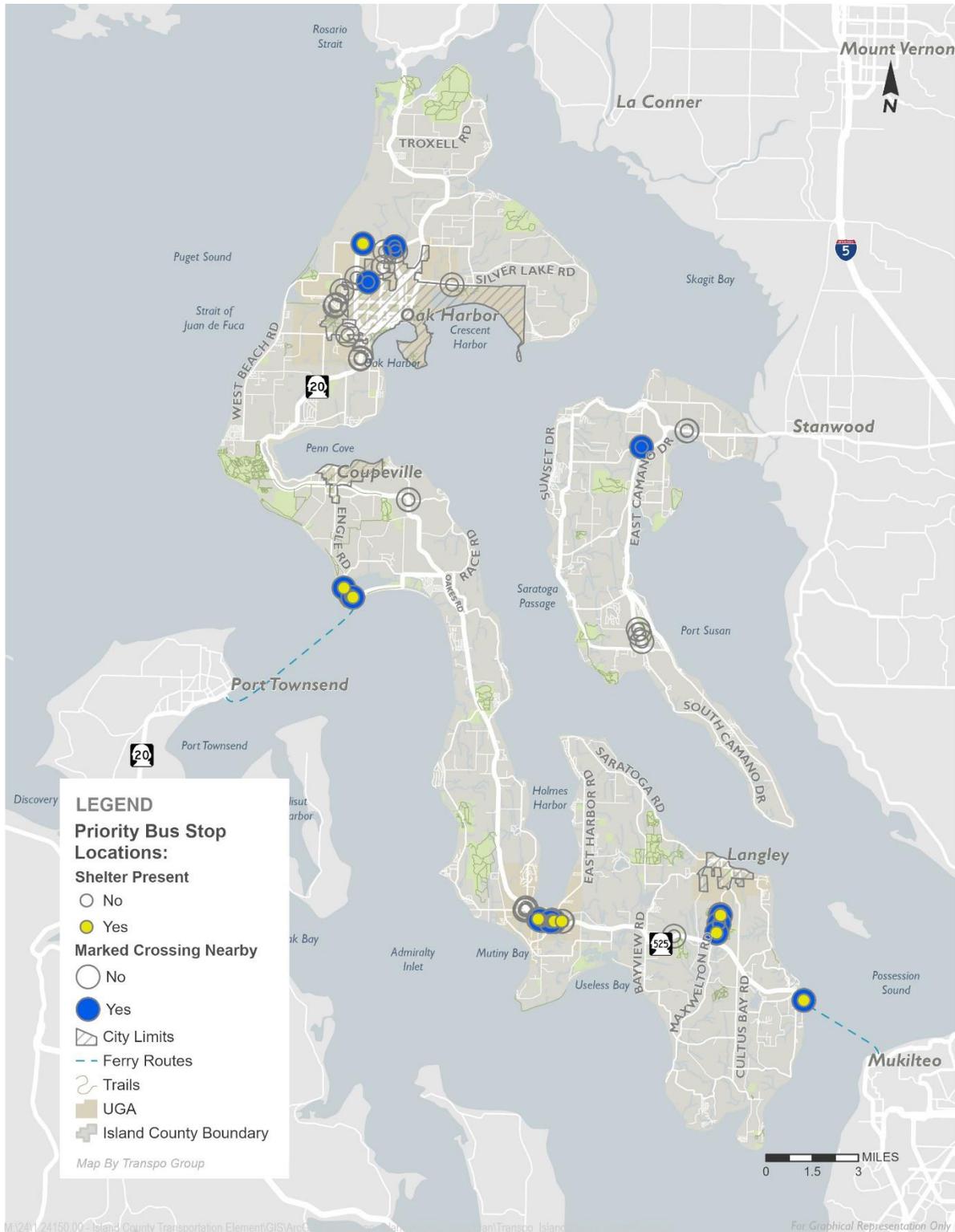


### 4.3. Transit

Improvements to the transit system are the primary responsibility of Island Transit. As of September 2025, Island Transit has been focused on restoring ridership to pre-pandemic levels with recently installed Sunday services as part of the Island Transit Maximized initiative. Given that Island Transit is responsible for providing transit service and controls routes and frequency, Island County is focused on providing access to transit stops, as described in Section 2.4

[Figure 4-5](#) shows the location of 47 bus stop locations identified as a high priority for improvements based on their location within UGA areas or proximity to schools and other important destinations in the county. Yellow and blue indicate the presence of shelters and crosswalks respectively while hollow points indicate the absence of one or both amenities at a stop. Transit stops lacking shelters and nearby marked crossings present opportunities for the County and Island Transit to improve accessibility to transit.

Figure 4-5 Transit Level of Service



#### **4.4. Ferry Service**

Improvements to ferry service in the County are the primary responsibility of the Washington State Ferries (WSF) with support services provided by WSDOT, Island County, IRTPO, and Island Transit. WSF maintains the Clinton-Mukilteo Route and the Coupeville-Port Townsend Route. At this time there are no service increases planned for any of the routes serving Island County.

Many ferry commuters rely on personal vehicles for one or both legs of their trips to and from work. Some park near the Clinton terminal and walk onto the ferry, then connect to transit. Others leave a vehicle in Mukilteo, though demand for overnight parking there is high and the supply is very limited. The City of Mukilteo currently discourages overnight parking.

As discussed in Section 3.3, future ferry service enhancements have generally been on hold as WSF has prioritized restoring ferry service to pre-pandemic levels. WSF will develop their next long-range plan in the next 5 years, which will outline their plans for service expansion and enhancements at that time. Over the next few years, WSF will continue to prioritize replacing aging fleet vehicles and building up crew capacity to establish pre-pandemic ferry service.

#### **4.5. Other Transportation Modes**

##### **Air, Rail and Equestrian**

The other modes discussed in Chapter 2 are not anticipated to have future changes that are under the jurisdiction of Island County. As such, these modes are not discussed in this chapter.

## 4.6. Transportation Projects & Programs

Transportation projects and programs are vital to maintain and enhance transportation within and through the County. These are anticipated to serve the County's safety, circulation, and active transportation goals over the planning horizon year of 2045.

The project improvements address safety, capacity, connectivity, and expanded active transportation facilities. Improvements also cover upgrades to existing roads and construction of new roadways, stormwater management / fish passage and interconnected trail systems to support the forecast economic development and growth in the County. The project improvement types are described below, with the complete list of projects summarized in [Table 4-1](#) and in [Figure 4-6](#) to [Figure 4-8](#).

### Shoulder Widening Program

An ongoing work program focused on installing shoulders on arterial and collector roadways. This program also assists the active transportation system to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. Potential sites are evaluated and prioritized based on traffic volumes, accident history, roadway conditions, and the availability of funds. Right of way needs are identified and acquired as necessary.

### Intersection Improvements

Intersection improvements were identified where existing or forecast operational deficiencies, as well as the need to realign intersections to improve safety. The projects are intended to improve operations at the identified intersections, improve safety or better accommodate active transportation users.

### Roadway Improvements

Roadway improvements were identified to reconstruct roadways where enhanced stabilization is required, additional left turn lanes are needed to better accommodate vehicles turning off state routes, or where new roadways may be desired. The projects are intended to improve traffic operations, improve safety and/or reinforce roadway structures.

### Trail System Expansion

Several expansions to the County's trail network are included as part of the transportation improvements identified in the transportation element. These improvements are aimed at expanding the trail system to provide enhanced connections to serve both local transportation needs, and tourist/visitor needs. These projects are intended to improve active transportation options across the County and support the construction of a countywide active transportation network.

### Active Transportation Improvements

Active transportation improvements include the construction of sidewalks, bike lanes or multiuse trails. The county planned active transportation network and multimodal level of service standard requires construction of sidewalks and bike lanes along key roadways located within the urban growth areas. In addition, several multiuse paths (10-12' paved pathways) have been identified to accommodate active users across the county. These improvements, like the train system expansion, are intended to improve travel options for active users.

### Countywide Spot Improvements

County staff and consultants identified roadway improvements to reconstruct roadways where enhanced stabilization is required, additional left turn lanes are needed to better accommodate vehicles turning off state routes, or where new roadways may be desired. The projects are intended to improve traffic operations, improve safety and/or reinforce roadway structures.

**Table 4-1 2044 Transportation Improvement Project List**

Project ID	Project Type	Roadway	Project Description	Cost
TE-11	Active Transportation	Goldie Rd	Add bike lanes, 5' sidewalks to both sides of Goldie Rd from Halyard Ln to Christian Road	\$2,450,000
TE-12	Active Transportation	Oak Harbor Rd	Add bike lanes, 5' sidewalks to both sides of Oak Harbor Rd from Gun Club Rd south ~1380 ft to existing sidewalk	\$1,590,000
TE-13	Active Transportation	Ault Field Rd	Stripe bike lanes, add 5' sidewalks on south side on Ault Field Rd from Heller Rd RAB to N Oak Harbor Rd	\$2,400,000
TE-14	Active Transportation	Heller St	Add bike lanes, 5' sidewalks on east side of Heller Street from NW Crosby Avenue to Family Bible Church Entrance	\$565,000
TE-18	Active Transportation	Swantown Road	Add bike lanes, 5' shoulders on Swantown Road from Liberty Ln to SW Heller St	\$740,000
TE-19	Active Transportation	Engle Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Engle Rd from Fort Casey Rd to Keyston Ferry Landing	\$2,210,000
TE-22	Active Transportation	Main St	Sidewalk on north side of Main St from SR 525 to Harbor Ave, restripe on-street parking for bike lanes	\$650,000
TE-26	Active Transportation	Camano Avenue	Add multiuse path from Sandy Point Rd to Fairgrounds Road	\$550,000
TE-32	Active Transportation	NW Broadway St	Widen and pave existing gravel path on east side of NW Broadway from SR 20 to City Limits (Oakmont St)	\$350,000
TE-33	Active Transportation	SR 20	Install 5' sidewalk on both sides of street from Eagle Vista to Waterloo	\$1,410,000
TE-35	Active Transportation	Main St / Scott Road	Add sidewalk on one side of E Main St / Scott Road from S Harbor Road to SR 525	\$1,690,000
TIP-12	Countywide	Misc. Intersection Alignment Improvement Projects	Improving safety by realigning intersections to be close to perpendicular	\$510,000
TIP-18	Countywide	Misc. Minor Safety Improvements and Project Developments	Small projects to improve safety, or initial project development	\$1,325,000
TIP-19	Countywide	Evaluate Horizontal Curves for Safety Improvements	Countywide horizontal curves for safety improvements	\$405,000
TIP-21	Countywide	Install Guiderails as needed	Countywide installation of guardrails as needed	\$50,000
TIP-22	Countywide	Speed Limit Evaluation / Changes	Countywide speed limit changes	\$25,000
TIP-24	Countywide	Non-compliant regulatory and warning sign replacement	Countywide regulatory and warning signing replacement	\$490,000
TE-04	Further Study Needed	SR 525	Study Addition of Multiuse Path on south side of SR 525 from Fish Rd to Scott Rd	TBD
TE-05	Further Study Needed	Madrona Way	Further Study Needed - US BR 97 from SR 20 to Coupeville Limits	TBD
TE-06	Further Study Needed	US BR 97 (Ducken Rd / Monkey Hill Rd)	Further Study Needed - US BR 97 from SR 20 to W Henni Rd	TBD
TE-08	Further Study Needed	US BR 97 (E Henni Rd, Imperial Lane, Jones Rd)	Further Study Needed - US BR 97 from W Henni Rd to E Frostad Rd	TBD

Project ID	Project Type	Roadway	Project Description	Cost
TE-09	Further Study Needed	US BR 97 (Taylor Rd)	Further Study Needed - US BR 97 from E Frostad RD to E Fakkema Rd	TBD
TE-15	Further Study Needed	Swantown Road	Further Study Needed - active transportation improvements on Swantown from Wieldraayer Rd to Fairway Dr	TBD
TE-30	Further Study Needed	US BR 97 (Scenic Heights Rd, Penn Cove Rd)	Further Study Needed - US BR 97 from southern Oak Harbor City limits to SR 20	TBD
TE-31	Further Study Needed	Marona Way / Nw Coveland St / N Main St	Further Study Needed - US BR 97 from western Coupeville limits to southern limits	TBD
TE-36	Intersection	SR 525 / Honeymoon Bay Rd	Install RAB or signal	\$5,160,000
TIP-13	Intersection	Swede Hill Road / Burley Road Intersection Improvements	Improve safety by realigning the Burley Road approach to Swede Hill Rd	\$625,000
TIP-14	Intersection	Monkey Hill Road / Henni Road Realignment	Improve safety by realigning the intersection	\$655,000
TIP-15	Intersection	East Camano Drive / Cross Island Road Intersection Improvements	Intersection improvements at East Camano Dr / Cross Island Rd / Arrowhead Rd (CSAP says RAB)	\$4,370,000
TIP-16	Intersection	East Camano Dr / McElroy Roundabout	Construct RAB at intersection of East Camano Drive / McElroy Drive	\$3,575,000
TIP-17	Intersection	Heggenes Road Intersection Realignments	Improve Safety by realigning Heggenes Rd / Orr Rd	\$120,000
TIP-23	Intersection	North Camano Dr & Utsalady Dr Guardrail Replacement	Replace non-standard guardrails	\$1,089,000
TIP-44	Intersection	East Camano Dr, Monticello Dr, Elger Bay Rd Intersection Improvements	Install Signals or RABs as needed	\$5,150,000
IB-05	Roadway	SR 20 Corridor Improvements - Cedar Hollow to Terry Road	Provide left turns lanes at intersections, or RABs. Add wildlife signing.	\$11,690,000
TIP-05	Roadway	South Whidbey Industrial Park Road	Provide public access to the light industrial zone portion of Crawford Rd.	TBD
TIP-10	Roadway	Cultus Bay Road Reconstruction	Bailey Rd to Jewett Rd	\$2,850,000
TIP-11	Roadway	Cultus Bay Road Reconstruction	French Rd to Bailey Rd	\$3,950,000
TIP-20	Roadway	Karen Way Shoulder Stabilization Phase 2	Stabilize shoulder to prevent roadway collapse	\$650,000
IB-14	Shoulder Widening	Sandy Point Rd Traffic Calming	5 ft paved shoulder (4 ft additional pavement)	\$2,470,000
TE-03	Shoulder Widening	SR 20	Widen shoulders to 4' on SR 20 from just north of Race Rd 5477 ft	\$3,160,000
TE-07	Shoulder Widening	Fort Casey Road	Widen shoulders to 4' on Fort Casey Road from Terry Rd to Engle Rd	\$8,610,000
TE-10	Shoulder Widening	E Sleeper Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on E Sleeper Rd from Taylor Rd to Dugualla State Park	\$2,880,000
TE-16	Shoulder Widening	Swantown Road	Widen shoulders to 4' on Swantown Road from Wieldraayer Rd Crosby Rd	\$3,660,000
TE-17	Shoulder Widening	Terry Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Terry Road from Coupeville City Limits to SR 20	\$2,560,000
TE-20	Shoulder Widening	Patmore Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Patmore Rd from Fort Casey Rd to SR 20	\$5,790,000
TE-21	Shoulder Widening	SR 20	Widen shoulders to 4' on SR 20 from Wanamaker Rd to just west of 525 / Race Rd intersection	\$3,530,000
TE-23	Shoulder Widening	Andreason Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Andreason Rd from Lone Lake Rd to Bayview Rd	\$1,710,000

Project ID	Project Type	Roadway	Project Description	Cost
TE-27	Shoulder Widening	Sandy Point Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Sandy Point Road from Clara Cornu Ln to Wilkinson Rd	\$360,000
TE-28	Shoulder Widening	Bob Galbreath Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Bob Galbreath Rd from SR 525 to Zimmerman Rd	\$2,050,000
TE-29	Shoulder Widening	Camano Drive / Mountainview Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Camano Drive from Nellie St to Elger Bay Rd	\$26,400,000
TIP-02	Shoulder Widening	Shoulder Widening Program	Ongoing program to cover design and right of way research of additional shoulder width	\$525,000
TIP-03	Shoulder Widening	Sunrise Boulevard Shoulder Widening	Shoulder widening on Sunrise Boulevard from SR 532 to Russel Rd	\$3,825,000
TIP-06	Shoulder Widening	Scenic Heights Road Shoulder Widening	Shoulder widening on Scenic Heights Rd from Monroe Landing Rd. to north of Balda Rd.	\$6,650,000
TIP-07	Shoulder Widening	SR 20 Shoulder Widening: Race to Welcher	This section of SR 20 has minimal shoulders. The project will provide Four (4)-foot shoulders on both sides of the highway.	\$5,400,000
TIP-09	Shoulder Widening	Bayview Road Shoulder Widening	Sunlight Dr to Ewing Rd	\$2,770,000
NI-05	Study	Neighborhood Traffic Management Program	Continue funding the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program	<a href="#">TBD</a>
NI-07	Study	Safe Routes to School Plan	Develop a Safe Routes to School Plan in Island County to improve safety and mobility for children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school. Island County Public Health proposes piloting this program on Camano Island before expanding to other school districts as efforts to improve routes to school will also address locations of concern and other safety concerns.	TBD
NI-11	Study	Active Transportation Plan	Develop an Island County Active Transportation Plan to identify and improve active transportation connections and facilities.	TBD
NI-17	Study	Intersection Traffic Studies	Conduct traffic analysis studies on priority locations to determine intersection controls. Consider a compact roundabout at SR 525 and Double Bluff Road	TBD
TIP-40	Trail	Misc. Trail Projects	Small trail projects to improve or expand the trail system for transportation	\$300,000
TIP-41	Trail	Kettles - Fort Ebey Trail Connector	Improvements to an existing trail connecting the paved portion of the Kettles Trail to Ford Ebey State Park	\$133,000
TIP-42	Trail	Clinton to Ken's Corner Trail	New multi-use trail along SR 525 connecting Clinton to Langley Rd	\$12,030,000
TIP-43	Trail	Rhododendron Park Road to Patmore Road Trail	Install multi-use trail between Rhododendron Park Road and Patmore Road	\$3,370,000

In addition to the capital improvement programs, the County also has Maintenance and Operations costs related to overseeing and operating existing transportation assets. They generally include the normal cost of maintaining and preserving existing roadways and other transportation infrastructure, as well as the cost of administering transportation programs in the County. The costs associated with maintenance and operations are discussed in Chapter 5.

**Figure 4-6 Transportation Improvement Projects (North Whidbey)**



Figure 4-7 Transportation Improvement Projects (South Whidbey)



Figure 4-8 Transportation Improvement Projects (Camano)



## 5. Transportation Funding Situation Assessment

The list of transportation improvement projects must be funded and implemented to meet existing and future travel demands in and around Island County. Estimated project costs and future revenues are presented and options to fund the projects are described in this section. Implementation strategies are discussed and include items such as coordination with WSDOT, IRTPO, and local agencies to prioritize and fund regional improvements. The implementation plan sets up the framework for the County to prioritize and fund the improvements identified in the transportation plan.

The GMA requires the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan to include a multi-year financing plan based on the identified improvement needs in the transportation systems plan. The financing plan is to be the basis in developing the required six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). If probable funding is less than the identified needs, then the transportation financing program must also include a discussion of how additional funding will be raised or how land use assumptions will be reassessed to assure that level of service standards will be met. Alternatively, the County can adjust its level of service standards.

A summary of costs for capital improvement projects and countywide maintenance and operation programs are presented. The capital project and maintenance and operations program costs are compared to estimated revenues from existing sources used by the County to fund transportation improvements. Other potential funding sources to help reduce the projected shortfall are described. Lastly, a summary of a reassessment strategy for the county to use for reviewing transportation funding in the context of the overall Comprehensive Plan is also included.

### 5.1. Project and Programs Cost Estimates

~~Table 5-1~~ ~~Table 5-4~~ summarizes the costs of the recommended transportation improvement projects and programs. These cover Island County capital improvements, maintenance and operations. The costs are summarized for the life of the Plan. Improvements under the responsibility of WSDOT and local agencies are not included in the summary table. However, the County may choose to include a share of the costs of WSDOT improvements in its transportation impact fee or other funding options.

**Table 5-1 Transportation Project and Program Costs (2026 – 2045)**

Improvement Type	(2026-2045) Total Costs <sup>1</sup>	Percent of Total Costs
<b>Transportation Capital Projects<sup>2</sup></b>		
Shoulder Widening Program	\$84,350,000	53.6%
Intersection Improvements	\$19,140,000	12.2%
Roadway Improvements	\$20,744,000	13.2%
Trail System Expansion	\$2,805,000	1.8%
Active Transportation Improvements	\$15,833,000	10.1%
Countywide Spot Improvements	\$14,605,000	9.3%
<b>Subtotal Capital Projects</b>	<b>\$157,477,000</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Transportation Maintenance &amp; Operations (M &amp; O) Programs</b>		
Salaries (including Sheriff's Office levy)	\$61,350,000	22%
Maintenance & Operations	\$218,560,000	78%
<b>Subtotal M &amp; O Programs</b>	<b>\$279,910,000</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$437,387,000</b>	

1. All costs in 2025 dollars, rounded to \$1,000  
2. Does not include other agency improvements

Planning-level cost estimates were developed for the capital improvements and presented in the Transportation System Plan Chapter (4). The planning estimates were prepared based upon average unit costs for transportation projects within the region. Planning-level costs were developed with the assumption that costs would include associated storm water development requirements, property acquisition, wetland mitigation, and utility extensions and/or upgrades, based upon historic costs for those items. More detailed cost estimates will need to be prepared as the projects are closer to design and construction. Future design studies will identify specific property impacts and options to reduce costs and impacts on properties.

The estimated capital cost of the Transportation Plan is approximately \$437.4 million (in 2025 dollars). Approximately 54 percent of the capital costs are associated with the shoulder widening program. These costs cover upgrading roadways to provide 4-foot-wide shoulders across the planned active transportation network. 25 percent of the capital costs are associated with roadway and intersection improvements, 19 percent with construction of active transportation improvements (sidewalks, bike lanes and multiuse paths) and expansion of the trail network. The remaining 2 percent of capital costs are for countywide spot improvements.

Maintenance and operations costs were projected based on historic expenditures from 2018 through 2024. Maintenance and operations costs cover general administration, roadway and storm drainage maintenance, street lighting, traffic signal and street signs, street sweeping, and

other miscellaneous safety improvement programs. The M&O budget also includes the salaries of staff and the sheriff's department's support. To reduce the need for extensive capital reconstruction projects, the maintenance and operations program to preserve the existing street system is estimated to be nearly \$280 million of the total \$437.4 million Transportation Plan cost.

## 5.2. Funding Analysis with Existing Revenue Sources

Historically there are seven main sources of revenue that have been used to fund transportation projects in Island County:

- Federal Funding Sources
  1. Federal Entitlements and Grants
- State Funding Sources
  2. State Fuel Tax
  3. CAPRON Funds
  4. State Entitlements and Grants
- Local Funding
  5. Property Taxes
  6. County General Fund Transfers
  7. Local Entitlements and Grants

### **Federal Funding Sources**

#### **Federal Entitlements and Grants**

Federal transportation grants are funded through the federal portion of the Fuel Excise Tax. The federal gas tax rate has remained consistent since 1993 at approximately \$0.184 per gallon. Most of these funds are deposited into the Highway Trust Fund and disbursed to the states through the Highway and Mass Transit Accounts. The Federal share of funding has represented a relatively small portion of overall funding and is sporadic and generally tied to success in grant applications for specific projects.

Additionally, Island County receives some non-grant federal transportation funding through federal entitlements that are part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The IIJA program is a federal program that has funded surface transportation programs at over \$350 billion for federal highway programs for fiscal years 2022 through 2026.

### **State Funding Sources**

#### **State Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT/Gas Tax)**

Although historical per capita fuel tax dollars have been increasing in nominal numbers, when adjusted for inflation it is clear that per capita revenues have been declining over time. This trend is becoming more pronounced in very recent history due to large increases in the price of gasoline and a significant shift toward electric-powered and more fuel-efficient vehicles. On average, Island County has received 11% of its revenues from their share of overall county distributions of the State Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax. This category has been the County's third largest source of revenue for Transportation.

### **CAPRON Funds**

Island County receives a sizable Capron refund distribution of State Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax. The Capron refund is authorized by the Capron Act, which was originally made law in 1919 (and is now codified as RCW 46.68.080) as a means to ensure equitable distribution of the State portion of MVFT revenues by refunding State MVFT proceeds collected within counties comprised entirely of Islands. At the time, San Juan and Island Counties were the only counties wholly comprised of islands and without any state highways. When State Route 20 was extended to Whidbey Island, the Capron refund was adjusted by reducing the refund to 50% of MVFT collected in the county.

Currently, the Capron Act distributes one-half of the vehicle license fees collected under RCW 46.17.350 and 46.17.355 and one-half of the fuel taxes collected under RCW 82.36.025 (1) and 82.38.030 (1) and directly or indirectly paid by the residents of those counties composed entirely of islands and which have either a fixed physical connection with the mainland or state highways on any of the islands of which they are composed, to those counties to fund their transportation programs.

Historically, about 27.5% of Island County's transportation revenues have come from Capron Refund distributions. This category is the County's second largest source of revenue for Transportation. This is a unique funding source that is extremely beneficial to Island County in funding its transportation program, including both M&O and capital improvements.

Over the past several decades there have been many attempts in the state legislature to repeal the Capron Act. So far, all attempts have failed. It is likely that in the future the act will be subject to attempted repeal again. In addition, this source suffers from the same overall uncertainty surrounding the continued viability of Motor Fuel Tax, so there is particular risk for Island County in terms of maintaining traditional levels of transportation funding.

### **Other State Funds**

This category is primarily state grants, like those from the Department of Ecology, Urban Arterial Board, Transportation Improvement Board, Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, and the Washington State Department of Transportation. Beyond State grants, state shared revenues, entitlements, impact payments, and in-lieu taxes might be included in this revenue category.

### **Local Funding Sources**

#### **Property Taxes (Road Levy)**

Property Taxes are used by the County and Cities to partially fund transportation projects. The County has a dedicated road levy. The local Cities and Towns use property tax receipts for a range of programs, including transportation. The Road Levy is a property tax collected by the County specifically for transportation funding and accounts for the largest portion (up to 48%) of the County's transportation funds.

#### **General Fund Transfers**

Because general fund revenues have few restrictions on how they are spent and the fact that the County has a dedicated Road Levy for transportation, it is relatively unusual for these funds

to be used for transportation purposes. Historically the County’s General Fund contributions to transportation have been sporadic.

**Other Local Funding**

These dollars typically include some combination of Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funds, Leasehold Excise Taxes, Road Permits, payments in lieu of taxes, and other miscellaneous capital and transportation funds. This has been a relatively steady source of funding, though overall contributing a relatively small share of total revenues for transportation investments.

**Grants**

Over the past several years the County has had some success in securing grants for transportation improvements. Grant funding is typically tied to specific improvement projects and distributed on a competitive basis, often with a local funding match.

~~Table 5-2~~ **Table 5-2**. summarizes the anticipated transportation revenues for the 20-year plan lifecycle.

**Table 5-2 2026-2045 Transportation Revenues**

Revenue Source	Total Revenues	Percent of Total Revenues
Road Levy Tax	\$188,000,000	48.70%
Capron	\$106,000,000	27.46%
State Entitlement	\$44,000,000	11.40%
Grants (State and Federal)	\$34,000,000	8.81%
Other	\$14,000,000	3.63%
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$386,000,000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Revenue projections were estimated based upon 7-years of historical revenues (2018-2024). Based on recent historical data, it is estimated that revenues would be more than \$386 million during the 20-year period.

TBD revenues are assumed to generate approximately 48.7 percent of revenue, while Capron funding is expected to generate 27 percent of the revenue.

**5.3. Forecasted Revenue Shortfall**

~~Table 5-3~~ **Table 5-3** summarizes the County’s proposed transportation financing strategy for the approximately \$280 million cost of maintaining and operating the County’s roadways as well as the \$157.5 million in capital costs. The Plan results in a shortfall of approximately \$51.4 million. This assumes that the level of grants and developer commitments will be generated as estimated in the Transportation Plan. The deficit could be greater if the level of development or the level of grant funding is less than forecast. The former would be offset by a reduced need for transportation improvements to accommodate growth. If the County is more successful in

obtaining grants or other outside funding for projects, then the potential deficit could be reduced, as discussed in the next section.

**Table 5-3 Forecasted Revenues and Costs (2026-2045)**

Revenue Source <sup>1</sup>	Total (2015–2035)
Transportation Revenues	\$386,000,000
Transportation M&O Costs	\$279,910,000
<b>Estimated Capital Budget</b>	<b>\$106,090,000</b>
Estimated Capital Costs	\$157,477,000
<b>Estimated Capital Shortfall</b>	<b>(\$51,387,000)</b>

1. All revenues in 2025 dollars
2. Does not include other agency improvements

***Capital Revenue Shortfall***

The County pools both capital and maintenance funds in the County’s roadway fund (Fund 101). The county plans to prioritize the maintenance of the roadway system before additional capital projects are constructed. Therefore, the county revenue projection assumes approximately \$106.1 million available (after necessary maintenance) for capital projects over the next twenty years. This results in an approximate \$51.4 million shortfall in funding to fund all of the identified capital improvement projects during the planning period.

**5.4. Potential Options to Balance the Plan**

As noted above, projected existing revenue sources would allow the County to fund approximately 67 percent of the identified transportation improvement project costs. The County could address this shortfall in two ways:

1. **Prioritizing Capital Projects.** The County can prioritize its capital projects, such that projects are funded on an as-funds-are-available basis. This would result in a delay in implementation of some projects, especially lower priority improvements.
2. **Adopting New Policies to Generate Additional Revenue.** The County could increase funding for capital transportation projects through several policy changes that would generate additional transportation revenues. These include partnering with other agencies or additional grants.

***Prioritizing Capital Projects***

Some of the capital improvements may only become necessary when and if development occurs. These projects are somewhat unique in that the cause and effect of capital projects is directly linked to the individual development projects themselves, as compared to capital projects that become necessary due to aggregate growth within the County as a whole. Funding for these projects could be tied to developer mitigations/or other County revenues generated through increased sales taxes.

The County may choose to prioritize its project list, and fund and pursue additional revenues only for the highest priority projects.

### ***New Policies to Generate Additional Revenues***

There are several new policies that Island County could consider to generate additional revenues for transportation:

- Property Tax Levy Lid Lifts
- Transportation Benefit Districts
- Voter Approved Bond/Tax Package
- Other Developer Mitigation and Requirements
- Local Improvement Districts

It is possible that some of these policies may be less feasible than others based on Island County's unique position and limited anticipated growth. That should be considered when considering any of these new policies. Each of these policies is discussed below.

#### **Property Tax Levy Lid Lifts**

The Road Levy is a property tax collected by the County specifically for transportation funding and accounts for a large portion of the County's transportation funds. Since the passage of I-747, the revenues from this levy have been declining because the 1.0 percent allowed increase does not keep pace with inflation (which hovers around 3.0 percent), or population growth.

One tool that counties can, and increasingly are, using to combat this is a levy lid lift. To do this, a county asks its voters to "lift" the 1 percent levy limit on annual levy increases so the district can collect a higher levy amount, up to the maximum rate limit amount for that jurisdiction. Districts have certain statutory maximum rates but many of these districts have seen their levy rate reduced year after year to avoid levying more than 1 percent additional revenue as property valuations increase. A levy lid lift lets them increase rates up to the statutory maximum rate. This is a powerful funding tool but does pose the challenge of requiring voter authorization. There is prevailing sentiment, though, that barring the legislature redesigning the current levy caps, jurisdictions will be forced to employ levy lid lifts to collect revenues lost from the 1 percent levy cap.

#### **Transportation Benefit Districts**

Transportation Benefit Districts (TBDs) (Chapter 36.73 RCW) are independent taxing districts that can impose fees and/or taxes to fund transportation improvements. TBDs can be established via ordinance in jurisdictions ranging from a city to multi-county area. TBDs are intended to finance the construction of, and operate, improvements to roadways, high-capacity transportation systems, public transit systems, and other transportation management programs.

**Sales and Use Tax (RCW 82.14.0455).** Cities and counties can authorize local TBDs that provide up to a 0.2% local sales and use tax with voter approval. This tax must be authorized by voters and may not be in effect longer than 10 years unless reauthorized by voters.

**Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) (RCWs 81.100 and 81.104).** TBDs can levy up to a \$100 fee for each new vehicle weighing less than 6,000 pounds registered in its jurisdiction. \$20 of this fee can be leveraged without a public vote.

Currently, Island County has not established a TBD, and, therefore, does not collect any revenue via this mechanism. To generate transportation revenues via a TBD, Island County would first need to pass a County ordinance establishing the TBD and then impose a fee or tax (from the options above) on that TBD. Depending on the fee or tax levied in the TBD, Island County might have to hold a public election to levy the tax.

#### **Voter Approved Bond/Tax Package**

Bonds do not result in additional revenue unless coupled with a revenue generating mechanism, such as a voter approved tax. The debt service on the bonds results in increased costs which can be paid with the additional tax revenues. Although the County does not anticipate issuing bonds in the near future, it remains an option for generating additional transportation revenues to fund some of the higher cost improvement projects.

#### **Other Developer Mitigation and Requirements**

The County could adopt specific development-related requirements which would help fund the identified improvements. These include frontage improvements and mitigation under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and concurrency requirements. The County requires developments to fund and construct certain roadway improvements as part of their projects. These typically include reconstructing abutting roads to meet the County's current design standards. These improvements can include widening of pavement, drainage improvements, and construction of curb, gutter, and sidewalks.

The County has the authority to evaluate impacts of development projects under SEPA. The SEPA review may identify adverse transportation impacts. These could include impacts related to safety, traffic operations, non-motorized travel, or other transportation issues. The needed improvements may or may not be identified as specific projects in the Plan.

The County could also require an evaluation of transportation concurrency for development projects. The concurrency evaluation may identify impacts to facilities that operate below the County's level of service standard. To resolve that deficiency, the applicant can propose to fund and/or construct improvements to provide an adequate level of service. Alternatively, the applicant can wait for the County, or another agency or developer to fund improvements to resolve the deficiency. Again, this funding source, while common in Washington State, may not be viable for Island County since growth projections do not appear to require capacity increases in the system.

#### **Local Improvement Districts**

A local improvement district (LID) (RCW 35.43 to 35.56) is a special assessment area established by a jurisdiction to fund specific public improvements, including transportation improvements, through mechanisms that assess those costs to benefitted property owners. LIDs could be formed to construct sidewalks, upgrade streets, improve drainage, or other similar types of projects. A LID may be in residential, commercial, or industrial areas or combinations depending on the needs and benefits. LIDs can be proposed either by the County or by

residents or business/property owners. LIDs must be formed by a specific process which establishes the improvements, their costs, and assessments. The assessments are added to the property tax which helps to spread the costs over time. The amount of money you can generate through an LID has to be equal to or less than the special benefit generated by the project for the properties being assessed. Due to that funding limiter, this tool works only in certain situations and for certain projects, but if the right opportunity presents itself, it could be a useful tool. Many of these situations hinge on development, so it is unlikely that it will be a large funding source for Island County moving forward.

## 5.5. Intergovernmental Coordination

Regional transportation planning was significantly affected by the adoption of the Growth Management Act in 1990. One of GMA's provisions authorized establishment of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs). In 1991, Skagit County jurisdictions joined with Island County jurisdictions to form the Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SIRTPO). The SIRTPO existed from 1991 – 2015, until it was dissolved because it no longer met the member requirements for an RTPO. Upon its dissolution, SCOG became the RTPO for Skagit County and the Island RTPO, or IRTPO, was formed in September 2016.

Island RTPO (IRTPO) is the lead agency for coordinating the transportation planning efforts of jurisdictions within the county. The organization is responsible for maintaining a regional transportation plan that frames the policy basis for coordinating transportation planning and improvements within Island County, including County, city and town, ports, Indian tribes, WSDOT, and public transportation service providers. IRTPO maintains the regional travel demand forecasting model and facilitates discussion and decision-making among its member agencies, including:

- Island County
- City of Oak Harbor
- Town of Coupeville
- City of Langley
- Port of Coupeville
- Island Transit
- Port of South Whidbey
- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

Northwest Region Office Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI) and the City of Stanwood are associate members. As part of WSDOT, the Washington State Ferry (WSF) system also sends representatives to IRTPO meetings. The member organizations voluntarily participate in the IRTPO and have elected Island County as the lead agency and fiscal agent. The IRTPO operates on State and Federal grant funding. No dues are collected from member agencies. The 13.5% matching funds required by any of the Federal grants the IRTPO receives are divided amongst the project-specific agencies. No matching funds are required for the IRTPO's State grants.

### **Regional Transportation Plan**

The IRTPO regional transportation plan [Island Access 2045](#) is based on public and agency outreach and establishes four key pillars with supporting policies, as listed below.

#### **PILLAR 1 – LEADERSHIP**

Refers to actions that establish a shared vision or common goal, motivate others to pursue that direction, foster collaboration and innovation, and advance regional objectives.

Policy 1. Consistency & Coordination

Policy 2. Strategic Decisions

Policy 3. Public Accountability

Policy 4. Visionary Direction

#### **PILLAR 2 - SYSTEM MANAGEMENT**

Refers to those strategies and actions that keep all aspects of the multimodal transportation system working safely and efficiently, and which keep life cycle costs as low as possible.

Policy 5. State of Good Repair

Policy 6. Efficient Reliability

Policy 7. System Safety

#### **PILLAR 3 - SUSTAINABILITY**

Refers to those actions that support the triple-bottom line of social equity, environmental health, and economic vitality.

Policy 8. Environmental Health

Policy 9. Economic Vitality

Policy 10. Social Equity

#### **PILLAR 4 - PREPAREDNESS**

Refers to actions that increase the ability to respond and adapt to unexpected disruptions or harness emerging opportunities.

Policy 11. System Resiliency

Policy 12. Technology & Innovation

### **Transportation Demand Management**

Beyond the GMA requirements to forecast how physical transportation facilities may be capable of accommodating the transportation demands attributed to future growth, Island County and other jurisdictions are responsible for identifying possible optional means such as management of transportation services in creative ways that maximize efficiencies and leverage the capacities of existing transportation facilities.

[Transportation Demand Management \(TDM\)](#) includes an entire set of measures and strategies that can be employed to manage the demand, rather than the supply, side of the societal transportation equation. TDM strategies include increased use of active transportation travel, transit and car-pooling, working from home, coordination of land use and transportation decisions, and encouraging major trip generators to plan their activities in such a way that peak hour travel demands are minimized.

## **5.6. Reassessment Strategy**

Although the financing summary identifies the potential for a total, conservative revenue shortfall of approximately \$51.4 M (in 2025 dollars) over the life of the plan, the County is committed to reassessing their transportation needs and funding sources each year as part of its 6-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This allows the County to match the financing program with the short-term improvement projects and funding. To implement the Transportation Element, the County will consider the following principals in its transportation funding program:

### ***New Policies to Generate Additional Revenues***

There are several new policies that Island County could consider generating additional revenues for transportation:

- Balance capital improvement with available revenues, by prioritizing transportation capital improvement projects as part of the annual 6-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
- Consider new policies to generate additional revenues; these may include:
  - Property Tax Levy Lid Lifts
  - Transportation Benefit Districts
  - Voter Approved Bond/Tax Package
  - Other Developer Mitigation and Requirements
  - Local Improvement Districts;
- Review project design standards to determine whether costs could be reduced through reasonable changes in scope or deviations from design standards; and
- Continue to vigorously pursue grant funds from state and federal sources, understanding that grant funds are anticipated to decline.

The County will use the annual update of the 6-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to re-evaluate priorities and timing of projects and need for alternative funding programs. Throughout the planning period, projects will be completed and priorities revised. The development of the TIP will be an ongoing process over the life of the Plan and will be reviewed and amended annually.

## **ELEMENT 10 – CAPITAL FACILITIES AND UTILITIES**

### **10.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update, Island County chose to combine the Capital Facilities and Utilities Elements to demonstrate how closely the two elements relate and create a shared responsibility between County service providers and non-County service providers. This shared duty allows the County to create well-coordinated and proactive planning measures that address current and future facility, utility, and service needs.

The Capital Facilities and Utilities elements are both required under Washington’s Growth Management Act (GMA). Each element has a unique purpose and set of requirements, however, there are many similarities in ways that make addressing them together particularly valuable in ensuring sufficient facilities and utilities are planned to address population growth for the County.

GMA Requirements for the Capital Facilities Element (CFE) (RCW 36.70A.070(3)):

- A. An inventory of existing facilities owned by public entities, including green infrastructure, showing their locations and capacities;
- B. A forecast of the future needs;
- C. The proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new capital facilities;
- D. At least a six-year plan that will finance such capital facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identifies sources of public money for such purposes; and
- E. Reassessment of the Land Use Element if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and to ensure that the Land Use Element, Capital Facilities Plan Element, and financing plan with the Capital Facilities Plan Element are coordinated and consistent. Parks and recreation facilities shall be included in the Capital Facilities Element.

GMA Requirements for the Utilities Element (RCW 36.70A.070(4)):

- A. Include the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities including, but not limited to, electrical, telecommunications, and natural gas systems.
- B. The county or city shall identify all public entities that own utility systems and endeavor in good faith to work with other public entities, such as special purpose districts, to gather and include within its utilities element the information required in (a) of this subsection. However, if, after a good faith effort, the county or city is unable to gather the information required in (a) of this subsection from the other public entities, the failure to include such information in the utilities element shall not be grounds for a finding of noncompliance or invalidity under chapter 228, Laws of 2023. A good faith effort must, at a minimum, include consulting the public entity’s capital facility or system plans, and emailing and calling the staff of the public entity.

#### **10.1.1 BACKGROUND**

Capital Facilities and Utilities goals and policies in this comprehensive plan are an integral part of other elements, including Land Use, Housing, Climate Resiliency, Economic Development, Natural Resources, Parks, and Transportation. Public services and facilities include, but are not limited to, parks and recreation, law enforcement, fire protection, emergency preparedness,

water/sewer, roads, transit, walk and bike facilities, ferries, stormwater management, education, library services, health and human services, energy, and telecommunications.

### 10.1.2 WHY PLAN FOR CAPITAL FACILITIES?

Capital facilities planning has multiple benefits, including:

- *Decision Making Framework.* The Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) provides a framework for decision makers regarding what to buy, when to buy it, and how projects will be funded.
- *Link to Long Range Plans.* The CFP guides implementation of the community's comprehensive plan, subarea plans, and strategies.
- *Project Management Tool.* The CFP provides the County an organizational mechanism to prioritize capital projects and match projects with existing funding options.
- *Community Awareness.* The adoption of a CFP elevates public awareness of the needs and financial resources available for projects.
- *Eligibility for Grants and Funding.* The State of Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development's Public Works Trust Fund requires that local governments have a CFE in order to be eligible for loans. Some other grants and loans have similar requirements or give preference to governments that have a CFE.
- *Best Management Practices.* Planning for major capital facilities and their costs requires Island County to demonstrate the need for facilities and the need for revenues to pay for them; estimate eventual operation and maintenance costs of new capital facilities that will impact the annual budget; take advantage of sources of revenue that require a CFE in order to qualify for the revenue; and get better ratings on bond issues when the County borrows money for capital facilities (thus reducing interest rates and the cost of borrowing money).

**Exhibit 1. Providers by Facility Type.**

<b>Capital Facility/Service</b>	<b>Primary Department/ Provider</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>• Applicable Plan(s)</b>
<b>General Administration Buildings</b>	Island County – Facilities Management	County-owned buildings and property management related to County-owned capital.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island County Budget</li> <li>• Island County Capital Improvement Plan (updated annually)</li> </ul>
<b>Corrections Facilities/Law Enforcement</b>			
Courts	Island County District Court, Superior Court, and Juvenile Court; Clerk of the Superior Court, Prosecuting Attorney's Office	Provides facilities that support courtroom functions at all levels of the judicial system.	
Sheriff	Island County – Sheriff's Department	Provides facilities that support the provision of law enforcement services.	
Jail/Corrections Facilities	Island County – Sheriff's Department (Jail)/Superior Court (Juvenile Detention Center)	Jail services can include the provision of prosecution, adjudication, indigent defense, sentencing, and incarceration services for misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor offenses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jail Feasibility Study (2025)</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Management</b>			
Emergency Management	Island County – Department of Emergency Management	Supports the community and partners by preparing for, responding to, mitigating against, and facilitating recovery from all emergencies and disasters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020)</li> <li>• Island County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (2018)</li> </ul>
Fire Protection/Emergency Medical Services	Fire Districts, Whidbey Health Public Hospital District, NASWI	Provides fire suppression and EMS, including technical and special operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire District Strategic &amp; Facility Plans</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<i>See the Transportation Element for more detail on transportation facilities.</i>		
County Roads	Island County – Public Works, Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO)	Provides County roads throughout the County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island County Transportation Improvement Plan (updated annually)</li> <li>• IRTPO Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) (2023)</li> <li>• Island County Regional Transportation Plan (2024)</li> <li>• Comprehensive Safety Action Plan</li> </ul>

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			(2025)
Active Transportation	Island County – Public Works, IRTPO	Provides planning framework and resources for non-motorized and human powered forms of transportation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Island County Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) (adopted annually)</li> <li>RTIP (2023)</li> <li>Island County Non-Motorized Trails Plan (2018)</li> </ul>
State Highways	Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), IRTPO	Provides highways throughout the County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Transportation Plan (2024)</li> <li>RTIP (2023)</li> </ul>
Ferries	WSDOT	Provides effective and efficient ferry services between Clinton – Mukilteo and Coupeville – Port Townsend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WA State Ferries Long Range Plan (2020 – 2040)</li> </ul>
Transit	Island Transit	Provides safe, efficient, and effective transportation for residents and visitors of Island County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Six Year Transit Development Plan (adopted annually)</li> </ul>
Health and Human Services	Island County Public Health and Human Services Departments	Provides a variety of health and human services to the residents of the County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Health Improvement Plan (2024)</li> </ul>
Libraries	Sno-Isle Libraries	Provides access to books, movies, music, and other community services like free wireless internet and community meeting space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sno-Isle Libraries Budget</li> </ul>
Water	Community Water Systems, Water Districts, Cities	Infrastructure for providing potable water and water for fire suppression to county residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated Water System Plan (1990)</li> <li>Water Resource Management Plan (1992)</li> <li>Groundwater Management Plan (2005)</li> </ul>
Parks & Recreation ( <i>see also the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element</i> )	Island County, Cities and Town, North Whidbey Parks District, South Whidbey Parks District, Washington State Parks, and more.	Parks, trails, and recreation facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parks, Recreation, and Outdoor Space Element</li> <li>Individual Parks District Plans</li> </ul>
Sanitary Sewer	Island County, Sewer Districts, Cities	Domestic and commercial wastewater systems using a combination of municipal systems and onsite wastewater disposal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual District Sewer Plans</li> </ul>

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Schools	School Districts, Skagit Valley College, Washington State University Extension	Provides public education from kindergarten through grade 12.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School District Strategic or Improvement Plans</li> </ul>
Solid Waste Management	Island County – Public Works	Solid waste disposal, prevention, and recycling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solid Waste and Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan (2020)</li> </ul>
Stormwater Management	Island County, Cities	Manages water quality and flood risks to reduce flooding, improve water quality, and preserve natural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stormwater Design Manual</li> <li>• Drainage District Plans</li> <li>• Surface Water Improvement Program</li> </ul>
<b>Private Utilities not included in the Capital Facilities Plan</b>			
Telecommunications	Service Providers	Services include telephone, cable, personal wireless communication, and broadband internet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island County Broadband Action Plan (2023)</li> <li>• Washington State BEAD 5-year Action Plan</li> <li>• Service Provider Individual Plans</li> <li>• Washington State Digital Equity Plan</li> </ul>
Energy	Puget Sound Energy (PSE), Sno-PUD	Provides electric power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSE Integrated Resource Plan (2023)</li> <li>• Sno-PUD Integrated Resource Plan (2023)</li> </ul>
Natural Gas	Cascade Natural Gas Corporation, Service Providers	Provides natural gas, predominantly in the Oak Harbor area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cascade Natural Gas' Washington Integrated Resource Plan (2025)</li> </ul>

## 10.2 LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) METHOD FOR ANALYZING CAPITAL FACILITIES

### 10.2.1 EXPLANATION OF LOS

Level of Services (LOS) are usually quantifiable measures of the capacity of capital facilities. LOS may also measure the quality of some capital facilities. LOS should be set to reflect realistic expectations consistent with the achievement of growth aims. Setting such levels too high, such as requiring 100 acres of parks per every resident, could be unrealistic and costly. Setting levels too low, such as only needing to have a solid waste transfer station process a pound of waste per 10,000 residents per day, when in reality each resident is producing much more than that, could result in inadequate facilities. LOS Standards are generally an established minimum capacity for capital facilities or services that is planned to be provided per unit demand or other appropriate measure of need and is used as a gauge for measuring the quantity of service.

LOS is not the exclusive determinant for capital improvement needs. Repair, remodeling, renovation, and replacement of obsolete or worn out facilities as determined by the Board of Island County Commissioners (Board), or the construction of capital facilities in excess of the minimum LOS Standards adopted in this Element, may be constructed or acquired at any time as long as the following conditions are met:

1. The capital improvement does not make financially infeasible any other capital improvement that is needed to achieve or maintain the LOS Standards adopted in this Element, and
2. The capital improvement does not contradict, limit, or substantially change the goals and policies of any Element of this Comprehensive Plan, and one of the following conditions is met:
  - a. The excess capacity is an integral part of a capital improvement that is needed to achieve or maintain LOS Standards (i.e., the minimum capacity of a capital project is larger than the capacity required to provide the LOS).
  - b. The excess capacity provides “economies of scale” making it less expensive than a comparable amount of capacity if acquired at a later date.
  - c. The asset acquired is land that is environmentally sensitive or designated by the County as necessary for conservation or recreation.
  - d. The excess capacity is part of a capital project financed by general obligation bonds approved by referendum.

Any capital improvement that is needed as a result of any of the factors listed above shall be included in the regular schedule of capital improvements contained in both the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and the Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

The County may provide non-capital alternatives to achieve and maintain the adopted LOS Standards. Non-capital alternatives use programs, strategies, or methods other than traditional “brick and mortar” capital standards. Non-capital alternatives include, but are not limited to the following:

- Programs that reduce or eliminate the need for the capital facility.
- Programs that provide a non-capital substitute for the capital facility (e.g. electronic home monitoring or other sentencing alternatives to incarceration in traditional jail facilities).
- Programs that reduce the demand for a capital facility or the service it provides (e.g. telecommuting as an alternative to commuting to work; transit as an alternative to cars; recycling as an alternative to landfills).
- Programs that use alternative methods to provide the same LOS (e.g. “natural” drainage

in managed flood basins as an alternative to levees and dikes).

- Programs that use existing facilities more efficiently to reduce the need for additional facilities (e.g. night court as an alternative to more courtrooms during the day; flextime and evening and night shifts as an alternative to additional space for government staff).

More information regarding the non-capital alternatives that may be used for each type of facility can be found in the CFP.

Concurrency is another important factor in setting LOS Standards. Currently, the County's concurrency ordinance only includes transportation systems. Not meeting the road LOS Standards requires a moratorium on development. LOS Standards are valuable planning and budgetary tools even if concurrency is not required for that facility. The Island County Concurrency Ordinance can be found in ICC Chapter 11.04.

Because the CFE is an open public process, development of the CFE enables citizen participation in decision making and ensures accountability of public funds. Also, participation in the capital planning process helps the community understand why a project may be given priority over others and what the funding limitations are. When seen in the context of a comprehensive planning and budgetary framework, prioritization and sequencing decisions are more clearly understood.

### **10.2.2. SETTING LOS STANDARDS**

Because the need for capital facilities is largely determined by the adopted LOS Standards, one of the primary purposes of the CFE is the selection of these standards. LOS Standards should be based on the community's vision and values for the future. The regionally established LOS Standards for State highways and ferries are to be developed jointly with the State Department of Transportation to encourage consistency across jurisdictions. Island County, Oak Harbor, Langley, and Coupeville have established LOS Standards for their own arterial roadway systems and intersections and transit routes. By establishing LOS Standards as the basis for providing capital facilities and ensuring the adequacy of capital facilities during the division of land and building permit processes, the CFE helps maintain the quality of life in this community.

The LOS Standards are provided in detail in CFU goal 1. The adopted standards:

1. Determine the need for capital improvements projects.
2. Provide the benchmark, when required, for testing the adequacy of capital facilities for each proposed development pursuant to the concurrency requirements.

In the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update, the Board decided to remove LOS Standards for General Administration, Law Enforcement, District Court, and Superior Court due to the dynamic nature of these facilities. These facilities will continue to be maintained and upgraded as needed. Alternatives to capital projects for those facilities can be found in the CFP.

## **10.3 COUNTY MANDATES**

### **10.3.1 COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES (CPP)**

Many capital facilities either cross jurisdictional boundaries or are used by both rural and urban citizens. The Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) establishes policies for inter-jurisdictional coordination and planning around capital facilities, including essential public facilities. CPP 3.6 includes restrictions on where certain capital facilities should be sited and which jurisdictions

should be involved in the planning process. Interlocal agreements may be utilized to coordinate facilities within unincorporated urban growth areas (UGAs).

### **10.3.2 NON-COUNTY CAPITAL FACILITIES**

The CFE contains LOS Standards for certain non-County, publicly- and privately-owned facilities. By this means adequacy will be determined and ensured. Non-County providers will need to decide their relationship to the County's Element and how they intend to provide services at an acceptable LOS. During the development of this update, non-county facility and utility providers, as well as special purpose districts were contacted. Non-county providers may update their plans out of cycle with the County's comprehensive plan and should be contacted for the most up to date information.

### **10.3.3 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES**

The GMA (RCW 36.70A.200) requires that each local jurisdiction planning under the GMA provide a process within its comprehensive plan for identifying and siting essential public facilities. Essential public facilities include those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities and state or regional transportation facilities as defined in RCW 47.06.140, regional transit authority facilities as defined in RCW 81.112.020, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, opioid treatment programs including both mobile and fixed-site medication units, recovery residences, harm reduction programs excluding safe injection sites, and inpatient facilities including substance use disorder treatment facilities, mental health facilities, group homes, community facilities as defined in RCW 72.05.020, and secure community transition facilities as defined in RCW 71.09.020. These facilities require special consideration and planning when selecting appropriate sites. The GMA does not directly require that Federal facilities be included when identifying essential public facilities. Federal lands are not subject to local land use regulations under GMA. The GMA prohibits local jurisdictions from imposing outright bans on essential public facilities. Goal CFU 4 and subsequent policies relate to the siting of essential public facilities. CPP 3.7 includes additional policies related to the siting of essential public facilities.

## **10.4 UTILITIES**

### **10.4.1 INVENTORY & ANALYSIS**

The exact location of many utilities are unknown, but the GMA requires the County to include the general location of those utilities. This Element identifies existing utility systems within the County and describes improvements that are necessary to meet anticipated demand. Descriptions of these systems are supplemented with maps which illustrate the utility systems and any anticipated or proposed improvements necessary to provide adequate service to the community.

Most of the information contained in this inventory is excerpted from plans developed by the utilities themselves, as well as coordinating with the utility providers. Detailed written plans are not always available from all utilities, and some utility providers are reluctant to share information regarding existing and proposed facilities, due to security concerns.

### **10.4.2 NATURAL GAS**

#### **10.4.2.1 CASCADE NATURAL GAS CORPORATION**

Cascade Natural Gas Corporation (Cascade), a privately owned for-profit corporation, is the sole provider of natural gas in Island County. Cascade is a subsidiary of the Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. Washington State requires gas providers to demonstrate that existing rate payers will not subsidize new customers. Thus, gas transmission line extensions are not planned in advance, but are initiated only when there is sufficient customer demand. Cascade serves more than 272,000 customers in 96 communities, 68 of which are in Washington and 28 in Oregon.

#### **10.4.2.1.1 EXISTING SYSTEM**

Natural gas is supplied to the County through a 6 inch high-pressure line which follows SR 532 onto Camano Island. A limited service area exists on northeastern Camano Island. A submarine 6 inch high- pressure main originates at Brown's Point on Camano Island and connects Whidbey Island at Strawberry Point. Service on Whidbey Island is limited to the City of Oak Harbor, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, and surrounding unincorporated areas within reasonable distance of the transmission main.

#### **10.4.2.1.2 FUTURE DEMAND AND PROPOSED FACILITIES**

The location, capacity, and timing of any improvements to the existing Cascade distribution system are driven purely by demand. This includes installation service for new development and conversion from electricity or oil to natural gas. Also, unlike some utility providers, natural gas service may legally be refused to potential customers if the extension is not cost effective to the company.

No major new facilities, upgrades, or extension of services beyond existing service areas are planned or anticipated within the next 20 years, but Cascade is willing to serve major new development outside existing service areas if the development occurs relatively close to existing mains.

#### **10.4.3 ELECTRICAL UTILITIES**

Electricity is vital to any community, but the vast network of generating facilities, transmission lines, switching stations, and distribution lines are rarely given a thought until the power goes out because of a problem. Electrical service providers must coordinate and plan their activities to a much greater degree than less critical utilities. Under State law, electrical utilities must provide electricity upon demand.

Roughly 70 percent of the electricity in the Pacific Northwest comes from hydroelectric generation. Diminishing natural resources, lack of available sites for new generating stations, and growing needs pose significant regional challenges for electric utilities. Local issues involve the siting of transmission systems, substations, and distribution lines.

Possible health effects from proximity to electrical transmission facilities have concerned some members of the public. Although research is ongoing, electromagnetic fields of the type and levels found near electrical power facilities have not been conclusively demonstrated to cause adverse effects in humans. In response to these concerns, new facilities are sometimes designed or located to reduce exposure to electromagnetic fields. The Environmental Protection Agency has not adopted any standards relating to electromagnetic fields.

#### **10.4.3.1 SNOHOMISH COUNTY PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT**

Since 1949, Camano Island has been provided electrical utilities by the Snohomish County Public Utility District (SnoPUD), the second largest publicly-owned utility in the Pacific Northwest in terms of number of customers. The three elected commissioners of the district set policies and adopt rates and charges for services. The main offices of the PUD are located in Everett, with five regional offices, including one in Stanwood.

#### **10.4.3.1.1 EXISTING SYSTEM**

The PUD's electric system covers approximately 2,200 square miles in Snohomish County and on Camano Island with a total 6,195 power line miles. There are approximately 303.44 circuit miles of power lines on Camano Island, with 203.55 overhead miles and 99.89 underground miles. Due to security concerns, Snohomish PUD has chosen not to share the location of existing utilities and proposed projects.

#### **10.4.3.2 PUGET SOUND ENERGY**

Puget Sound Energy is an investor-owned utility provider of electric and natural gas service to homes and businesses in Puget Sound. With a 6,000 square mile service territory encompassing 10 counties, PSE provides power to more than 1.2 million electric customers and 900,000 natural gas customers.

PSE creates 46 percent of electricity from its own hydro, thermal, solar and wind facilities; the company has 3,500 megawatts of power-generating capacity and purchases the rest of its power supply from other utilities, independent power producers, and energy marketers across the United States and Canada. In 2022, PSE provided 3,794,770 megawatt hours of renewable energy produced from wind and hydropower facilities. Electric and natural gas planning efforts are integrated and centered on providing safe, reliable, and efficient energy service.

##### **10.4.3.2.1 EXISTING FACILITIES**

PSE maintains an extensive integrated electric system consisting of generating plants, transmission lines, substations, switching stations, sub- systems, overhead and underground distribution systems, attachments, appurtenances, and metering systems. Electricity provided by PSE to customers is often produced elsewhere, then interconnected to the Pacific Northwest grid. For example, wind generation from the 248 MW Beaver Creek windfarm in Montana may soon power Whidbey Island. PSE serves Skagit, Island, Whatcom, and King Counties with electricity by linking transmission facilities.

The PSE transmission facilities in Island County are important components of the regional grid. Whidbey Island is electrically connected to Skagit County via two 115 kV transmission lines from March Point Substation terminating at Whidbey Switching Station (March Point-Whidbey #1 and March Point-Whidbey #2). A second pair of 115 kV transmission lines connects Whidbey Switching Station to Greenbank Substation. Finally, three 115 kV transmission lines form a loop around the southern end of the island. Langley Substation is fed radially from the southern loop via Maxwellton Substation (Maxwelton-Langley).

The 87,000 residents of Island County are served via 38,000 upgraded AMI meters. Twelve distribution stations reach customers along the isle north to south: Crescent Harbor, Porter, Clover Valley, Hillcrest, Faber, Coupeville, Swantown, Greenbank, Freeland, Brooks Hill, Maxwellton, and Langley.

Due to its unique geographic location, Whidbey Island customers experience longer and more frequent outages in comparison to other customers on the PSE system. These storm-related outages account for a significant portion of the customer interruptions on Whidbey Island. Substation outages due to loss of transmission are also a factor, and exceed the PSE System average. Outages caused by trees and vegetation account for 46 percent of the total outages on Whidbey Island, which is why vegetation management occurs on three-to-six-year cycles. Avian protection measures are also in place to safeguard wildlife.

#### **10.4.3.2.2 FUTURE DEMAND AND PROPOSED FACILITIES**

PSE will maintain existing energy facilities and embrace new clean energy technology in order to improve reliability and meet increasing demand on the island. A transition to electric vehicles will require increased infrastructure to ensure there is a safe, reliable, and effective source of energy for charging. Infrastructure modifications may include:

- Roadway Turn Outs for Electric First Responders to make safe aerial repairs.
- 2024 Greenbank Substation Replacement
- 2025 Clover Valley Substation Replacement
- 2026 Langley Substation Replacement
- Siting Clean Energy Projects such as Solar+ Storage
- PSE Up & Go Electric
- Municipal Public Pole Charging Program
- Ferry Electrification
- Public Safety Power Shutoffs for Wildfire Prevention
- Projects from the Whidbey Solutions Report

#### **10.4.4 TELECOMMUNICATIONS UTILITIES**

Telecommunication utilities can be broken down into subcategories for telephone (landline), cellular, cable television, and internet. Service providers may supply all four utilities, a mixture, or just one. The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission regulates rates and services of telephone companies operating in Washington State, but does not regulate cable, internet, wireless phones, or “voice over internet protocol” (VOIP). Island County coordinates provisions of these services through the development permitting process.

##### **10.4.4.1 TELEPHONE**

Standard wired telephone services are becoming less common, as users are moving more to cell phones or VOIP. Two standard telephone utilities service Island County. Frontier serves all of Camano Island and northern and central portions of Whidbey Island. Whidbey Telecom existing service area begins at Greenbank and covers the southern part of Whidbey Island.

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission regulates rates and services of telephone companies operating in Washington State, but does not regulate cable, internet,

wireless phones, or VOIP. It would be to the economic advantage of Island County to have rates restructured to eliminate intra county toll charges.

Standard telephone facilities include a central plant, which houses switching gear (often in the same building as central offices), remote switching stations, microwave and the familiar utility poles and overhead lines. Underground installation of telephone lines and use of efficient fiber optic systems is becoming more common as technology advances and the regulatory framework responds to aesthetic concerns.

While standard telephone service is becoming less demanded, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), for internet access is still an important service offered through telephone companies.

#### **10.4.4.1.1 FRONTIER COMMUNICATIONS**

Frontier's service area in Island County includes the incorporated areas of the City of Oak Harbor and the Town of Coupeville. Most of Frontier's major facilities are located on the mainland. Frontier has office facilities located in Oak Harbor.

Existing telephone facilities and some minor upgrades, mainly at the distribution level, will adequately serve the County's needs during the planning period, and no new major facilities are planned by Frontier. New facilities and provisions of these services are coordinated with Island County through the development permitting process.

#### **10.4.4.1.2 WHIDBEY TELECOM**

Whidbey Telecom is an independently owned and operated telephone utility serving roughly the southern half of Whidbey Island, with main offices in Freeland. In addition to its standard telephone service, the company also provides cable television, marine communications, and access to the Internet. Whidbey Telecom has added an extensive network of optic fiber systems to its existing wire line system.

Whidbey Telecom provides internet, WiFi, voice and security alarm services. Established as Whidbey Telephone company in 1908, the company remains proudly independent. The company continues to grow, currently employing over 100 skilled local professionals and provides outstanding broadband-based services over both its fiber optic network and legacy copper network.

To ensure long-term sustainability and growth, Whidbey Telecom is actively investing in its delivery capacity, primarily focusing on a Fiber-to-the-Premise (FTTx) network, branded as "The BiG GiG® Fiber Network". Whidbey Telecom has significantly upgraded its core network to a 600 Gigabit per second (Gbps) capacity via an optical transport network, which connects its service area to internet connection points in Seattle and other regional locations. This high-capacity network is designed to support not only current needs but also future growth in data usage. Whidbey Telecom currently offers home service up to 5 Gbps and Commercial service up to 10 Gbps. Traditionally a 100 percent buried infrastructure company, starting with its copper network (DSL), Whidbey Telecom continues to bury infrastructure that is critical to customer connectivity. Redundancy is critical to Whidbey Telecom's success; the company owns 4 fiber optic submarine cables that connect Whidbey Island to diversified internet connections. Should the need arise, Whidbey Telecom is also capable of provisioning service aerially and via fixed wireless. The company is proud to currently deliver 99.99999 percent uptime. When the demand exists, the company is well positioned to be able to deliver the consumer 100 Gbps from this scalable network. Ready to accommodate projected population growth, the company anticipates

supporting the increasing demand for high-speed internet without requiring fundamental changes to the core structure of the network.

Whidbey Telecom believes that this region is ripe for superior, local customer service to the consumer, extraordinary performance of fiber optic broadband, and is excited to grow beyond South Whidbey. Whidbey Telecom was awarded an NTIA grant to add Middle Mile submarine fiber optic broadband capacity from Whidbey Island, into the San Juan Islands and Point Roberts, Washington. Additionally, the "Middle Mile" plan includes building out The BiG GiG Fiber Network north of its current terrestrial termination in Greenbank/Coupeville, north up through Oak Harbor to make the submarine connection. Whidbey Telecom plans to deliver fiber optic internet service to North Whidbey Island in the near future. In addition to Whidbey Island growth, the company will be expanding Fiber-to-the-Home, via its existing submarine fiber, to the currently underserved areas of South Camano Island. This work is funded by a USDA Rural Development grant awarded to Whidbey Telecom subsidiary FiberCloudNW.

The Whidbey Telecom Customer Experience Center and headquarter office locations currently serve as key points for operations and customer service. FiberCloudNW currently operates out of the headquarter in Langley with future plans to expand onto Camano Island.

#### **10.4.4.2 CELLULAR TELEPHONE SERVICE**

Cellular telephone service is the main form of communication resident's use. A cellular network consists of cells (a geographic area served by a transmitting and receiving tower), cell sites (the tower site, also including a base station radio and interconnecting equipment), a switching station (which receives and distributes signals from the cell sites via conventional land lines and microwave signals). In order to cover broad service areas, cell sites must be located close enough to one another so that service is uninterrupted as the user moves from one location to another.

Cellular towers can pose siting problems. The towers can be free-standing structures but are often placed on top of existing structures where convenient; this is more common in urban areas and creates less of a visual impact than free-standing towers. As service expands or changes, existing cell sites may need to be reconfigured.

Due to the rural nature of Island County, many areas are without adequate cellular service. This is not only a nuisance for customers but is increasingly becoming a public safety concern as few residents have landlines and rely on cell phones for emergency calls.

At the Federal level, cellular phone facilities are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which has jurisdiction over the public airwaves, assigning frequencies and licensing operators. The FCC requires that transmitting towers be located such that transmission of signals is unobstructed. Local jurisdictions can regulate tower siting to the extent that a Federally licensed use is not impeded.

Thus, a local jurisdiction can deny approval of a tower at a particular site but cannot impose an outright ban on towers within its jurisdiction.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and WSDOT Aviation Division also review proposed towers when they exceed 200 feet in height (above ground level) or when the proposed location is within 20,000 feet of a major airport (serving military and commercial aircraft) or within 10,000 feet of a smaller airport. While not having the authority to deny potential sites, the FAA coordinates its review process with the FCC, who may deny a particular site if the FAA objects.

Identifying specific cellular companies who service Island County is difficult, since most of the cellular networks are lease or sub-leased to various companies. Instead of describing these companies individually, this Element includes a map of the existing cellular antennas which have been installed or proposed through the FCC.

#### **10.4.4.3 CABLE TELEVISION**

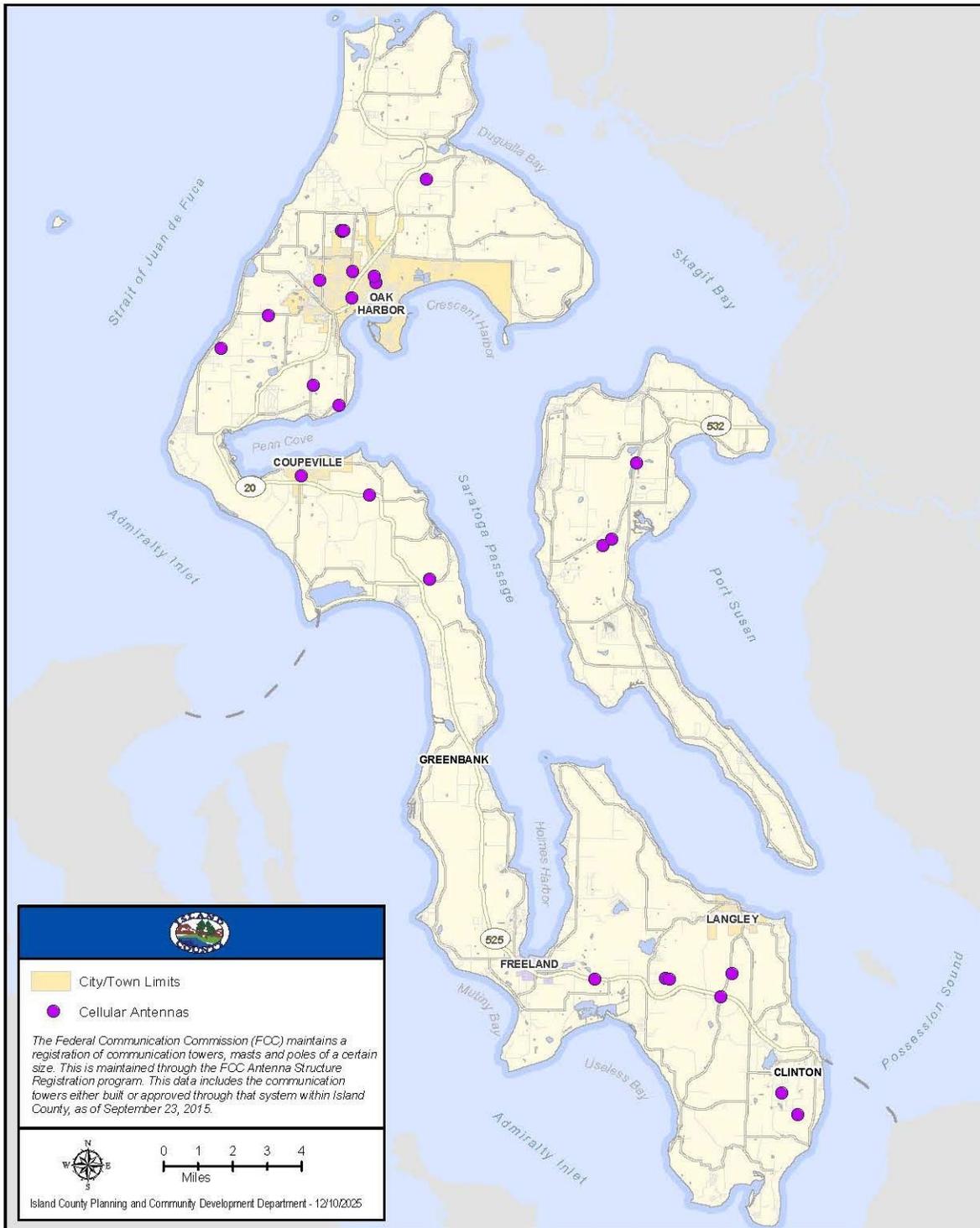
Cable carries data through coaxial cable from trunk lines, which originate at a head end site, which processes information and distributes it through the distribution system. Though the term “cable” implies wiring throughout the system, many cable systems also utilize satellite dishes and microwave antennae. Cable distribution lines are often run using leased overhead utility poles, but underground installation of cable systems is becoming more common.

Frontier, Whidbey Telecom, and Comcast are the main cable providers in Island County. Cable companies and cable service change often and require relatively minor facilities. No new major facilities are expected to meet anticipated growth in Island County.

#### **10.4.4.4 INTERNET**

Generally, internet service is not provided by a separate utility, but rather through a cable, telephone, or cellular provider. As such, no detailed company information is provided in this Element.

**Map 1. Cellular Antennas.**



## ~~10.1 GOALS AND POLICIES~~

### GOALS AND POLICIES

#### Level of Service

**Goal 1. Define types of public facilities and services, establish standards for their level of service, and determine what improvements are needed to achieve and maintain those standards.** ~~Establish Level of Service (LOS) Standards for each type of capital facility, and determine what capital improvements are needed in order to achieve and maintain the standards for existing and future populations and to repair or replace existing capital facilities.~~

~~CF 1.1. The County's adopted LOS Standards for Categories A and B capital facilities are as follows:~~

~~CFU 1.1.1. Category A. The LOS Standards of each type of capital facility in Category A, as defined above, shall apply to development permits issued by the County after the effective date of implementation of this Element, as described in CF 3.3 Chapters 11.04 and 11.05 ICC, the County's annual budget, the County's CIP Capital Improvements Program, and other Elements of this Comprehensive Plan.~~

~~CFU 1.1.1 Category A Capital Facilities (County Roads – rural/urban arterials/transit routes/their intersections, as well as city/town arterials/transit routes/their intersections) can be found in the Transportation Element.~~

~~CFU 1.2. 1.1.2. Category B. The LOS Standards of each type of capital facility in Category B, as defined above, shall apply to development permits issued by the County after the effective date of implementation of this Element, as described in CF 3.3, and other Elements of this Comprehensive Plan. Category B capital facilities are provided by entities other than Island County, therefore the LOS Standards shall not apply to the County's annual budget or the County's Capital Improvements Program.~~

~~CFU 1.2.1 Category B Capital Facilities (City and Town Roads – rural/urban arterials/transit routes/their intersections) can be found in the Transportation Element.~~

~~CFU 1.3 The Active Transportation Network and associated pedestrian and bicycle LOS standards are not included in the concurrency requirements for development permit review but are required to be included in the Annual Report on the Capacity and Multi-Modal LOS of Capital Facilities described in the Transportation Element.~~

~~CF 1.1.3. Categories C and D. The LOS Standards for those capital facilities in Categories C and D, as defined above, that are required to be found adequate pursuant to RCW 58.17 or required to be found adequate for building permits, shall apply to development permits issued by the County, as applicable.~~

~~CF 1.2. The LOS Standards for capital facilities shall be as follows. The County recognizes that the methodology used to determine the LOS Standards for capital facilities may need to be revisited and adjusted with future updates to this element. These standards apply to the unincorporated area of the County. Municipalities may establish different LOS Standards.~~

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### ~~CF 1.2.1. Category A Capital Facilities:~~

~~CF 1.2.1.1. County Roads (rural arterials & transit routes): See the Transportation Element~~

~~CF 1.2.1.2. County Roads (urban arterials & transit routes): See the Transportation Element~~

~~CF 1.2.1.3. County Arterial/Transit Route Intersections: See the Transportation Element CF 1.2.2. Category B Capital Facilities~~

~~CF 1.2.2.1. City and Town Arterials/Transit Routes/Their Intersections: As specified in the CFE of the city/town.~~

CFU 1.4.1.2.3. Category C. The LOS standards for Category C capital facilities located within unincorporated areas of the County Capital Facilities shall be as follows (municipalities may establish different LOS standards). The LOS Standards for those capital facilities in Categories y C and D, as defined above, that are required to be found adequate pursuant to RCW 58.17 or required to be found adequate for building permits, shall apply to development permits issued by the County, as applicable.

CFU 1.4.1 1.2.3.1. Sanitary Sewage: Approving authority standard.

CFU 1.4.2 1.2.3.2. Solid Waste Processing: 5.968 pounds per capita per day.

CFU 1.4.3. 1.2.3.3. Corrections and Detention: 0.501.00 beds per 1,000 total County population. Facilities should be built using a 40-year planning period.

CFU 1.4.4. 1.2.3.4. Juvenile Detention: 0.0675 beds per 1,000 total County population.

### ~~CF 1.2.3.5. County Buildings~~

~~CF 1.2.3.5.1. General Administration Buildings: 1,000-square feet per 1,000 County population~~

~~CF 1.2.3.5.2. District Court: 1 courtroom or hearing room per judicial position CF 1.2.3.5.3. Superior Court: 1 courtroom per judicial position~~

~~CF 1.2.3.5.4. Law Enforcement Buildings: 120 sq. ft. per 1,000 people in the unincorporated area~~

CFU 1.4.5. 1.2.3.6. Trails: 0.518.1 miles per 1,000 population in the unincorporated area.

CFU 1.4.6. 1.2.3.7. Community Parks: 3.510.2 acres per 1,000 population in the unincorporated area.

CFU 1.4.7. Before the 2035 Periodic Update, develop a LOS standard for open space and natural assets (such as forests, shorelines, and freshwater systems).

### ~~CF 1.2.3.8. Stormwater Management Systems:~~

CFU 1.4.8. 1.2.3.8.1. Stormwater management systems M must be designed to control both stormwater quantity and quality impacts.

CFU 1.4.8.1 1.2.3.8.2. Surface Water – Habitat – Both areas: Restore in-stream flows, reduce peaks, and maintain clear fish passage.

CFU 1.4.8.2. 1.2.3.8.3. Surface Water – Quality - Both areas: Federal/State water quality standards for receiving waters.

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~~CFU 1.5. 1.2.4.~~ Category D ~~Capital Facilities~~. The LOS standards for Category D capital facilities located within unincorporated areas of the County shall be as follows. The LOS Standards for those capital facilities in Categories D, as defined above, that are required to be found adequate pursuant to RCW 58.17 or required to be found adequate for building permits, shall apply to development permits issued by the County, as applicable. Municipalities may establish different LOS standards.

~~CFU 1.5.1. 1.2.4.1.~~ Fire Protection Services: Fire Protection Class #8 (Washington State Surveying and Rating Bureau).

~~CFU 1.5.2. 1.2.4.2.~~ School District Facilities: The minimum acreage of the site should be five usable acres and one additional usable acre for each one hundred students or portion thereof of projected maximum enrollment plus an additional five usable acres if the school contains any grade above grade six, per WAC 392-342-020. ~~Five usable acres and one additional usable acre per 100 students and for any school housing students above grade six, an additional usable five acres, as specified in WAC 180-26-020; and~~

~~CF 1.2.4.3. Stormwater Management Systems:~~

~~CFU 1.5.3. 1.2.4.3.1.~~ Stormwater management systems ~~M~~ must be designed to control both stormwater quantity and quality impacts.

~~CFU 1.5.3.1. 1.2.4.3.2.~~ Surface Water – Habitat – Both areas: Restore in-stream flows, reduce peaks, and maintain clear fish passage.

~~CFU 1.5.3.2. 1.2.4.3.3.~~ Surface Water – Quality – Both Areas: Federal/State water quality standards for receiving waters.

~~CFU 1.5.4. 1.2.4.4.~~ Domestic Water: Refer to State Department of Health and Island County Code for proof of water availability requirements.

~~CF 1.2.4.5. State Transportation Facilities:~~

~~CFU 1.5.5. 1.2.4.5.1.~~ Regional Facilities: As adopted by Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO) in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

~~CFU 1.5.6. 1.2.4.5.2.~~ State-wide Facilities: As adopted by WSDOT/Legislature.

~~CFU 1.5.7. 1.2.4.5.3.~~ Washington State Ferries: As adopted by WSDOT/Legislature.

~~CF 1.3. Determining Capital Facility Needs. The County shall determine the quantity of capital improvements needed to eliminate existing deficiencies and to meet the needs of future growth. The following methodology shall be used in determining capital facility needs.~~

~~CF 1.3.1. The quantity of capital improvements shall be determined by the following calculation:  
 $Q = (S \times D) - I$ ;~~

~~Where: Q is the quantity of capital improvements needed, S is the standard for LOS,~~

~~D is the demand, such as the population, and I is the inventory of existing facilities.~~

~~CF 1.3.2. The calculation shall be used for existing demand in order to determine existing deficiencies. The calculation shall be used for projected demand in order to determine needs of future growth.~~

## DRAFT Island County 2025 Comprehensive Plan - Capital Facilities & Utilities Element

~~CF 1.3.3. LOS is not the exclusive determinant for capital improvement needs. Repair, remodeling, renovation, and replacement of obsolete or worn-out facilities as determined by the Board of Island County Commissioners, or the construction of capital facilities in excess of the minimum LOS Standards adopted in this Element, may be constructed or acquired at any time as long as the following conditions are met:~~

~~CF 1.3.3.1. The capital improvement does not make financially infeasible any other capital improvement that is needed to achieve or maintain the LOS Standards adopted in this Element, and~~

~~CF 1.3.3.2. The capital improvement does not contradict, limit or substantially change the goals and policies of any Element of this Comprehensive Plan, and~~

~~CF 1.3.3.3. One of the following conditions is met:~~

~~CF 1.3.3.3.1. The excess capacity is an integral part of a capital improvement that is needed to achieve or maintain LOS Standards (i.e., the minimum capacity of a capital project is larger than the capacity required to provide the LOS).~~

~~CF 1.3.3.3.2. The excess capacity provides “economies of scale” making it less expensive than a comparable amount of capacity if acquired at a later date.~~

~~CF 1.3.3.3.3. The asset acquired is land that is environmentally sensitive, or designated by the County as necessary for conservation or recreation.~~

~~CF 1.3.3.3.4. The excess capacity is part of a capital project financed by general obligation bonds approved by referendum.~~

~~CF 1.3.4. The County may provide non-capital alternatives to achieve and maintain the adopted LOS Standards. Non-capital alternatives use programs, strategies or methods other than traditional “brick and mortar” capital standards. Non-capital alternatives include, but are not limited to the following:~~

~~CF 1.3.4.1. Programs that reduce or eliminate the need for the capital facility.~~

~~CF 1.3.4.2. Programs that provide a non-capital substitute for the capital facility (e.g. electronic home monitoring or other sentencing alternatives to incarceration in traditional jail facilities).~~

~~CF 1.3.4.3. Programs that reduce the demand for a capital facility or the service it provides (e.g. telecommuting as an alternative to commuting to work; transit as an alternative to cars; recycling as an alternative to landfills).~~

~~CF 1.3.4.4. Programs that use alternative methods to provide the same LOS (e.g. “natural” drainage in managed flood basins as an alternative to levees and dikes).~~

~~CF 1.3.4.5. Programs that use existing facilities more efficiently to reduce the need for additional facilities (e.g. night court as an alternative to more courtrooms during the day; flextime and evening and night shifts as an alternative to additional space for government staff).~~

~~CF 1.3.5. Any capital improvement that is needed as a result of any of the factors listed in CF 1.3.3 shall be included in the regular schedule of capital improvements contained in both the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). All such capital~~

~~improvements shall be approved in the same manner as the capital improvements that are needed according to the quantitative analysis described in CF 1.3.1.~~

~~CF 1.4. Priorities. The relative priorities among capital improvements projects are as follows:~~

~~**CF 1.4.1. Priorities Among Types of Capital Facilities.** Relative priorities among types of capital facilities (i.e., roads, septage, etc.) should be established by adjusting the LOS Standards and the available revenues until the resulting capital facilities needs become financially feasible. This process should be repeated with each update of the Capital Facilities Element to allow for changes in priorities among types of capital facilities.~~

~~CF 1.4.2. Priorities of Capital Improvements Within a Type of Capital Facility.~~

~~Capital improvements within a type of capital facility are to be evaluated on the following criteria and considered in the order of priority listed below. The County shall establish the final priority of all capital facility improvements using the following criteria as general guidelines. Any revenue source that cannot be used for a high priority facility shall be used beginning with the highest priority for which the revenue can legally be expended.~~

~~CF 1.4.2.1. New capital facilities, and improvements to existing capital facilities, that eliminate public hazards if such hazards were not otherwise eliminated by facility improvements prioritized according to CF 1.4.2.2 of CF 1.4.2.3.~~

~~CF 1.4.2.2. Reconstruction, rehabilitation, remodeling, renovation, or replacement of obsolete or worn-out facilities that contribute to achieving or maintaining LOS adopted in this Element.~~

~~CF 1.4.2.3. New or expanded facilities that reduce or eliminate deficiencies in LOS for existing demand.~~

~~CF 1.4.2.4. Improvements to existing facilities, and new facilities that significantly reduce the operating cost of providing a service or facility, or otherwise mitigate impacts of capital facilities on future operating budgets.~~

~~CF 1.4.2.5. New facilities that exceed the adopted LOS for new growth during the next six fiscal years by either~~

- ~~• Providing excess capital facility capacity that is needed by future growth beyond the next six fiscal years, or~~
- ~~• Providing higher quality capital facilities than are contemplated in the County's normal design criteria for such facilities.~~

~~CF 1.4.2.6. Facilities not described in CF 1.4.2.1 through CF 1.4.2.5, but which the County is obligated to complete, provided that such obligation is evidenced by a written agreement the County executed prior to the adoption of this Element.~~

~~CF 1.4.3. All facilities scheduled for construction or improvement in accordance with this policy shall be evaluated to identify any plans of State or local governments or districts that affect, or will be affected by, the proposed County capital improvement.~~

~~CF 1.4.4. Project evaluation may also involve additional criteria that are unique to each type of capital facility, as described in other Elements of this Comprehensive Plan.~~

## Financial Feasibility

**Goal 2. Ensure the costs of County-owned capital facilities are within the County's funding capacity, and fairly distributed between users and the County *in general*.**

**CFU 2.1. Financial Feasibility.** The estimated costs of all needed capital improvements shall not exceed conservative estimates of revenues from sources that are available to the County pursuant to current statutes, and which have not been rejected by referendum, if a referendum is required to enact a source of revenue. ~~Conservative estimates need not be the most pessimistic estimate, but cannot exceed the most likely estimate.~~

**CFU 2.2. Financing Policies.** Capital improvements shall be financed, and debt shall be managed as follows:

**CFU 2.2.1.** Capital improvements for County enterprise funds (e.g. solid waste) shall be financed by one of the following:

**CFU 2.2.1.1.** Debt to be repaid by user fees and charges and connection or capacity fees for enterprise services.

**CFU 2.2.1.2.** Current assets (e.g. reserves, equity or surpluses, and current revenue, including grants, loans, donations and interlocal agreements).

**CFU 2.2.1.3.** A combination of debt and current assets.

**CFU 2.2.2.** Capital improvements financed by non-enterprise funds shall be financed from either current assets: (i.e., current revenue, fund equity and reserves), or debt, or a combination thereof. Financing decisions shall include consideration for which funding source (current assets, debt, or both) will be most cost effective, consistent with prudent asset and liability management, appropriate to the useful life of the project to be financed, and the most efficient use of the County's ability to borrow funds.

**CFU 2.2.3.** Debt financing shall not be used to provide more capacity than is needed within the schedule of capital improvements for non-enterprise capital facilities ~~unless one of the conditions of CF 2.3.3.3 is met~~. For REET 1, REET 2, and Conservation Futures Funds, the total 6-year planning period obligations to debt service shall not exceed 50% of the total 6-year planning period revenue of the individual funds.

**CFU 2.3. Operating and Maintenance Costs.** Except for open space and habitat areas, the County shall not provide a capital facility, nor shall it accept the provision of a capital facility by others, if the County or other provider is unable to pay for the subsequent annual operating and maintenance costs of the facility. Non-capital alternatives, as provided in ~~CF 1.3.3~~ the CFP, shall be utilized to meet LOS standards if operating and maintenance cost restrictions prohibit capital construction.

**CFU 2.4. Revenues Requiring Referendum (voter approval).** In the event that sources of revenue require voter approval in a local referendum that has not been held, and a referendum is not held, or is held and is not successful, this Comprehensive Plan shall be revised at the next annual amendment to adjust for the lack of such revenues, in any of the following ways:

- Reduce the LOS for one or more capital facilities;

- Increase the use of other sources of revenue;
- Decrease the cost, while retaining the quantity of the facilities that is inherent in the standard for LOS;
- Decrease the demand for and subsequent use of capital facilities; or
- A combination of the above alternatives.

CFU 2.5. *Conditional Permits for Projects Waiting Approved Financing.* All development permits issued by the County which require capital improvements that will be financed by sources of revenue which have not been approved or implemented (such as future debt requiring a referendum) shall be conditioned on the approval or implementation of the indicated revenue sources, or the substitution of a comparable amount of revenue from existing sources.

CFU 2.6. *Funding Shortage.* The Land Use Element will be reassessed if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and to ensure that the Land Use Element, Capital Facilities Element, and financing plan within the Capital Facilities Element are coordinated and consistent.

### **Provide Needed Improvements and Concurrency Management**

**Goal 3. Provide concurrent and adequate capital facilities by constructing needed capital improvements which repair or replace obsolete or worn out facilities, eliminate existing deficiencies, and meet the needs of future development and redevelopment caused by previously issued and new development permits. ~~The County's ability to provide needed improvements will be demonstrated by maintaining a financially feasible schedule of capital improvements in this Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).~~**

~~CF 3.1. Schedule of Capital Improvements. The County shall provide the County-owned capital improvements listed in the CIP. The CIP may be modified as follows:~~

CFU 3.1. Maintain a prioritization system for possible planned capital facilities and services within the CFP.

CFU 3.2. 3.1.1. Utilize the CFP to identify and prioritize necessary capital improvements during the annual update of the CIP. ~~The CIP shall be updated annually.~~

CFU 3.3. Plan for capital facilities necessary to support development based on adopted housing and employment growth targets.

~~CF 3.1.2. Pursuant to the Growth Management Act, amendments to the CIP may only occur during the annual update.~~

~~CF 3.1.2.1. In certain cases, the CIP may be adjusted by budgetary amendment rather than through an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. The conditions under which this may occur include: correction of errors, updates of data, emergencies, reallocation of funds between projects appearing within the adopted plan regardless of year, or modifications concerning costs; revenue sources; acceptance of facilities pursuant to dedications which are consistent with the approved CIP; or the date of construction (so long as it is completed within the 6-year period) of any facility enumerated in the schedule of capital improvements.~~

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~~CF 3.1.3. Any act, or failure to act, that causes any project listed in the CIP for which concurrency is required to be scheduled for completion in a fiscal year later than the fiscal year indicated in the CIP shall be effective only if the act, or failure to act, causing the delay is subject to one of the following:~~

~~CF 3.1.3.1. Projects providing capacity equal to, or greater than the delayed project are accelerated within, or added to the CIP, in order to provide capital facility capacity in the fiscal year at least equal to the capacity scheduled prior to the act which delayed the subject project.~~

~~CF 3.1.3.2. Amendment of the Comprehensive Plan (during the allowable annual amendment) to reduce the adopted LOS Standards for capital facilities until the fiscal year in which the delayed project is scheduled to be completed.~~

~~CF 3.2. Budget Appropriation of CIP. The County shall include in the capital appropriations of its annual budget all the capital improvements projects listed in the CIP for expenditure during the appropriate fiscal year, except that the County may omit from its annual budget any capital improvements for which a binding agreement has been executed with another party to provide the same project in the same fiscal year. The County may also include in the capital appropriations of its annual budget additional capital facility projects that conform to CF 1.3.3 and CF 1.4.2.6.~~

~~CF 3.3. Adequate Capital Facility Concurrency. The county shall condition the issuance of development permits on a determination that there is sufficient capacity of Category A and Category B capital facilities to meet the LOS Standards for existing and approved development and the impacts of the proposed development are concurrent with the proposed development.~~

~~CF 3.3.1. In implementing ordinances, the County should consider setting specific development permit threshold levels depending upon the classification and/or ownership of the transportation facility.~~

~~CF 3.3.2. A finding of concurrency should be a prerequisite of applying for a permit for a non-exempt development activity.~~

~~CF 3.3.3. For the purpose of this policy and the County's land development regulations, "concurrent with" shall be defined as follows and the availability of capital facility capacity to support development concurrent with the impacts of such development shall be determined in accordance with the following:~~

~~CF 3.3.3.1. For all Category A and B capital facilities except arterial roads and transit routes:~~

~~CF 3.3.3.1.1. The necessary facilities and services are in place at the time a development permit is issued; or~~

~~CF 3.3.3.1.2. Development permits are issued subject to the condition that the necessary facilities and services will be in place when the impacts of the development occur; or~~

~~CF 3.3.3.1.3. The necessary facilities are under construction at the time a development permit is issued, and the necessary facilities will be in place when the impacts of the development occur; or~~

~~CF 3.3.3.1.4. The necessary facilities are the subject of a binding executed contract which provides for the actual construction of the required facilities and guarantees that the necessary facilities will be in place when the impacts of the development occur; or~~

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~~CF 3.3.3.1.5. The necessary facilities are guaranteed in an enforceable development agreement that must guarantee that the necessary facilities will be in place when the impacts of the development occur.~~

~~CF 3.3.3.2. For arterial roads and transit routes:~~

~~CF 3.3.3.2.1. Any of the provisions of CF 3.3.3.1; or~~

~~CF 3.3.3.2.2. The County has in place binding financial commitments to complete the necessary capital facilities within six years, provided that:~~

- ~~• The CIP and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) must be financially feasible.~~
- ~~• The County uses a realistic, financially feasible funding system based on revenue sources available according to laws adopted at the time the CIP is adopted.~~
- ~~• Improvements, strategies, or other mitigation measures which will achieve or maintain an operating level at or above the LOS Standard for the affected arterial, transit route, or their intersection are in place, planned, and reasonably funded, and the CIP must demonstrate that the actual construction of the arterial roads and transit routes are scheduled to commence on or before the sixth year of the CIP.~~
- ~~• The CIP must include necessary facilities to maintain the adopted LOS Standards to serve the new development proposed to be permitted and the necessary facilities required to eliminate existing deficiencies.~~
- ~~• The concurrency period may be shorter than 6 years if the impact on the LOS of the facility is severe.~~

~~CF 3.3.3.3. For those capital facilities that are not designated as Category A or B capital facilities and for which the State Subdivision Law (RCW 58.17) requires a finding that appropriate provisions have been made for specified capital facilities, regulations/policies will be enacted to support the “approving authorities” finding and/or action in approving or disapproving the proposal. The check for adequacy logically occurs during the preliminary approval process of a regulated division of land or in the case of a building permit, prior to its issuance.~~

~~**CF 3.3.4.** The County will evaluate and update current development regulations to identify non-exempt development and ensure all non-exempt development demonstrates that there is adequate capacity for Category C and Category D facilities to meet the LOS Standards.~~

~~**CF 3.3.5.** No permit for an identified non-exempt development activity shall be issued by the County without a determination of the concurrency of Category A and Category B capital facilities. Verifying that concurrency exists should be a prerequisite of submittal of a permit for a non-exempt development activity.~~

~~CF 3.3.6. As specified in the implementing regulation, non-exempt development permits issued pursuant to CF 3.3.4 and CF 3.3.5 shall be subject to the following requirements:~~

~~CF 3.3.6.1. For the following capital facilities, the capacity must meet the LOS Standards prior to the issuance of the building permit:~~

- ~~• Domestic water~~

- ~~• Sanitary sewer~~
- ~~• Surface water~~

~~CF 3.3.6.2. For the following capital facilities, the capacity must be available within the area of impacts as determined by a traffic report/study at the time of development, as defined in the implementing ordinance, or be the subject of a specific financial commitment, strategies, or mitigation to meet the standards within 6 years of the issuance of the final development permit:~~

- ~~• County Arterial roads~~
- ~~• County Transit routes~~
- ~~• State Route 20~~
- ~~• State Route 525~~

~~CF 3.3.6.3. The determination that facility capacity is available to meet the LOS Standards shall apply only to specific uses, densities, and intensities based on information provided by the applicant and included in the development permit.~~

~~CF 3.3.6.4. The determination that facility capacity is available to meet the LOS Standards shall be valid for the same period of time as the underlying development permit, including any extensions of the underlying development permit. If the underlying development permit does not have an expiration date, the capacity shall be valid for a period not to exceed two (2) years.~~

~~CF 3.3.6.5. The determination that facility capacity is available to meet the LOS Standards shall be binding on the County.~~

~~CF 3.3.6.6. The LOS Standards of Category A and Category B capital facilities shall be applied to the issuance of development permits, as defined in the implementing ordinance, on geographical basis.~~

~~CF 3.3.6.7. Capital facilities shall achieve and maintain the LOS Standards within the service area as determined by a concurrency management process. No development permit application for a non-exempt development activity, as defined in the implementing ordinance, may be submitted if the LOS Standards are not achieved and maintained for the following capital facilities and assigned service areas:~~

~~CF 3.3.6.7.1. County arterials/transit routes/intersection—the service area includes those County arterials/county transit routes and their intersections impacted by the proposed development as determined by a traffic report/study submitted in compliance with the requirements of the County concurrency management program.~~

~~CF 3.3.6.8. No further determination of capacity for the subject property shall be required prior to the expiration of the determination of capacity for the development permit provided that the capacity has been reserved for the development permit. The subject property may extend the reservation of capacity to subsequent development permits for the same property. Any change in the density, intensity, or land use that requires additional capital facilities or capacity is subject to review and approval or denial by the County.~~

~~CF 3.3.6.9. The check for adequacy shall be performed only for certain capital facilities that are designated herein as Category C or D capital facilities and for which the State Subdivision Law~~

~~(RCW 58.17) requires a finding that appropriate provisions have been made for the specified capital facility prior to preliminary approval of the development activity.~~

- ~~• Drainage ways~~
- ~~• County parks~~
- ~~• Potable water supplies~~
- ~~• Sanitary wastes~~
- ~~• School sites~~
- ~~• Streets and roads~~
- ~~• Transit stops~~

~~CF 3.3.7. The County should evaluate development regulations as they relate to vested rights and ensure vested rights provisions are consistent with state statutes and recent Washington case law.~~

~~CFU 3.43.3.8. Island County will continually evaluate and seek opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of County established drainage systems and when possible, invest in additional drainage infrastructure to mitigate flooding within the County.~~

~~[CFU 3.5. Follow the established requirements for concurrency as defined in WAC 365-196-840.](#)~~

~~[CFU 3.5.1. Approve development permits only when adequate capacity of facilities is reasonably available when concurrency is required per ICC 11.04, 11.05, and 14.02A.](#)~~

### ~~**Coordination and Consistency with Other Plans and Policies**~~

~~**Goal 4. Implement the Capital Facilities Element in a manner that coordinates and is consistent with the plans and policies of other Elements of the Island County Comprehensive Plan, the Countywide Planning Policies (CWPP), and the Growth Management Act of the State of Washington. Where possible, the Capital Facilities Element will also coordinate and be consistent with the plans and policies of other regional entities, adjacent counties, and municipalities.**~~

~~CF 4.1. Land Development. Manage the land development process to ensure that all development receives capital facility LOS equal to, or greater than the standards adopted in CF 1.2 by implementing the CIP and projects contained in the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP), and by using the fiscal resources provided for in Goal 2 and its supporting policies.~~

~~CF 4.1.1. All Category A and Category C capital facility improvements shall be consistent with the goals and policies of other Elements of this Comprehensive Plan. The location and LOS provided by projects in the CIP shall maintain adopted LOS Standards for existing and future development in a manner and location consistent with the Land Use Element of this Comprehensive Plan.~~

~~CF 4.1.2. The County shall integrate its land use planning and decisions with its planning and decisions for capital facility improvements by developing, adopting, and using the programs listed in the Goal 6.~~

~~CF 4.1.3. The land development regulations shall be amended to the extent permissible under State law to expedite land use decisions for County and non-County capital facility projects included in adopted CIP reviewed by the County. Such regulatory amendments will help ensure~~

~~that capital facilities are provided in a timely, predictable, and cost effective manner and encourage the development of CIP by special purpose districts.~~

~~CF 4.2. CWPP Implementation. Implementation of the Capital Facilities Element shall be consistent with the requirements of adopted CWPP.~~

~~CF 4.2.1. The County will evaluate capital facilities of State or Regional significance as required by CWPP and State statute.~~

~~CF 4.3. Sewer service may not be extended outside of an Urban Growth Area unless consistent with the exemptions listed in CWPP 3.6.1.~~

### Implementation Programs

~~**Goal 5. — Implement the following programs by the effective date as adopted by the County, to ensure that the goals and policies established in the Capital Facilities Element will be achieved or exceeded and that the necessary capital improvements will be constructed. Each implementation program will be adopted by ordinance as appropriate for each implementation program.**~~

~~CF 5.1. Review of Applications for Development Permits. The County shall maintain its land development regulations to provide for a system of review of various classes of applications for development permits which applications, if granted, would impact the LOS of Category A and Category B capital facilities or for which a finding that appropriate provisions must be made pursuant to the State Subdivision Law (RCW 58.17). Such system of review shall assure that no final development permit, as defined in the implementing ordinance, shall be issued which results in a reduction in the LOS below the standards adopted in CF 1.2.1 and CF 1.2.2 for Category A and Category B capital facilities.~~

~~CF 5.2. The land development regulations shall include, at a minimum, the provisions of CF 3.3 in determining whether a development permit can be issued. These regulations may also establish a class or classes of development that are exempt from concurrency requirements.~~

~~CF 5.2.1. The land development regulations shall also address the circumstances under which capital facilities may be provided by applicants for development permits. Applicants for development permits may offer to provide capital facilities at the applicant's own expense in order to ensure sufficient capacity of Category A and Category B capital facilities. Development permits may be issued subject to the provision of capital facilities by the applicant subject to the following requirements:~~

~~CF 5.2.1.1. The County and the applicant enter into an enforceable development agreement which shall provide, at a minimum, a schedule for construction of the Category A and/or Category B capital facilities and mechanisms for monitoring to ensure that the capital facilities are completed concurrent with the impacts of the development, or the development will not be allowed to proceed.~~

~~CF 5.2.1.2. The capital facilities to be provided by the applicant are contained in the CIP and will achieve and maintain the adopted LOS Standards concurrent with the impacts of development.~~

~~CF 5.3. Annual Budget. The annual budget shall include in its capital appropriations all projects in the CIP that are planned for expenditure during the subsequent fiscal year. Individual Conservation Futures projects will be identified annually consistent with I.C.C. 3.22A and~~

~~miscellaneous courthouse, park, and solid waste improvements may or may not be specifically identified in the annual budget.~~

~~CF 5.4. Update of Capital Facilities Plan (CFP). The CFP shall be reviewed and updated annually. The update shall include:~~

- ~~• Review of population projections~~
- ~~• Update of inventory of capital facilities~~
- ~~• Update of capital facilities requirements analysis (actual LOS compared to adopted standards)~~
- ~~• Update of revenue forecasts~~
- ~~• Revision and development of the CIP for the next six fiscal years~~
- ~~• Amendments to the CFP, including amendments to LOS Standards, capital projects, and the financing plan sources of revenue.~~

~~CF 5.5. Concurrency Implementation and Monitoring System. The county shall establish and maintain Concurrency Implementation and Monitoring Systems. The systems shall consist of the following components:~~

~~CF 5.5.1. Annual Report on the Capacity and LOS of Capital Facilities for which concurrency is required. The County should create an annual report that summarizes the actual capacity of capital facilities compared to the LOS Standards adopted in CF 1.2.1 and CF 1.2.2, and forecast the capacity of capital facilities for the six succeeding fiscal years. The forecast shall be based on the most recently updated CIP. The annual report shall provide the initial determination of the capacity and LOS of capital facilities for the purpose of issuing development permits during the 12 months following completion of the annual report.~~

~~CF 5.5.2. Capital Facility Capacity Review of Development Applications. The county shall use the procedures specified above, to enforce the requirements of CF 3.3 at the time each application for development in the unincorporated area is reviewed. Reviews of applications for development within municipal boundaries will be conducted according to the terms of interlocal agreements between the county and each city/town. Records shall be maintained during each fiscal year to indicate the cumulative impacts of all development permits approved during the fiscal year to date on the capacity of capital facilities as set forth in the most recent annual report on capacity and LOS of capital facilities.~~

~~CF 5.5.3. Review of Changes to Planned Capacity of Capital Facilities. The County shall review each amendment to this Capital Facilities Element, in particular any changes in LOS Standards and changes in the CIP, in order to enforce the requirements of CF 3.1.3.~~

~~CF 5.5.4. Concurrency Implementation Strategies. The County shall annually review the concurrency implementation strategies that are developed to implement CF 3.3 of this Capital Facilities Element. Such strategies may include, but are not limited to, the following:~~

~~CF 5.5.4.1. LOS Standards may be phased to reflect the County's financial ability to increase capital facility capacity, and resulting LOS, from year to year. LOS Standards may be phased to~~

~~specific fiscal years in order to provide clear, unambiguous standards for issuance of development permits. Phased standards, if any, will appear in CF 1.2.~~

~~CF 5.5.4.2. LOS Standards may be applied according to the timing of the impacts of development on capital facilities. Final development permits which impact capital facilities in a matter of months are issued subject to the availability of capital facilities prior to the issuance of the building permit (except roads and transit which must be available within a maximum of 6 years of the final development permit, as defined in the implementing ordinance).~~

~~CF 5.6. Evaluation Reports. Evaluation reports will address the implementation of the goals and policies of the Capital Facilities Element. The monitoring procedures necessary to enable the completion of evaluation include:~~

- ~~• Review of Annual Reports of the Concurrency Implementation and Monitoring System.~~
- ~~• Review of Annual Updates of this Capital Facilities Plan, including updated supporting documents.~~

~~CF 5.7. Contractor Performance System. The County will develop a system of monitoring the actual performance of contractors who design or construct capital facilities for the County. The monitoring system shall track such items as actual vs. planned time schedule, and actual vs. bid cost. The performance of contractors shall be considered when the County awards contracts for capital facilities.~~

### **Essential Public Facilities**

**Goal 4.6. Provide for the siting of essential public facilities.**

CFU 4.1. 6.1. Provision shall be made in the comprehensive plan and development regulations for siting important and essential public or quasi-public facilities of County or State-wide significance. Examples include, but are not limited to, airports, state education facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and public and private utilities.

CFU 4.2. 6.2. Siting requirements will be important factors in determining whether essential public facilities will be located in urban or in rural areas.

CFU 4.2.1. 6.2.1. Siting requirements for County facilities within UGAs will be jointly and cooperatively established with the municipalities.

CFU 4.3. 6.3. Essential public facilities should not be located in Resource Lands and Critical Areas, as defined by Chapter 17.02B ICC, unless there is a demonstrated need, and no alternative siting options are reasonable/feasible.

~~CF 6.3.1. Siting of essential Public Facilities within Resource and Critical Lands must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plans of the County and Municipalities and must be compatible with adjacent land use and consistent with development regulations adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A.~~

CFU 4.4. 6.4. Essential public facilities located outside of Urban Growth Areas should be self-contained and designed in a manner that will not promote urban sprawl. Utility and service considerations must be incorporated into site planning and development. Essential public facilities

~~sited outside of urban growth areas must be self-supporting and not require the extension of urban services and facilities.~~

~~CFU 4.5. 6-5.~~ The siting of major energy facilities, including throughput transmission facilities, shall not be considered essential public facilities and therefore, comprehensive plans, development regulations, and local policies will apply to the siting of such facilities.

~~CFU 4.6. 6-6.~~ Essential public facilities shall not be sited in the Commercial Agriculture land use zone.

CFU 4.7. Essential public facilities such as schools and libraries that generate substantial travel demand should first be considered in UGAs and then, along or near major transportation corridors and public transportation routes.

CFU 4.8. Site and design public facilities with consideration of current and projected climate-related hazards, including flooding, sea level rise, and extreme weather events, to enhance community resilience, reduce long-term risks, and protect public investment.

CFU 4.9. Encourage easy to access facilities for reuse, recycling, and composting.

~~CF 6.7 No new essential public facilities should be sited within the AICUZ noise contours.~~

### Public Services

**Goal 5-7. Coordinate the provision of public services, as defined in WAC 365-196-200(16), to align with emergency, health, and other relevant plans. Ensure that those public services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current LOS below locally established minimum standards.**

~~CFU 5.1. 7-1.~~ ~~Promote~~ Implement the adopted Comprehensive Emergency ~~Response~~ Management Plan. The objective is to avoid duplication, foster rapid efficient communication and insure prompt delivery of emergency services.

~~CFU 5.2. 7-2.~~ Promote the development of a comprehensive social and health service delivery program focusing on the identification of valid social and health needs and implementation of action programs.

~~CFU 5.3. 7-3.~~ Coordinate and plan for the provision of public services, and their related facilities, in the most cost effective manner incorporating both the public and private sector.

### Goal 6. Provide adequate public facilities to UGAs.

CFU 6.1. Require urban-level sanitary sewer or equivalent service in all UGAs.

CFU 6.1.1. Establish regulations for development that require sewer connectivity between UGA parcels or tracts.

CFU 6.1.2. Utilize large on-site sewage systems (LOSS), community septic systems, or individual on-site sewage systems combined with the installation of dry lines as an interim means to achieve urban densities within the UGA until such time sanitary sewer service is available.

CFU 6.1.3. In accordance with Island County Health and Washington State requirements, require connection to a public sewer system for new or extensively remodeled development located within 200 feet of a public sewer system.

CFU 6.1.5. Pursue wastewater solutions for the Freeland Non-Municipal Urban Growth Area (NMUGA).

CFU 6.1.4. In the Freeland NMUGA, consider the use of alternative sewage treatment techniques in areas that contain a significant concentration of critical areas, will be impacted by extreme rain and coastal flooding, or which have topographic challenges, discharge constraints, or critical aquifer recharge areas.

CFU 6.2. Research tools and methods for capital facilities and amenities to meet or exceed the baseline goals needed to address growth needs.

CFU 6.3. Prioritize Island County expenditures for public services and capital facilities in UGAs as an incentive to encourage development in urban areas.

CFU 6.4. Negotiate with municipalities and other providers of public facilities to coordinate planning for and development of UGAs.

CFU 6.4.1. The County and all municipalities shall conduct joint planning of associated UGAs to identify methods, costs, and funds to extend urban services and achieve urban densities or to define alternative UGA boundaries.

CFU 6.5. The coordination of capital improvements and land development must be accessible to all communities, especially those that have been historically underserved and marginalized, and provide clear, transparent, and timely information for impacted parties.

CFU 6.6. ~~CF 4.2.2.~~ The County will coordinate with municipalities and use its Capital Facilities Element to support the ~~CWPPs~~ pertaining to serving ~~Urban Growth Areas~~ UGAs with urban services.

## ~~Utilities Goals & Policies~~

~~Goal 1. Facilitate the provision of utilities at levels of service and rates appropriate to accommodate planned development within Island County and its incorporated areas.~~

~~U 1.1. Encourage communication among the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), and utilities regulated by the WUTC, regarding the requirements of the Growth Management Act, especially the requirement that service be provided concurrently with or in advance of demand.~~

~~U 1.2. Planning for utilities is the primary responsibility of the utility providers and must be coordinated with the County Comprehensive Plan.~~

**Goal 7.2. Coordinate with utility providers including water, wastewater, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, transportation systems, etc. to ensure environmentally sensitive, equitable, reliable, and affordable access to utilities and facilities for all County residents. ~~Ensure that utility service is provided in a manner that is environmentally~~**

~~sensitive, safe, reliable, economical, and aesthetically compatible with surrounding land uses.~~

CFU 7.1.2-4. When reasonable and feasible, promote the co-location of public and/or private utility distribution facilities. Coordinate construction timing to minimize disruptions to the public and disturbances to the environment and archaeological resources, and to reduce the cost to the public for utility delivery.

CFU 7.2.2-2. Use utility corridors for shared uses, such as trails, open space, wildlife corridors, and recreation.

CFU 7.3. Buffer trees away from utility lines and transportation corridors.

CFU 7.4.2-3. Provide timely and effective notification to utility providers of road construction, and of maintenance and upgrades of existing roads to facilitate coordination of public and private utility trenching activities, where possible.

CFU 7.5.2-4. Encourage efficient, cost-effective, and reliable utility service by ensuring that land will be made available for the locations of utility lines, including location within public transportation corridors, consistent with franchise terms and conditions including the possible payment of annual fees.

CFU 7.6.2-5. Coordinate land use and facility planning to allow eventual siting and construction of distribution lines within rights-of-way which are being dedicated or within roads which are being constructed or reconstructed.

CFU 7.7.2-6. New electrical and telecommunication distribution lines should be installed underground where feasible to increase climate resilience. Promote underground placement of existing distribution lines through such tools as local improvement districts. Encourage system design practices intended to minimize the number and duration of interruptions to customer service, including underground utility lines where practical.

CFU 7.7.1. Implement “Dig Once” policies to lay conduit for all infrastructure and coordinate with roadwork to ensure tax dollars are only spent once.

~~U 2.7. Facilitate and encourage conservation of resources to delay the need for additional utility facilities.~~

CFU 7.9.2-8. New utility facilities should be located outside of critical areas to minimize disturbance. Once in place, continuing maintenance of utility facilities may disturb sensitive areas. Utility facilities should therefore be located outside such sensitive areas.

CFU 7.10.2-9. While harmful biological effects due to proximity to utility facilities such as electrical transmission lines or cellular tower sites have not been conclusively demonstrated, significant concerns remain, and study of the issues is ongoing. To address these environmental and health concerns, the County and affected utilities should:

CFU 7.10.1.2-9.1. Promote siting of facilities with respect for climate-related hazards and environmental, watershed, and local ecological resources, ~~natural features, sensitive areas, and water quality and quantity.~~

CFU 7.10.2-2-9.2. Monitor research into the health effects from utility facilities.

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CFU 7.10.3 ~~2.9.3~~. Adopt standards as necessary to protect the public from known health hazards.

CFU 7.10.4 ~~2.10~~. Consider changes to regulations and policies as appropriate to allow new utility technologies.

CFU 7.11 ~~4.2~~. Planning for utilities is the primary responsibility of the utility providers and must be ~~coordinated~~ consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan.

CFU 7.12. Incentivize enhancement, repairs, and replacements of obsolete or worn-out facilities to eliminate existing gaps or deficiencies in utility service and quality to meet the needs of current and future development.

CFU 7.13. Incentivize repair and replacement of utilities to improve utility resilience to climate impacts, prioritizing improvements in areas that are disproportionately affected by climate change.

CFU 7.14. Explore the creation of public utility districts (PUDs) to serve the community with water and/or wastewater.

CFU 7.15 ~~1.1~~. Encourage communication among the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), and utilities regulated by the WUTC, regarding the requirements of the Growth Management Act, especially the requirement that service be provided concurrently with or in advance of demand.

~~Goal 3. Process permits and approvals for utility facilities in a fair and timely manner, and in accordance with predictable development regulations.~~

~~U 3.1. Implement timely, predictable, and reasonable permit processes for utility service.~~

~~U 3.2. Review and amend existing regulations as necessary to allow maintenance, repair, installation and replacement of utilities, where consistent with the overall goals of this Comprehensive Plan.~~

~~U 3.3. Work with utility providers to enhance County and private Geographic Information Systems (GIS) development to help increase efficiency in permit processes.~~

~~U 3.4. Exercise flexibility in reviewing proposals using innovative new technologies.~~

~~Goal 4. Improve accessibility to government through interactive audio/visual communication, considering the geography of Island County.~~

~~Goal 5. Manage and protect ground water withdrawals and provide for resource protection through a common goal of non-degradation for existing and future residents of Island County.~~

~~U 5.1. Water utilities must work with the Island County Health Department, and Washington Departments of Health and Ecology to make best use of available data and new technology.~~

~~U 5.2. When converting land to a use that requires water availability, refer to policy NR-12.2 in the Natural Resources Element.~~

**Goal 86. Plan and manage groundwater resources using the best available science to protect the quantity and quality and ensure their sustainable use for the benefit of current and future residents. ~~Manage water systems in a way that protects the quantity and quality of groundwater resources for existing and future residents of Island County.~~**

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CFU 8.16.1. Provide water utilities with incentive programs to encourage participation in water conservation and aquifer recharge area protection programs.

~~CFU 8.26.2.~~ Continue to participate with State agencies and with the public in developing, updating, and implementing tools to improve management of Island County's limited groundwater resources, such as the Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP), the Groundwater Management Program, and the Water Resource Management Plan.

~~CFU 8.36.3.~~ Development must not be allowed to outstrip known water supplies. Consideration shall be given to the availability, susceptibility, and vulnerability of known groundwater resources when siting new development and making land use decisions, per Chapter 8.09 ICC and related policies.

~~U 6.4. Water utilities must follow NR 7.1.2 in the Natural Resources Element.~~

~~U 6.5. Continue to provide for adequate groundwater analysis, commensurate to the scale and nature of the proposed development.~~

~~U 6.6. Water utilities must follow NR 9.1 in the Natural Resources Element.~~

CFU 8.4. New development shall connect to a public water system if located within the boundaries of a public water system.

CFU 8.5. Enact regulations to require that if a developed parcel needs to replace its well, the parcel shall be connected to a public water system if the parcel is located within water system boundaries.

CFU 8.6. Encourage the consolidation of smaller water systems into larger water districts to improve resiliency and long-term viability.

CFU 8.77.1 Island County will prohibit service overlaps for the expansion of existing water systems and the formation of new water systems per the CWSP.

CFU 8.87.2 New or expanding water systems will be required to meter and document report water usage at the source and impose conservation strategies and implementation measures per the CWSP.

~~**Goal 7. Ensure that Island County plans for water systems in a manner that utilizes the best available information regarding water resources, so that the resource will be preserved for current and future use.**~~

~~U 7.1. Implement the existing Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP) to effectively guide the development, expansion, combination, and coordination of water systems in the County.~~

~~U 7.2. Island County will prohibit service overlaps for the expansion of existing water systems and the formation of new water systems per the CWSP.~~

~~U 7.3. New water systems will be required to meter and document water usage at the source and impose conservation strategies and implementation measures per the CWSP.~~

~~U 7.4. Water systems will be encouraged to upgrade facilities to provide adequate water distribution, pressure, storage, and treatment for domestic use and fire protection.~~

~~U 7.5. Provide water conservation education to water utilities.~~

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~~U 7.6. Development will be restricted unless adequate water supplies are available per ICC 8.09 and related policies.~~

~~U 7.7. Prior to any final plat approval, water availability must be reviewed and approved in accordance with ICC 8.09 and other related water policies.~~

~~U 7.8. Reuse of water, recharge of aquifers, and alternative storage systems will be encouraged in water system designs.~~

~~U 7.9. Incentives will be offered for the retrofit of existing fixtures with water conservation fixtures.~~

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## ELEMENT 11 – CLIMATE ELEMENT

### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires local comprehensive plans to have a Climate Resilience Element. Climate elements must maximize economic, environmental, and social co-benefits and prioritize environmental justice to avoid worsening environmental health disparities. A climate element can take the form of a stand-alone comprehensive plan element or be integrated into several elements such as housing, transportation, and land use.

#### 11.1.1 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS

Climate related goals, policies, and strategies are found throughout the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Goals and policies specifically related to climate change and resiliency, rather than incidentally related, appear in this element.

### 11.2 RESILIENCE SUB-ELEMENT

#### 11.2.1 REQUIREMENTS

As required by state law the Resilience Sub-Element must include but is not limited to:

- Address natural hazards created or aggravated by climate change, including sea level rise, landslides, flooding, drought, heat, smoke, wildfire, and other effects of changes to temperature and precipitation patterns; and
- Identify, protect, and enhance natural areas to foster climate resilience, as well as areas of vital habitat for safe species migration; and
- Identify, protect, and enhance community resilience to climate impacts, including social, economic, and built-environment factors, which support adaptation to climate impacts consistent with environmental justice.

#### 11.2.2 RESILIENCE

To identify, protect, and enhance natural areas and community resilience, Island County identified over 170 assets, including administrative and civic buildings, regional county & state parks, historic sites, ferry terminals, bridge, farms, natural preserves, waste handling facilities, water systems (as an asset versus individual water systems), fiber optic network, shorelines, electrical distribution, and other critical facilities. These assets have been organized into specific community sectors. Island County explored hazards, climate indicators, and climate impacts relevant to the identified assets and sectors.

**TABLE 11.1 COMMUNITY ASSETS BY SECTOR**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Assets</b>
Agriculture & Food Systems	Hobby farms, commercial farms, grazing land, vineyards, dairy, and food production
Buildings & Energy	Power transmission lines, natural gas pipelines, government buildings, schools, churches and places of worship, libraries, wharfs, and marinas

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Cultural Resources	Historic sites and buildings, archeological resources, and cemeteries
Economic Development	Tourism, natural resources (shellfish), state & county parks, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, fiber optic communications
Ecosystems	Shorelines, forests, grasslands, estuaries, and wetlands
Emergency Management	Fire stations, police stations, and emergency shelters
Health & Well-being	Naval Health Clinic, Whidbey Health Medical Center, clinics, senior living, and community centers
Transportation	Deception Pass Bridge, highways, Clinton Ferry Terminal, Coupeville Ferry Terminal, trails, and park & rides
Waste Management	Transfer stations, Coupeville Solid Waste Complex (hazardous waste), City of Oak Harbor, Langley, and Coupeville Wastewater Treatment Plants, septic systems, and RV dump stations
Water Resources	City of Anacortes Water Treatment Plant (surface water from the Skagit River serving Oak Harbor and Naval Air Station), Island County Sole Source Aquifer (serving individual wells, 294 Class A, and 586 Class B water systems)
Zoning & Development	Military, state & county parks, rural, multifamily, commercial, industrial, municipality (UGA), water

Hazards, climate indicators, and climate impacts specific to Island County were identified for each sector utilizing the Climate Mapping for a Resilient Washington (“CMRW”) webtool, the Coastal Hazard Resiliency Network Sea-level tool, and the USGS groundwater database. Priority climate hazards were identified based on the County’s existing plans and anecdotal information. The existing plans include the Comprehensive Plan, Shoreline Master Program, 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan, and Countywide Planning Policies. The climate hazards most significant to consider in the County are listed below.

### Priority Climate Hazards

- Drought
- Extreme Precipitation
- Flooding
- Reduced Snowpack
- Sea Level Rise

Assets most vulnerable to these priority climate hazards are residences, agricultural farms, estuaries and wetlands, forests, industrial/manufacturing businesses, nature preserves, fire stations, roadways & bridges, wastewater treatment facilities, water supply infrastructure, schools, and telecommunication-fiber optic infrastructure.

Lower income households and people of color in Oak Harbor and with mobility difficulties are vulnerable to climate hazards. Areas in northeastern Camano Island and southeastern Whidbey Island have high exposure to sea-level rise, heat, and poor air quality and will have increased mortality rates due to natural hazard injuries and fatalities.

Drought presents a significant risk for Island County due to approximately 70 percent of the population's reliance on drinking water from various class A and class B water systems across the County. The Climate Policy Advisory Team, along with the public and staff, identified water systems as a primary concern. Additionally, rising sea levels pose a threat by causing property damage and affecting the sole source aquifer these water systems depend on.

### **11.3 RESILIENCY GOALS AND POLICIES**

The goals and policies in this element, and discussed throughout the Comprehensive Plan, relating to climate and resiliency were established to address priority hazards identified and preserve and enhance natural areas and community resilience. Each goal identified below is intended to help Island County improve community resilience by sector.

Integrated resiliency goals and policies are distributed throughout the Comprehensive Plan in addition to the resiliency policies included below.

#### **11.3.1 CLIMATE RESILIENCE SUB-ELEMENT GOALS & POLICIES**

The following are the goals and associated policies for each goal. The policies are provided below each goal in a bulleted list.

- Goal 1    Increase climate literacy among general population. Provide information to the general public to increase the level of knowledge across the County for people to be more engaged.
  - CL 1.1    Provide the Best Available Science (BAS) to understand the essential principles of Earth's climate, geological, and water systems and the options to address climate change.
  - CL 1.2    Promote sources for credible information about climate change and make it accessible and keep it updated.
  - CL 1.3    Communicate about climate change in accurate and effective ways.
  - CL 1.4    All appropriate levels of leadership will make informed decisions related to climate change.
  - CL 1.5    Educate permit applicants on the climate associated risks with new development or changes to existing development.
  
- Goal 2    Protect and restore undeveloped coastal ecosystems to increase the resilience of species and habitats to climate change.
  - CL 2.1    Utilize the Best Available Science in respect to sea-level rise for coastal and nearshore habitat restoration projects.
  - CL 2.2    Identify, protect, and restore aquatic and shoreline ecosystem services including submerged aquatic vegetation, saltwater marshes, feeder bluffs, accretion beaches.

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- Goal 3 Establish land use patterns that increase the resilience of the built environment, ecosystems, and communities to climate change.
- CL 3.1 Direct new development into areas where exposure to climate hazards (drought, flooding, and heat) is low.
  - CL 3.2 Conduct an environmental justice audit, including people living on shorelines and in heat sensitive areas, prior to creating new zoning designations or rezoning.
  - CL 3.3 Identify and implement strategies to increase the resilience of the shoreline environment to sea-level rise and other climate hazards, while also protecting shoreline and coastal wetland ecological functions, allowing water-dependent uses, and providing public access.
  - CL 3.4 Identify and protect agricultural and forested lands, including wildlife corridors, that provide climate resilience benefits from being converted to more developed land use types.
  - CL 3.5 Prohibit the expansion of polluting industries in overburdened communities via local zoning and development regulations.
- Goal 4 Protect and preserve water quality and quantity from drought, extreme heat, and other hazards exacerbated by climate change.
- CL 4.1 Every 5 years, review and, if necessary, update the Coordinated Water System Plan to evaluate the long term financial and water resource sustainability of class A and B water systems and develop strategies for long term sustainability of those water systems in light of growth, climate change and operability.
  - CL 4.2 Utilize water conservation methods and technologies in development of irrigation infrastructure within parks and recreation areas to foster climate resilience.
  - CL 4.3 Require low-impact development best management practices, where feasible, for the development and incentivizing of green infrastructure to address increased storm intensities and stormwater runoff.
  - CL 4.4 Manage water resources and sole source aquifer sustainably in the face of climate change through smart irrigation, stormwater management, preventative maintenance, water conservation and wastewater reuse, plant selection, and landscape management.
  - CL 4.5 Encourage onsite gray water reuse systems to reduce water demand in private-sector commercial and residential buildings.

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- CL 4.6 Evaluate the long-term adequacy of stormwater infrastructure to ensure that changes in hydrological patterns (e.g., increases in flooding frequency) can be anticipated and managed effectively.
  - CL 4.7 Develop and implement a comprehensive drought resilience strategy that factors in projected climate impacts and sets action levels for different drought stages.
  - CL 4.8 Develop education programs on hazards associated with the use and disposal of chemicals including chemicals of emerging concern, pesticides, herbicides and petroleum products.
- Goal 5 Design and improve the local transportation system — including infrastructure, routes, and travel modes — so that it can withstand and recover quickly from the impacts of extreme weather events and other hazards exacerbated by climate change.
- CL 5.1 Design and site new and expanded roads to have the least possible adverse effect on the shoreline, account for sea-level rise projections, not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological functions, or adversely impact existing or planned water-oriented uses, public access, and habitat restoration and enhancement projects.
  - CL 5.2 Improve street connectivity and walkability, including trails, to serve as potential evacuation routes.
  - CL 5.3 Incorporate hydrologic climate impacts into the design of water-crossing structures (i.e., climate-smart culverts and bridges) for fish passage and habitat quality.
  - CL 5.4 Reduce stormwater impacts from transportation and development through watershed planning, redevelopment and retrofit projects, and low-impact development.
  - CL 5.5 Enhance the resilience of parks and recreational trails by assessing and addressing climate hazards and impacts.
- Goal 6 Ensure the protection and restoration of streams, riparian zones, estuaries, wetlands, and to achieve healthy watersheds that are resilient to climate change.
- CL 6.1 Implement actions identified in restoration and salmon recovery plans to improve the climate resilience of streams and riparian zones.
  - CL 6.2 Increase the climate resilience of native fish species and aquatic ecosystems by reducing the threat of aquatic invasive species (e.g., fish, plants, invertebrates).

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- CL 6.3 Increase aquatic habitat resilience to low summer flows by increasing water residence time, storing water on the landscape, conserving water, protecting groundwater, providing shade, and protecting water quality.
  - CL 6.4 Protect and restore wetlands and corridors between wetlands to provide biological and hydrological connectivity that fosters resilience to flooding and other climate impacts.
- Goal 7 Enhance emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts to mitigate risks and impacts associated with extreme weather and other hazards worsened by climate change.
- CL 7.1 Support enhanced data collection for climate hazard events (extreme heat, flooding, etc.) of all magnitudes to provide a fuller understanding of the community's hazard characteristics — including those affected by climate change.
  - CL 7.2 Support the implementation and ongoing updates of the County's Community Wildfire Protection plan.
  - CL 7.3 Develop resilience hubs — community-serving facilities that are designed to support residents, coordinate communication, and distribute resources during emergencies.
  - CL 7.4 Factor climate impacts into the planning of operations and coordination of preparedness, response, and recovery activities among first-responders and partners, including public health, law enforcement, fire, school, and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel.
  - CL 7.5 Integrate a climate impacts risk assessment and policies into the local hazard mitigation plan.
  - CL 7.6 Incorporate sea-level rise information, along with tsunami hazard mapping, into critical area delineation for siting critical infrastructure, land-use planning, conservation, and emergency management.
  - CL 7.7 Reduce wildfire risk by enforcing burn bans.
  - CL 7.8 Designate alternative travel routes for critical transportation corridors for evacuation routes.
  - CL 7.9 Enhance resilience by supporting upgrades to airport facilities to serve as critical infrastructure for emergency response, evacuation, and supply distribution during extreme weather events or other climate-related disasters.
- Goal 8 Utilize local conservation districts to ensure that the local agricultural economy — including food and materials producers, distributors, and sellers — is resilient to the impacts of extreme weather and other natural hazards and resources are

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coordinated, funded, and staffed to support farmers in making informed business decisions in a changing climate.

- CL 8.1 Expand local food security and the food-related economy to address climate impacts and increase access to healthy and affordable foods.
- CL 8.2 Promote conservation district programs to educate the local agricultural sectors on methods to adapt to changing climate conditions and capitalize on sustainable business opportunities.
- CL 8.3 Utilize conservation districts to promote environmentally sustainable water-storage and farming practices that help agricultural producers adapt to changing conditions and reduce production losses while balancing ecosystem needs.
- CL 8.4 Direct citizens to technical assistance from conservation programs to meet increasing demands and continued viability around climate adaptation within the agricultural sector.
- CL 8.5 Support, and direct citizens to, conservation programs and resources that provide information and direct financial assistance to farmers to implement best management practices that address impacts of climate change.

Goal 9 Ensure that buildings and infrastructure are sited, designed, built, and updated sustainably to reduce environmental impacts and remain resilient to extreme weather and other hazards worsened by climate change.

- CL 9.1 Require the design and construction of commercial and residential buildings and their surrounding sites to reduce and treat stormwater runoff and pollution.
- CL 9.2 Encourage the use of lower-carbon building materials in new construction and building retrofits to reduce embodied carbon.
- CL 9.3 Adopt fire-resilience standards for new and redeveloped sites in high-risk wildfire areas.
- CL 9.4 Encourage building designs for passive survivability to ensure that they will stay at a safe temperature for occupants if the power goes out.

Goal 10 Protect community health and well-being from the impacts of climate-exacerbated hazards — prioritizing focus on overburdened communities — and ensure that the most vulnerable residents do not bear disproportionate health impacts.

- CL 10.1 Evaluate and implement habitat reduction and population control for arthropod disease vectors (e.g., mosquitos and ticks) and zoonotic disease reservoirs using integrated pest-management methods.

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- CL 10.2 Develop and maintain a program for addressing the social and mental health needs of displaced populations following disasters.
  - CL 10.3 Mitigate community exposure to wildfire smoke by providing personal protective equipment and filter fans or incentivizing infrastructure updates (e.g., HVAC updates and MERV 13 filters for air intake) for facilities that serve high-risk populations.
  - CL 10.4 Promote and connect citizens to programs that distribute cooling units and install heat pumps.
  - CL 10.5 Develop and implement a wildfire smoke resilience strategy in partnership with local residents, emergency management officials, Northwest Clean Air agency officials, and other stakeholders.
  - CL 10.6 Explore an urban heat resilience strategy for County UGAs that includes land use, urban design, urban greening, and waste heat reduction actions.
  - CL 10.7 Utilize and update local health impact assessments and other tools to address the potential impacts of health, equity, and climate change on vulnerable communities.
  - CL 10.8 Prioritize the development of anti-displacement programs in overburdened communities when increasing densities.
  - CL 10.9 Review land use maps and identify opportunities or barriers to responding to rapid population growth or decline, rebuilding housing and services after disasters, and other extreme climate impact scenarios.
  - CL 10.10 Provide overburdened communities information and assistance to offset potential cost increases associated with conversion to non-fossil-fuel energy sources.
- Goal 11 Protect and enhance the climate resilience of forests by implementing climate-smart forest management.
- CL 11.1 Reduce loss of private forestland through forest stewardship education and identify opportunities to expand incentives for forest landowners.
  - CL 11.2 Consider implementing ordinances to maintain and expand tree canopy cover, improve tree and watershed health, prioritize carbon sequestration, and plan for recovery after wildfire.
  - CL 11.3 Adopt a forest master plan and implementing ordinances to maintain and expand tree canopy cover, improve tree and watershed health, prioritize carbon sequestration, plan for recovery after wildfire, and build climate resilience.

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- CL 11.4 Encourage management of tree canopy and forests (including parks, greenbelts, and urban forests) to decrease climate-exacerbated risks from severe wildfires, protect residents, and improve ecosystem health and habitat through programs like Washington’s small forest landowner assistance cost-share and stewardship programs.
- CL 11.5 Ensure that all forestry management plans include considerations for the impacts of climate change.

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# CLINTON SUBAREA PLAN

ISLAND COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
Revised November 7, 2025

Based on the June 2025 draft prepared by  
KIMLEY-HORN, planning consultant

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## Definitions

**Affordable Housing:** Means, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, residential housing whose monthly costs, including utilities other than telephone, do not exceed thirty percent of the monthly income of a household whose income is:

(a) For rental housing, 80 percent of the median household income adjusted for household size, for the county where the household is located, as reported by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development; or

(b) For owner-occupied housing, 80 percent of the median household income adjusted for household size, for the county where the household is located, as reported by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Board of Island County Commissioners:** The Board of Island County Commissioners (Board or BOCC) are responsible for overseeing all County departments and have decision making authority over the County's Comprehensive Plan.

**Comprehensive Plan:** Means a coordinated land use policy statement of the governing body of a county or city that is adopted pursuant to Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A. Comprehensive plans are 20-year plans, which outline a community's goals, development vision, land use, growth, and other planning topics.

**Cost-burdened:** A household spending more than 30% of its income on housing costs including utilities, mortgage, and rent.

**Contamination:** Water containing harmful substances making it unsafe for daily use such as cleaning, cooking, and drinking. Generally measured if a harmful substance is above a state or national threshold.

**Critical Areas:** Land that is likely not suitable for development because of its sensitive nature. Critical Areas include wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazardous areas.

**Exposure:** An area or asset where a hazard has a demonstrated probability of effect. An exposed asset would include a home located in a mapped 100-year flood zone.

**Economic Development:** Improving a community's well-being by increasing economic activity in the short and/or long term. Economic development may be derived from any economic activity such as retail sales, ticket fares, tax revenue, or manufacturing.

**Hazard:** A natural process with the potential to impact an area. Examples include earthquakes, floods, sea-level rise, wind, snow, among others.

**LAMIRD:** A Limited Area of More Intensive Rural Development. LAMIRDs are designated areas in rural areas that are outside of cities and Urban Growth Areas that allow for greater density. They seek to limit rural sprawl by allowing for development, density of multiple use types, and the establishment of an outer boundary of more intense development. LAMIRD is a synonymous term with Rural Areas of More Intensive Development (RAID).

**Non-Municipal Urban Growth Areas (NMUGAs):** Areas designated pursuant to RCW 36.70A.110. NMUGAs are designated areas where urban growth will be encouraged and supported with urban levels of service but are not incorporated.

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**Open Space:** Any land area so designated by an official comprehensive land use plan adopted by any city or county and zoned accordingly, or (b) any land area, the preservation of which in its present use would (i) conserve and enhance natural or scenic resources, or (ii) protect streams or water supply, or (iii) promote conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches or tidal marshes, or (iv) enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, nature reservations or sanctuaries or other open space, or (v) enhance recreation opportunities, or (vi) preserve historic sites, or (vii) preserve visual quality along highway, road, and street corridors or scenic vistas, or (viii) retain in its natural state tracts of land not less than one acre situated in an urban area and open to public use on such conditions as may be reasonably required by the legislative body granting the open space classification.

**Paratransit:** Public transportation service that provides individualized rides for people who are unable to use fixed-route public transit.

**Single Family (Housing):** A freestanding home designed for occupancy by one family, having a single owner, and consisting of a single unit.

**Subarea Plan:** A policy document that outlines the general goals, principles, and policies that guide the creation of subsequent development regulations specific to an established planning area. Subarea Plans are holistic in that they address land use, transportation, capital facilities, open and civic space, utilities, economic development, housing, etc. in context of the whole.

**Traffic Calming:** The use of various mechanisms to slow the pace of vehicular traffic with the goal of creating a safer, more commercial productive street environment for all users.

**Housing Tenure:** Whether a home or apartment is owner occupied, a rental, or vacant.

**Urban Growth Area (UGA):** Areas within which urban growth is encouraged. In Island County, UGAs have been established around each municipality.

**Vacation rental:** Private residence that's rented out to travelers for a short-term stay, usually 30 days or less. Airbnb and VRBO are common companies whose vacation rentals are listed and booked through.

**Zoning:** The demarcation of an area by ordinance (text and map) into zones and the establishment of regulations to govern the uses within those zones and the location, bulk, height, shape, and coverage of structures within each zone.

## Executive Summary

### Community Vision for 2045

The vision statement for the Clinton Subarea Plan is an ideal future condition based on past planning documents, community feedback, and analysis within this subarea plan. See Appendix A for a summary of the outreach effort and results.

*Clinton is a vibrant, walkable mixed-use rural community at the southern gateway to Whidbey Island. The Clinton community serves the needs of year-round residents through a variety of housing types for a full range of residents, from young families to retirees. The commercial corridor around Washington State Route 525 (SR 525) is the central community hub, with a mixture of small businesses, local restaurants, and essential community services and open space. In 2045, Clinton has grown at a modest pace year after year while retaining the character of the community and preserving the vital natural resources and open space that is an essential element to life in south Whidbey. SR 525 has been restructured to be a walkable, pedestrian-oriented corridor with traffic calming measures that slow pass-through ferry traffic and invite in passersby to stop and spend time in the downtown area.*

### Goals and Policies

Chapters 3 through 9 of the Clinton Subarea Plan each contain a set of goals and policies designed to implement the community vision statement.

A **goal** is a direction-setter. It is an ideal future end, condition, or state related to the public health, safety, or general welfare toward which planning and implementation measures are directed. A goal is a general expression of community values and, therefore, is abstract in nature. They are the “what” statement that provides the basis, or reasoning, behind policies and development regulations.

A **policy** provides a more specific course of action that is based on the line of reasoning set forth by the planning goals. They are the “how” statements and are meant to be measurable implementation techniques and actions.

The following goals and policies were developed from the analysis performed within the following chapters of the Clinton Subarea Plan. The tables below display:

- Individual goals by chapter.
- Specific policies developed in order to implement that goal.
- The lead group responsible for implementation as well as support partners.
- An approximate timeline for implementation, organized by short (0-1 year), medium (1-3 years), and long (3-10 years).
- A priority level as determined by the technical analysis and community feedback, organized by low, medium, and high.

Implementation of the plan will require a collaborative effort across a number of different parties, including Island County, the Clinton Community Council, community members and stakeholders, and outside agencies such as the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). For ease of reading, the groups are identified within the table as follows:

- PCD = Island County Planning & Community Development
- CCC = Clinton Community Council

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- WSDOT = Washington State Department of Transportation
- ETP = External Technical Partner (this refers to a technical consultant specializing in that specific focus area)
- PW = Island County Public Works Department
- CWD = Clinton Water District
- ICPH = Island County Public Health
- DEM = Department of Emergency Management

Land Use Goals and Policies			
LU Goal 1: Encourage efficient development within the Clinton Rural Center land use designation.			
Policy	Lead and Partners	Timeline	Priority
LU 1.1: Modify existing development standards to increase permitted densities and allow additional housing types, such as multi-family, in mixed-use areas, subject to infrastructure availability.	PCD CWD	Short	High
LU 1.2: Establish a 0.5 acre or less minimum lot size standard within the Rural Center zone with parameters for ICPH review.	PCD ICPH	Short	High
LU 1.3: Specify design standards in place of requiring conditional use permits for mixed-use development.	PCD	Short	High
LU 1.4: Modify existing development standards to allow up to 8 dwelling units per building in mixed-use developments in mixed-use LAMIRDs in Clinton.	PCD ICPH CWD	Short	High
LU 1.5: Modify the development standards for parcels along SR 525 in coordination with WSDOT, such as decreasing setbacks, to more easily permit pedestrian access to new development, especially on parcels that have unique shapes/sizes.	PCD WSDOT	Short	Medium
LU 1.6: Evaluate the potential for changes within the right-of-way on Island County owned roads to further traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and wayfinding.	PW PCD	Medium	Medium
LU 1.7: Evaluate permitted uses within the Rural Center zone in Clinton to expand the types of businesses and services that can be located in the downtown core.	PCD	Short	Medium
LU Goal 2: Establish a defined physical character that facilitates growth while maintaining a small-town look and feel.			
Policy	Lead and Partners	Timeline	Priority
LU 2.1: Create zoning standards to help establish or reinforce the desired character of Clinton for future development abutting SR 525.	PCD ETP	Medium	High
LU 2.2: Enhance pedestrian connectivity through dedicated bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that allows safe and efficient movement throughout the community.	PW WSDOT, PCD	Medium	Medium
LU 2.3: Enhance Clinton's public areas, including improved sidewalk and pedestrian areas along SR 525 and the removal of unnecessary curb cuts, which increase vehicular/pedestrian conflict areas.	PW WSDOT	Medium	High
LU 2.4: Create a standardized signage and wayfinding program.	PCD PW	Medium	Medium

**LU Goal 3: Study appropriate area boundaries for a Clinton Non-Municipal Urban Growth Area (NMUGA).**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Lead and Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Priority</b>
LU 3.1: Develop materials to provide the community with information on what becoming an NMUGA would mean for Clinton and meaningfully engage the community for input/feedback.	<b>PCD</b>	Short	High
LU 3.2: Establish a boundary for the Clinton NMUGA based on accommodating projected growth over the succeeding 20-year period.	<b>PCD</b> State Agencies	Long	Medium
LU 3.3: Conduct a financial feasibility study to determine the potential cost and available funding sources for providing necessary urban governmental services, including storm drain and sewer services.	<b>ETP</b> PCD, CWD	Long	Medium
LU 3.4: Evaluate the need for land use designation changes or the establishment of new land uses within Clinton.	<b>PCD</b>	Long	Medium
LU 3.5: Determine appropriate urban densities for the future NMUGA based on population projections and the County's population growth projections.	<b>PCD</b>	Long	Medium
LU-3.6: Consider Environmentally Critical Areas in and around Clinton to inform a future NMUGA boundary.	<b>PCD</b>	Long	Medium

**Housing Goals and Policies**

**HO Goal 1: Align growth, including uses and densities, with the needs of the community while diversifying housing mixes and opportunities.**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Lead and Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Priority</b>
HO 1.1: Evaluate existing development standards in the Rural Residential zone to allow additional housing types, including duplexes, cottage housing, and townhomes.	<b>PCD</b>	Short	High
HO 1.2: Complete a septic study to evaluate the feasibility of alternative septic systems as well as sewer service to accommodate growth.	<b>ICPH</b> PCD	Short	High
HO 1.3: Encourage the building of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) with single-family residential development.	<b>PCD</b> CWD	Medium	Medium

**Utilities, Infrastructure and Services Goals and Policies**

**UT Goal 1: Plan for capital facilities to be available prior to or concurrent with new development.**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Lead and Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Priority</b>
UT 1.1: Collaborate with ICPH on the outcomes of their 2025 septic study to promote creative alternative solutions to private septic service.	<b>ICPH</b> PCD	Medium	High
UT 1.2: Continue to require that new development makes code required improvements to infrastructure and utilities.	<b>PCD</b>	Short	High
UT 1.3: Coordinate with utility providers to adequately plan for capital facilities to support future growth in the community.	<b>PCD</b> PW, CWD	Short	Medium

**Environmental Goals and Policies**

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### ENV Goal 1: Encourage protection of the environment and enhancement of the area’s quality of life while still permitting growth with respect to natural limitations.

Policy	Lead and Partners	Timeline	Priority
ENV 1.1: Evaluate the potential impacts of present and future hazards when planning for future growth and discourage growth in areas subject to natural hazards.	PCD DEM State Agencies	Short	High
ENV 1.2: Maintain an updated set of Critical Areas data to inform residents and applicants of potentially environmentally sensitive areas within their properties	PCD State Agencies	Short	High
ENV 1.3: Evaluate, record, and preserve established wildlife corridors.	PCD	Medium	Medium
ENV 1.4: Promote the use of native vegetation in residential neighborhoods.	PCD	Long	Low
ENV 1.5: Using updated modeling, appropriately regulate development in frequently flooded areas along sole access roads exposed to sea-level rise and king tides, including exploring the establishment of an overlay allowing for greater landscaping and lower density in such exposed areas.	PCD DEM	Long	Low

### Parks and Open Space Goals and Policies

#### POS Goal 1: Preserve and enhance Clinton’s existing park and open space areas.

Policy	Lead and Partners	Timeline	Priority
POS 1.1: Carry out the project list for Dan Porter Park in the 2025 Island County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element and look for opportunities to complete an assessment of Clinton Beach Park for projects to include in future Comprehensive Plan periodic updates.	PW PCD	Short	Medium
POS 1.2: Promote a community volunteer clean-up program.	CCC	Medium	Medium
POS 1.3: Identify and apply for funding opportunities including grants, local partnerships, and sponsorships, and consider park impact fees to fund future park and open space acquisition and maintenance.	PW CCC	Medium	Low

#### POS Goal 2: Expand open space and recreational opportunities in Clinton.

Policy	Lead and Partners	Timeline	Priority
POS 2.1: Identify land, including Environmentally Critical Areas, in Clinton for potential acquisition as neighborhood parks and open space.	PW	Medium	High
POS 2.2: Catalog existing official trails to identify gaps in service and increase community connectivity.	PW	Short	High
POS 2.3: Advertise local recreational opportunities organized by the Clinton Community Council and other local organizations.	CCC	Short	Medium

POS 2.4: Encourage the development of vacant and underused land as pedestrian-oriented community spaces in the downtown core area.

**PCD**  
**PW**

Long

Medium

<b>Transportation Goals and Policies</b>			
<b>TR Goal 1: Increase Clinton’s transportation network safety and efficiency.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Lead and Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Priority</b>
TR 1.1: Coordinate with state, regional, and local agencies, including WSDOT, to implement a “safe systems approach” using best practices to advance transportation safety for all users of the transportation system including transit, bicycle, and pedestrian activities.	<b>PW</b> WSDOT	Long	High
TR 1.2: Create clear wayfinding signage to move residents and visitors more efficiently through Clinton and to Clinton’s commercial goods and services.	<b>PW</b>	Medium	High
TR 1.3: Coordinate with WSDOT to evaluate the potential classification of SR 525 under a contextual roadway classification system.	<b>PW</b> WSDOT	Long	Low
TR 1.4: Where feasible, upgrade and expand sidewalks in strategic locations such as the Rural Center Zone, around daycares, schools, and in high traffic areas.	<b>PW</b> WSDOT	Short	Medium
<b>TR Goal 2: Increase pedestrian and bicycle safety and connectivity.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Lead and Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Priority</b>
TR 2.1: Complete the Clinton to Ken’s Korner multi-use trail along SR 525.	<b>PW</b>	Medium	High
TR 2.2: Conduct an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assessment of public realm areas to ensure usability for all residents.	<b>PW</b>	Medium	Medium
TR 2.3: Minimize vehicular curb cuts into businesses from SR 525 through shared access or rear access off alleys and secondary roads.	<b>PCD</b> PW, WSDOT	Medium	Medium
TR 2.4: Introduce physical separation such as planter strips between pedestrian walkways and travel lanes where possible along SR 525.	<b>PW</b> WSDOT	Medium	Medium
TR 2.5: Coordinate with WSDOT and relevant agencies to study the reduction of speed limits and potential for pedestrian buffers along SR 525 and collector streets in Clinton’s core.	<b>PW</b> WSDOT	Long	Medium
TR 2.6: Study pedestrian safety design techniques such as lowering the speed limit on County roads to 30 mph or adding enhanced crossing improvements.	<b>PW</b> PCD	Short	Medium

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Economic Development Goals and Policies			
<b>ED Goal 1: Increase economic growth opportunities in Clinton’s downtown core.</b>			
Policy	Lead and Partners	Timeline	Priority
ED 1.1: Explore the creation of a business improvement district to combine resources and focus on collectively addressing future needs within Clinton’s commercial areas.	ETP CCC	Medium	High
ED 1.2: Provide businesses with information on economic resources available through Island County’s Economic Development Council initiative as well as external resources.	ETP CCC	Short	Medium
<b>ED Goal 2: Address barriers to commercial development.</b>			
Policy	Lead and Partners	Timeline	Priority
ED 2.1: Study opportunities for sewer and septic solutions to ease the individual burden of septic for new businesses.	ICPH	Medium	High
ED 2.2: Amend development standards within the <b>Rural Center Zone</b> along SR 525 and cross-streets in Clinton to create flexibility in future development.	PCD WSDOT	Short	High
ED 2.3: Coordinate with WSDOT on implementing traffic calming measures on SR 525 between Humphrey Road and Bob Galbreath Road to increase pedestrian safety and walkability. (See Transportation goals and policies)	PW WSDOT	Long	High
<b>ED Goal 3: Establish a cohesive sense of place along Clinton’s the SR 525 frontage.</b>			
Policy	Lead and Partners	Timeline	Priority
ED 3.1: Create zoning standards for future commercial development abutting SR 525.	PCD	Medium	Medium
ED 3.2: Coordinate with WSDOT on future streetscape improvements along SR 525, such as street trees, street furniture, and landscaping.	PW PCD CCC WSDOT	Long	Medium

## Growth Opportunities for Clinton

### Growth Outlook

The Clinton community has been designated as a Limited Area of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRD), under the state’s Growth Management Act (GMA). Island County has historically called these areas RAIDs (Rural Area of more Intensive Development) and is shifting to using the State’s terminology. LAMIRDs are designated rural areas that are characterized by greater density located outside of cities and Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). The intent is to seek to limit rural sprawl by allowing for development, density of multiple use types, and the establishment of an outer boundary to reflect the existing development pattern within them. Despite their ability to accommodate growth, they are not intended to have urban levels of services and are therefore limited in the amount of growth they can accommodate.

Clinton has been comprised of two LAMIRDs, zoned Rural Center and Rural Residential – see Figure 3-1 on page 27. Rural Center designated areas are generally adjacent to State Route 525 (SR 525), while Rural Residential areas buffer the RC area from the surrounding rural areas. The Rural Center and Rural Residential Zones both allow residential development at low densities. Development permitted within

Clinton requires review and approval by Island County Public Health to apply health and safety standards relating to the need for private septic that can be accommodated on each lot. Island County has not identified a specific growth target for any LAMIRD, however the established identity of Clinton as the gateway to Whidbey Island from the south and the developed nature of the community create potential for Clinton to play a large part in accommodating future growth in Island County.

### **Growth Restrictions as a LAMIRD**

As mentioned in the previous section, Clinton’s growth is limited by the boundaries of the LAMIRD as adopted by the 1998 Island County Comprehensive Plan. Per [Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\) 365-196-425](#), counties had to designate LAMIRD boundaries as part of their initial comprehensive plan under the GMA. LAMIRD boundaries are required to follow a logical outer boundary delineated by the built environment when the act was established. While there is a process for changing the boundaries of Mixed-Use LAMIRDs, they must follow the same criteria as initial designation and cannot be used to expand the LAMIRD with vacant parcels for infill purposes. Thus, expansions of Mixed-Use LAMIRDs are rare and difficult. Boundary changes to residential LAMIRDs are not permitted under GMA. LAMIRDs are rural areas and are only required to provide “rural governmental services” to their residents, which are less intensive than urban services. This limits growth potential by requiring rural densities. Per the WAC, rural governmental services typically include domestic water service, fire and police protection, roadways and public transportation, and public utilities such as electrical, telecommunications, and natural gas lines. Crucially, rural governmental services do not include storm or sanitary sewers. Due to the rural nature of LAMIRDs, sanitary sewer service may be provided only if: <sup>1</sup>

1. Necessary to protect basic public health and safety and the environment;
2. Financially supportable at rural densities; and
3. Does not permit urban development.

Development within LAMIRDs typically relies on natural systems to adequately manage stormwater and on-site sewage systems to treat wastewater. With its status as a LAMIRD, Island County is required to establish densities in rural areas that do not overwhelm the ability of natural systems to provide these services without compromising either public health or the vitality of the surrounding ecosystem. Clinton matches the characteristics of a LAMIRD and cannot grow past its current boundaries under the current designation.

### **Potential Growth as a Non-Municipal Urban Growth Area (NMUGA)**

As an NMUGA, Clinton would have the ability to expand and establish the community as the gateway to South Whidbey. As an urban growth area, Clinton would be able to reconsider its outer boundary, plan for new densities, housing types, commercial services, and other services typically characteristic of more urban areas like stormwater, sewers, and sidewalks. While this designation would allow growth, it would be important to establish an area as appropriate for zoning standards to maintain the community vision. These standards should be developed with the context of Clinton as a place that wants to grow both commercially and residentially within the rural framework that exists in south Whidbey.

During the comprehensive planning process, Island County is relying on all of our LAMIRDs, including Clinton, to achieve the allocated housing growth targets. Housing development in LAMIRDs is generally

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<sup>1</sup> WAC 365-196-425. Available at: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=365-196-425>

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restricted by infrastructure availability and creative solutions are needed to see any kind of significant housing growth. Even with those creative solutions, further restrictive development standards such as low permitted densities, building heights, and lot coverage standards promote primarily single-family and low-density housing. For Clinton to realize its full vision as a vibrant gateway, it needs the support of expanded infrastructure under an NMUGA if it is to support measurable growth over the next couple of decades.

### Designation as an NMUGA

To implement a NMUGA designation, Clinton would need to be served by urban governmental services defined under RCW 36.70A.030 in order for the full potential of the zoning designations to be realized. In the meantime, new development would be reviewed by ICPH for septic and water service requirements. In addition, new development would be required to be subject to no protest agreements for future public sewer service.

A study was completed for a Comprehensive Sewer Plan in Clinton in 2003, which may be updated as part of this process. The study established several alternatives and is described in further in the Past Studies section of this plan.

The County has included in the Comprehensive Plan Capital Facilities Plan that the County will pursue a study and a phased plan to provide sewer or alternate septic service as it seeks to implement this Comprehensive Plan and the Clinton Subarea Plan. Funding for the Clinton sewer study could come from Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET) or other fund sources. The study is anticipated to be complete within 10 years.

In addition to the infrastructure phased plan, Island County will consider future amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to establish a formal boundary for Clinton as an NMUGA. By considering a future NMUGA designation of Clinton, Island County can include funding options and plan for the required studies for transition of Clinton to realize its potential as an NMUGA over the course of the 20-year lifespan of the comprehensive plan.

## Chapter 1. Introduction and Subarea Planning Framework

### 1.1. Purpose of the Clinton Subarea Plan

#### 1.1.1. What is a Subarea Plan

The GMA allows for the development of subarea plans consistent with local comprehensive plans and county wide planning policies ([RCW 36.70A.080\(2\)](#)). Appendix B includes a checklist showing the consistency of the Clinton Subarea Plan with the Island County Comprehensive Plan. The GMA was established by the Washington State Legislature in 1990 to encourage state and local governments to manage population goals and control urban growth, reduce sprawl, regulate housing, transportation, the environment, and economic development in their jurisdictions. While not a mandatory comprehensive plan element per [RCW 36.70A.070](#), a subarea plan is a strategic tool that allows for focused planning within a smaller geographic area. A subarea plan identifies and addresses planning issues and opportunities within the subarea and develops planning goals and policies to guide future growth and economic development within the subarea.

### 1.1.2. Why Create the Clinton Subarea Plan

Clinton is an unincorporated community on the southeast coast of Whidbey Island, serving as the gateway to the island from the Mukilteo-Clinton ferry. Clinton has long struggled with its identity – it's not a town, or an urban growth area, and feels like a place you pass through to those unfamiliar with its hidden gems. Island County is expected to grow by more than 15,000 people by 2045, indicating the need to plan for growth in the County's LAMIRDs, including Clinton. As a component of Island County's (the County) 2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, the County Planning and Community Development Department has invested in a sub-area plan for the Clinton LAMIRD to help determine the best ways to support the community's growth. The purpose of the subarea plan is to develop a community-specific plan that addresses the future growth needs in the Clinton LAMIRD by creating policies to foster economic development, equitable growth, and Clinton's unique sense of place.

### 1.1.3. Plan Elements

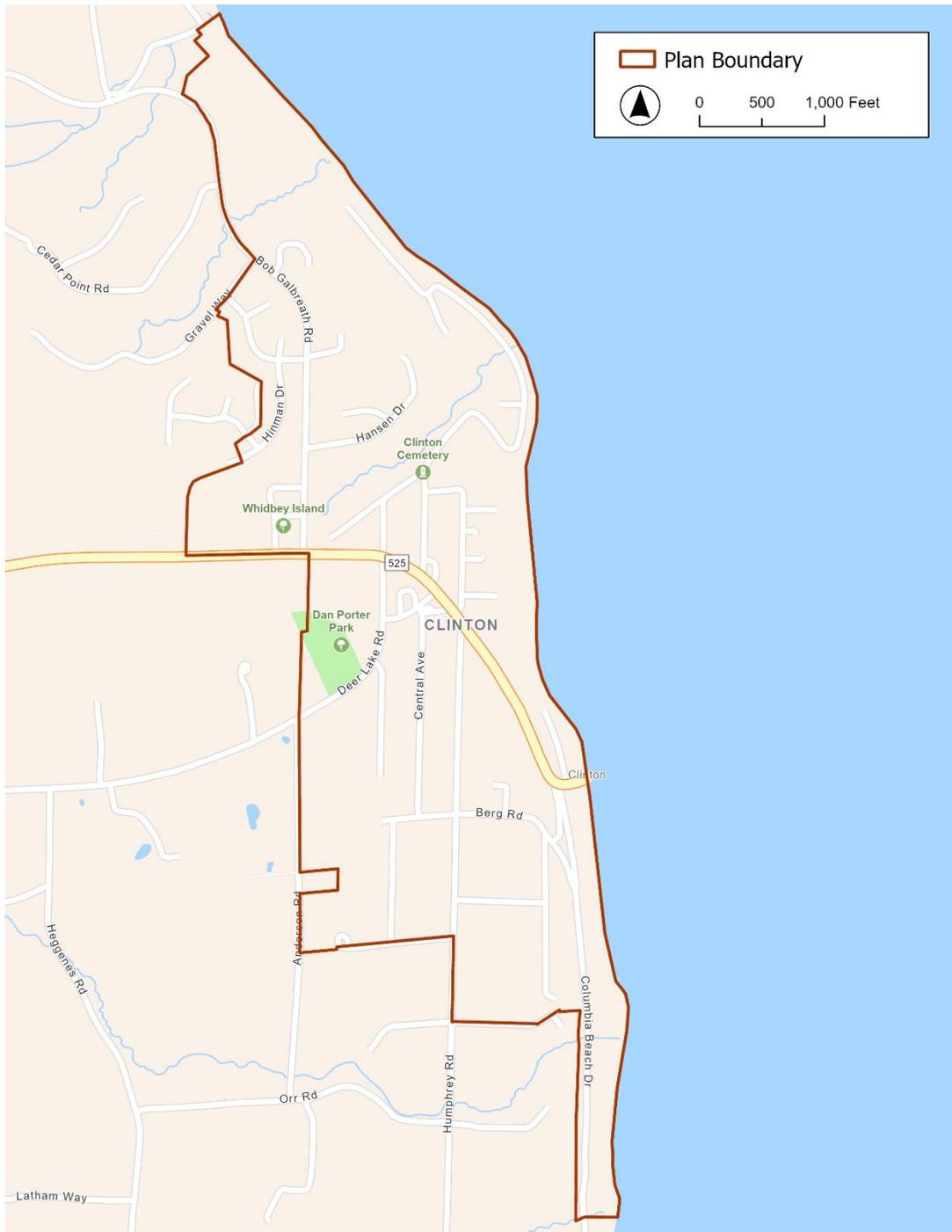
The Clinton Subarea Plan contains the following elements displayed as chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction and Subarea Planning Framework** - defines the purpose of the Clinton Subarea Plan as well as the policy framework in relation to the Island County Comprehensive Plan.
- **Chapter 2: Demographics and Population** - describes the socioeconomic characteristics of the Clinton community.
- **Chapter 3: Land Use and Zoning** - describes the existing and planned land use and zoning for the Clinton community. Growth patterns and character of land uses are evaluated within this section.
- **Chapter 4: Housing** - evaluates existing housing stock, housing conditions, and strategies for accommodating future housing growth in a Clinton.
- **Chapter 5: Utilities, Infrastructure, and Services** - evaluates existing service and creative strategies for providing additional infrastructure to the community.
- **Chapter 6: Environment and Climate** - focuses on evaluating the natural environment and critical areas within Clinton. Critical areas may include wetlands, Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, shorelines, Critical Drainage Areas, and archaeologically significant areas.
- **Chapter 7: Parks and Open Space** - identifies and evaluates park and open space areas within Clinton, including programming and levels of service for residents.
- **Chapter 8: Transportation** - describes both local and regional transportation within Clinton. This includes all methods, from ferry access to Clinton to SR 525 and local roads. Public transit and non-motorized methods of transportation, such as walking and bicycling are also evaluated.
- **Chapter 9: Economic Development** - builds off past studies to define strategies for economic growth in Clinton's Rural Center.

1.1.4. Plan Scope

The data collected for this plan’s existing conditions reports and addressed by its policies applies to the area shown in **Figure 1-1**. This area the adopted Clinton LAMIRD. Due to the small size of Clinton, Census and consumer data used in the Subarea Plan is collected from the slightly larger area, using Census Designed Place (CDP) boundaries as defined by the US Census Bureau.

Figure 1-1 Subarea Plan Study Area



### **1.1.5. Community Engagement Framework**

Island County initiated a community engagement process in the development of the Clinton subarea plan. This included multiple touch points with the Clinton Community Council, an in-person community workshop, and community events such as the Clinton Market and a booth at the Island County Fair as part of the larger Comprehensive Plan periodic update outreach process. In addition to in-person events, the County created a project website to provide interested residents and stakeholders with project updates, a project survey, and an interactive community map to identify opportunities for improvement, community resources, and other physical characteristics. A workshop was held in February 2025 to present draft findings to the community and the Community Council. The plan has been updated to include community feedback.

**Appendix A** contains full comments received during the community engagement process for the Clinton subarea plan.

## **1.2. Policy Framework**

### **1.2.1. 2025 Island County Comprehensive Plan Update**

Per RCW 36.70A.130, the GMA requires cities and counties to update their Comprehensive Plans and implementing development regulations every 10 years. The Clinton Subarea Plan was developed as part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update and is consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs).

### **1.2.2. Relevant State Planning Policy**

Under the GMA, Clinton is designated as a LAMIRD. RCW 36.70A.070(5) and WAC 365-196-425(6) allow Counties in Washington State to designate isolated pockets of more intense development in rural areas as LAMIRDs. In 2022, RCW 36.70A.070 was amended to allow for development or redevelopment of any building size, scale, use or intensity within a LAMIRD area subject to confirmation from all existing public facilities and public services. The code section has specific size restrictions and other requirements for development within LAMIRDs. One of the goals of this subarea plan is to determine how future development growth can be accommodated in the Clinton LAMIRD inclusive of infrastructure needs.

### **1.2.3. Clinton History**

The Clinton area was originally home to Coast Salish tribes such as the Lower Skagit, and Snohomish tribes. The first European settlers began to make homes on Whidbey Island in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Clinton was primarily a logging and milling hub. The Island Transportation Company began passenger ferry service between Mukilteo and south Whidbey Island in 1911, with car service starting shortly after in 1919. As the gateway to south Whidbey Island, the unincorporated community began to see a surge in commercial development during the 1960s and 1970s as primarily small, businesses, often catering to vehicle services.

### **1.2.4. Previous Planning Efforts**

**Comprehensive Sewer Plan:** In 2003, a Comprehensive Sewer Plan study was prepared to provide the Clinton Water District with options for how to expand and build the wastewater system in Clinton. The Plan included five options for the creation of a sewer system including financing, facilities plan, and usage projections. The plan was approved but sewerage has not been built in Clinton. This study will need to be updated to incorporate current conditions and costs.

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**Clinton Community Council:** In 2012, the residents of Clinton formed the 13-member Clinton Community Council in response to the 2012 Future Search Conference (a method used at the time to help a number of diverse groups find common ground). The goals of the Clinton Community Council are to promote a sense of community vision and pride for Clinton, facilitate communication between the Clinton community, Island County and other governmental entities, initiate projects on behalf of the Clinton community in partnership with local organizations and ensure that the wishes and desires of the community are carried out as they work with Island County.

**Clinton Market Study:** In 2017, the Port of South Whidbey and Beckwith Consulting created the Clinton Market study which looked at existing economic conditions in Clinton and identified potential actions to increase economic activity in the area. The conclusions of this study were similar to the Gateway Plan of 2020, focusing on improvements to zoning, marketing, and improvements along Route 525.

Link: <https://clintoncommunitycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Beckwith-Clinton-Market-Study.pdf>

**Clinton Gateway Plan:** In 2020, as part of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development Element update, Island County developed the Clinton Gateway Plan with the goal of identifying ways to increase economic activity in the LAMIRD area while creating a distinctive identity with a pedestrian-friendly landscape, more urban amenities, and increasing development in Clinton's core. The plan provided takeaways, specifically for economic development, which are reflected in this Subarea plan.

Link: <https://clintoncommunitycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CAI.Island-County-Clinton-Gateway-Analysis.2020-0430-003.pdf>

### Analysis of Past Studies

As shown above, there have been many past planning studies completed for the Clinton community, ranging from economic development to infrastructure, to generally establishing a sense of place and vision for Clinton. The 2020 Gateway Plan and 2017 Market Study reached similar conclusions about how to increase economic development, specifying the need for increased business activity along SR 525 through marketing, urban design, and land use changes. Similar findings are concluded in this plan's analysis of the Clinton area's economic development needs and potential, leading to the goals and policies found within the Economic Development Chapter of this Subarea Plan. Past studies have generally stopped short of identifying specific measurable actions, timelines, and lead entities and support agencies/groups to provide a structured plan for implementation.

This Subarea Plan is intended be a living document, implementing prioritization of actions to track present and future economic, land use, and other important policies and indicators in Clinton. Developed by Island County in coordination with the community, the goals and policies identified within this plan create actionable steps that will need to be broken down further, but which provide clear direction on what is needed for code updates and other important processes. These steps are described throughout the policies and respective sections. As Clinton plans for a future NMUGA designation, having a plan for constructing necessary infrastructure as well as a defined boundary and strategy for growth will be required. The 2003 Comprehensive Sewer Plan provides a strong base for a future updated sewer plan, which will enable the Clinton NMUGA to develop in the future consistent with the community vision expressed in this subarea plan. The Sewer Plan was indicative of the early and continuing potential for expansion of Clinton via the construction of a sewer system.

All told, past studies point toward great potential for Clinton’s economy, including housing opportunity, vibrant commercial growth, and reliable infrastructure to grow in a sustainable manner appropriate to the surrounding context but with an established sense of place and an identity as the southern gateway to Whidbey Island.

## Chapter 2. Demographics and Population

### 2.1. Introduction

The Demographics and Population chapter sets the stage for the following chapters by describing the Clinton community as it exists at the development of the subarea plan. Understanding the composition of the community, from the ages of residents to ethnic composition and education levels, is important when creating effective policy. While an important factor, this data is just one part of the story of the Clinton community and must be combined with community input and technical analysis.

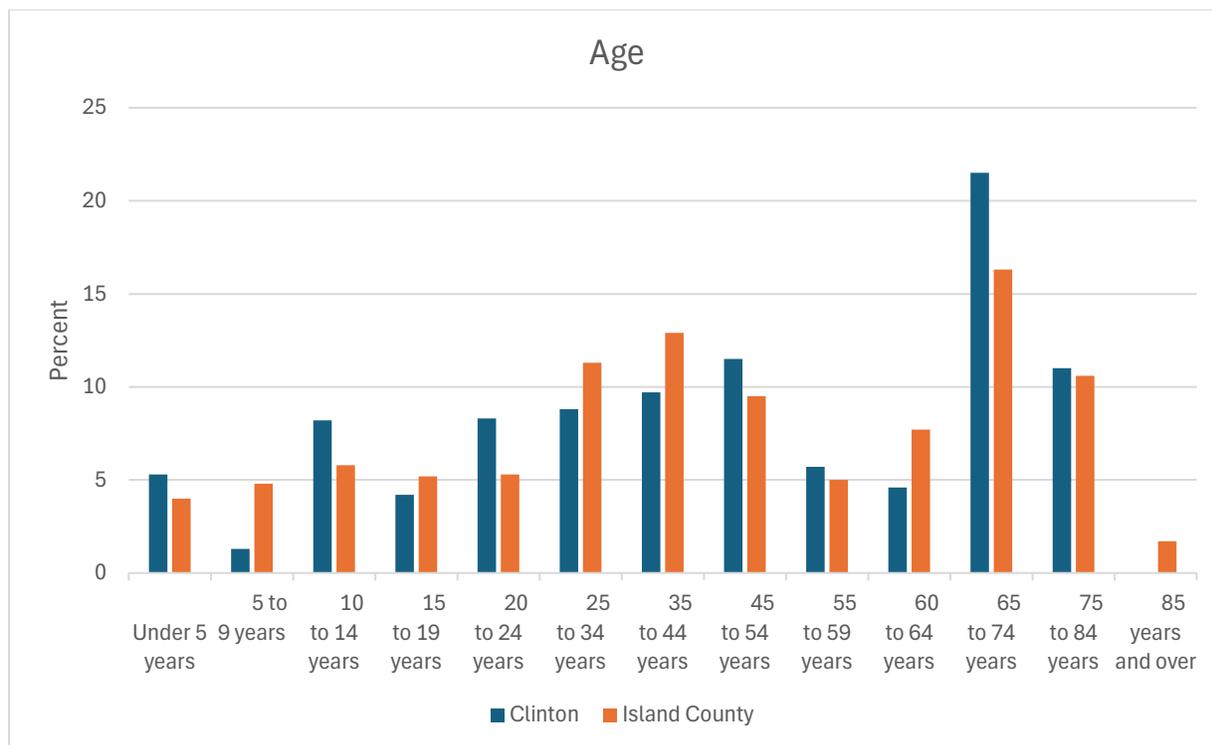
### 2.2. Existing Conditions

This section describes the existing condition of Clinton’s population demographics, employment, and education as of the establishment of the subarea plan. This information sets the baseline for evaluating the elements within the subarea plan and provides valuable insight into the makeup of the Clinton community. Information in this section is based largely on Census data and other informational sources as noted.

#### 2.2.1. Population Overview

As of 2023 American Community Survey (ACS), the Clinton CDP population was 1,367 people. The median age is 46.1 years old, above Island County’s median of 45.7 years old. Clinton’s population tends to be generally in line with that of the overall Island County. The 65 to 74 years old category is higher with Clinton having more of this segment than Island County. This age range makes up 20.9 percent of the Clinton community compared to just 15.7 percent for Island County. This indicates that more residents in Clinton are approaching or just entering into the historically typical retirement years. This is illustrated in **Figure 2-1**, Clinton’s Population Comparison (By Age).

Figure 2-1: Clinton's Population Comparison (By Age)



Source: 2023 ACS Survey, US Census Bureau

Similarly, Clinton’s population has a similar racial composition to Island County, however a larger percentage (approximately 86.9 percent) identify as White, with a smaller percentage of the population 7.2 percent of the Clinton community identifying as Two or More Races compared to 13.8 percent for Island County. Hispanic populations typically identify under “some Other Race,” “White,” of “Two or More Races,” making it difficult to discern their population within the Clinton area through the Census. This data is in **Table 2-1: Population Characteristics, Clinton’s Population Comparison (By Race)**.

Table 2-1: Population Characteristics

Category	Clinton		Island County	
	Total	Percent	IC Total	IC Percent
<b>Population</b>	1165	100%	86,267	100%
<b>Median Age</b>	49.5		45.5	
<b>Race</b>				
White	1012	86.9%	66156	76.7%
Black or African American	1	0.1%	1456	1.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0	0.0%	371	0.4%
Asian	66	5.7%	4904	5.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	51	0.1%
Some Other Race	2	0.2%	1423	1.6%
Two or More Races	84	7.2%	11906	13.8%

Source: 2023 ACS Survey, US Census Bureau

**2.2.2. Education**

Clinton has a well-educated population, with a higher percent of its populace possessing a college degree or higher than Island County. Census data shows female residents have substantially higher rates of college education than males, with nearly three times as many females holding college degrees or higher.

**Table 2-2:** Education Characteristics, shows Clinton’s education attainment compared to Island County.

**Table 2-2: Education Characteristics**

Age by Educational Attainment	Clinton		Island County	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Population 18 to 24 years	97	100%	6,563	100%
Less than high school graduate	65	67.0	656	10
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	27	27.8	4,190	63.8
Some college or associate's degree	5	5.2	1,434	21.8
Bachelor's degree or higher	0	0.0	283	4.3
Population 25 years and over	847	100%	64,690	100%
Less than 9th grade	0	0.0	1,127	1.7
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	80	9.4	1,406	2.2
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	174	20.5	14,587	22.5
Some college, no degree	137	16.2	16,953	26.2
Associate's degree	60	7.1	6,829	10.6
Bachelor's degree	205	24.2	13,989	21.6
Graduate or professional degree	191	22.6	9,799	15.1
High school graduate or higher	767	90.6	62,157	96.1
Bachelor's degree or higher	396	46.8	23,788	36.8

Source: 2023 ACS Survey, US Census Bureau

**Chapter 3. Zoning and Land Use**

**3.1. Introduction**

This chapter analyzes Clinton’s existing zoning and land use and evaluates the potential for future growth and changes in land use over time. Clinton is designated within Island County’s Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code as one of the County’s Mixed-Use LAMIRDs — indicating it is rural in nature, where a range of commercial, light manufacturing and multi-family uses that serve a broad geographic area are permitted. Development in Clinton is required to go through review by the ICPH to apply the current land use and building standards to development proposals, and there is adequate ability to serve proposed development based on water availability and soil conditions for septic solutions.

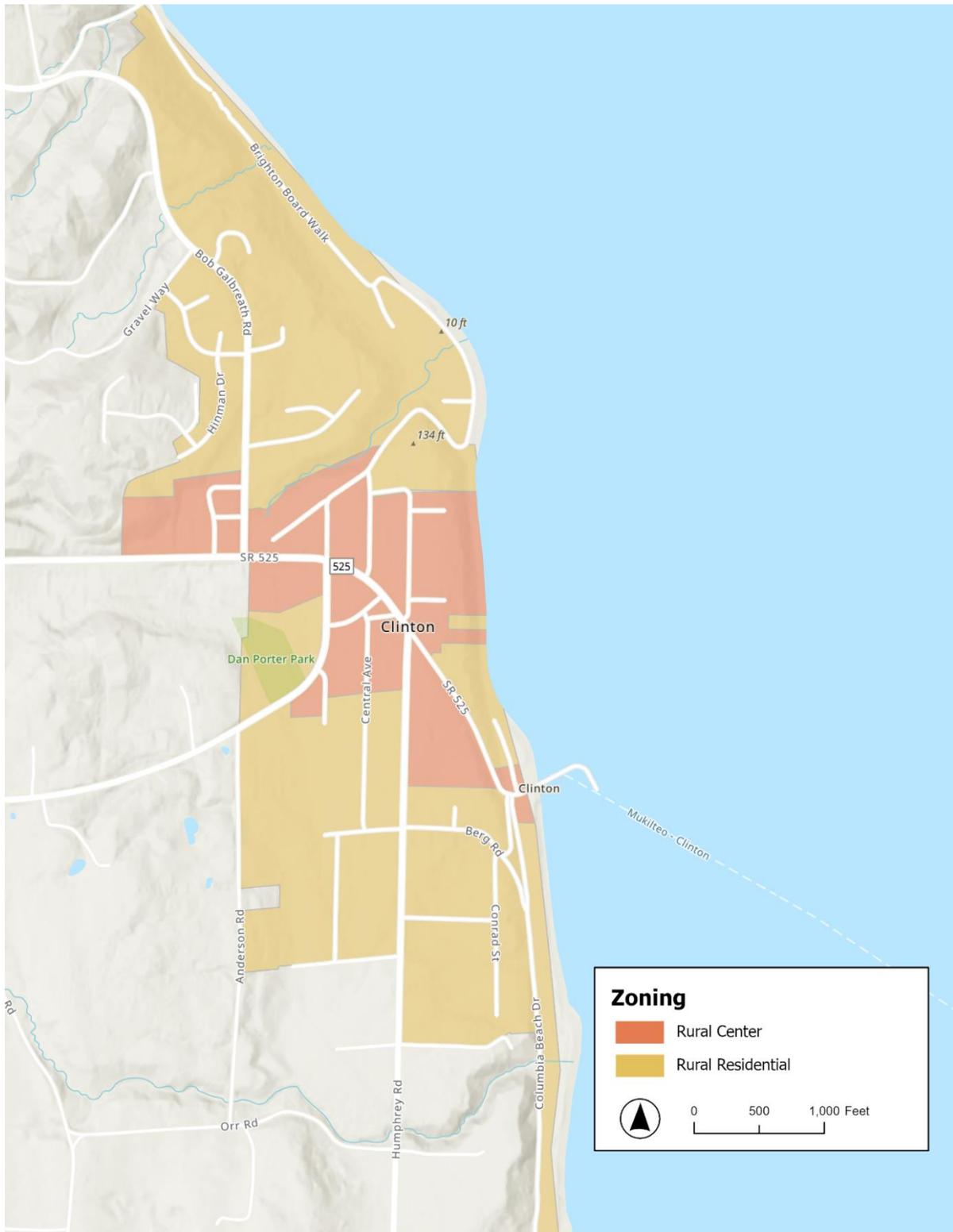
### 3.2. Existing Conditions

#### 3.2.1. Existing Land Use

The Clinton LAMIRD is made-up of two zoning districts: Rural Residential and Rural Center, shown in **Figure 3-1: Clinton Land Use and Zoning**. The Clinton LAMIRDs are nearly 330 acres, over double the average LAMIRD size in Island County of 156 acres. Clinton has a small Rural Center Zone, where most of its urbanized development potential exists. As part of the overall Comprehensive Plan update process, Island County is evaluating potential changes to development regulations within the existing zoning designations, which implement the broader land use vision. This analysis is discussed in **Section 3.3: Population Growth Analysis of the subarea plan**.

It is important to note that land-use designations and zoning are not the same. Land-use designations are consistent with the comprehensive plan for Island County and provide a framework for implementing zoning and development regulations. Zoning is the legal framework that is used to permit development on specific parcels. Zoning names and boundaries may be different from land-use designations. At present, however, Clinton's zoning and land-use designations have matching names and boundaries and thus both are represented on the same map.

Figure 3-1: Clinton Land Use and Zoning



Source: Island County

### 3.2.2. Physical Character

Clinton is the southern gateway to Whidbey Island and is accessed from the south via the Clinton-Mukilteo ferry route. The community has some shoreline residential uses and a relatively steep elevation gain until it flattens out as you head west into the commercial corridor. The Clinton community is primarily comprised of one- and two-story structures, with commercial uses largely focused on either side of SR 525. Single-family residential neighborhoods sit to the north and south of the commercial areas on large lots, interspersed with parks and other open space areas. Lot coverage is fairly low on a majority of parcels because of on-site sewage treatment (septic systems). The Clinton community is bisected by SR 525.

### 3.2.3. Existing Zoning Classifications

#### ***Rural Residential (RR)***

Rural Residential areas are designated by Island County Code, [Chapter 17.03.070 ICC](#) for residential development denser than the Rural zone. The Rural Residential Zone is exclusively for residential properties with a minimum lot size of 14,500 square feet at a maximum density of 3 dwelling units (du) per acre. Existing development in this zone is entirely residential consisting of single-family homes of varying sizes with large yards. Structures are limited to 35 feet tall.

#### ***Rural Center (RC)***

Rural Center Zones are designated by [Chapter 17.03.120 ICC](#) as intense mixed-use zones, allowing for a variety of uses encompassing a boundary as identified in the 1998 Island County Comprehensive Plan of existing development in a rural area. The Clinton Rural Center Zone is Clinton's only zone that permits mixed uses including commercial and residential. The Clinton Rural Center Zone encompasses the entire central Clinton area from the ferry terminal to the LAMIRD boundary west of Bob Galbreath Road, running along SR 525. Within the Clinton Rural Center Zone, buildings are limited to three stories and 40' in height and any development greater than one residential unit must enter a development agreement with the county for utility cost sharing.

## 3.3. Population Growth Analysis

### 3.3.1. Buildable Lands Analysis

As part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update, Island County is required to plan for future housing and employment growth through 2045. This is done at the County level where growth (population, housing, and employment) is allocated between incorporated cities, UGAs, and both rural and resource lands within the County. This provides the foundation for cities and the county to begin planning for the next 20-years of growth. Island County anticipates that their LAMIRDs will also play an important role in accommodating growth, however projections are not allocated at the individual LAMIRD level. As part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update, Island County is addressing growth across all Mixed-Use LAMIRDs through changes to the development code, including increasing housing options, revisions to existing development standards, and analyzing potential private septic solutions. This approach spreads housing growth across the county and allows for the development of housing in areas that can accommodate the necessary infrastructure to serve additional housing units.

The Housing Chapter of this subarea plan provides additional information on potential housing growth opportunities within Clinton based on available land and current zoning but does not identify housing growth targets.

### **3.3.2. Accommodating Future Growth in Clinton**

As stated in the Executive Summary at the beginning of this plan, due to its status as a LAMIRD, Clinton's boundary cannot grow unless it becomes a NMUGA. Changing Clinton from its designation as a LAMIRD to an NMUGA would allow for additional growth and would provide the basis for Clinton to transition from services typical to rural areas to "urban governmental services" as defined by the Washington Administrative Code (WAC).

In addition to studying the infrastructure requirements needed to support an NMUGA status, Island County would also need to establish a formal boundary for Clinton as an NMUGA. There are a couple of considerations when establishing a formal boundary:

- Population projections must be analyzed to determine the appropriate size and urban densities for Clinton to ensure that the community has adequate land and services to meet Clinton's projected growth over the succeeding 20-year period.
- NMUGA boundaries should avoid expanding into Environmentally Critical Areas. The County must evaluate existing critical areas in and around Clinton.
- A financial model may be completed to evaluate the potential impacts of development within a specified area, specifically looking at the price of land and impact to developing housing affordable by the local population.

By considering an NMUGA as part of the Clinton Subarea Plan, Island County can begin to consider funding options and plan for the required studies for transition of Clinton as an NMUGA in the future consistent with the community vision included in this subarea plan.

### **3.3.3. Barriers and Recommendations for Increased Housing Types**

As part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update, Island County is evaluating its mixed-use LAMIRDS and considering changes to development standards to provide greater flexibility in the types of housing and commercial uses that can be constructed. This is an evaluation of what constraints current zoning may be placing on development within the mixed-use LAMIRDS, including Clinton. The study considers changes such as increasing allowed densities (within a rural context) in mixed-use areas, removing requirements for County Health review if consolidated septic is established. It also considers modifying standards such as setbacks, height limits, and floor lot coverage if they are found to be inconsistent with similar rural counties and proving to be impediments to development. Initial findings from the study are summarized below.

The first part of the analysis identified barriers to building denser housing types in Mixed-Use LAMIRD zones. A zoning analysis was performed using WA State Department of Commerce Barrier review checklists. The checklists are specifically designed to identify any barriers in the jurisdiction's code for certain housing types. The goal of this analysis is to identify options in mixed-use RAID zones that would allow for higher density mixed-use developments to be built.

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Mixed-use development typically consists of a ground floor commercial use with additional stories of residential uses. These types of developments are often called vertical mixed-use, which are covered by “low-rise housing types” in the barriers to housing checklists.

The major findings from the checklists were that low maximum densities, high minimum lot sizes, and restrictive permitting requirements may present significant barriers to building low and mid-rise housing types. These barriers can be largely attributed to the rural nature of LAMIRDs and the necessity for any developments in LAMIRDs to be serviced by individual wells and septic systems.

The following recommendations were made in the study for consideration by Island County. While the analysis is countywide, many of these are applicable to Clinton and would apply if changes were made in the Rural Center zone.

- Increase the existing density to 12 dwelling units per acre maximum for mixed-used development. This would likely be in conjunction with increases in height limits and max building gross floor area.
- Allow 0.5 acre minimum lot size or less with ICPH approval. Currently there is no set standard for the Rural Center zone and all lot sizes are determined by ICPH approval.
- Increase building height to 40 feet in all mixed-use zones. Could consider step-backs or other design standards to lessen potential impact. This standard currently exists in the Rural Center zone at present.
- Specify design standards in place of requiring conditional use permits for mixed-use development.
- Allow up to 8 dwelling units per building in all mixed-use developments in mixed-use LAMIRDs. Due to the rural requirements for LAMIRDs, this is dependent on adequate utility availability and ICPH approval.

### 3.4. Land Use Goals and Policies

<b>LU Goal 1: Encourage efficient development within the Clinton Rural Center land use designation.</b>
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<p><b>Policy LU 1.1:</b> Modify existing development standards to increase permitted densities and allow additional housing types, such as multi-family, in mixed-use areas, subject to infrastructure availability.</p>
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<p><b>Policy LU 1.2:</b> Establish a 0.5 acre or less minimum lot size standard within the Rural Center zone with parameters for ICPH review.</p>
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<p><b>Policy LU 1.3:</b> Specify design standards in place of requiring conditional use permits for mixed-use development.</p>
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<p><b>Policy LU 1.4:</b> Modify existing development standards to allow up to 8 dwelling units per building in mixed-use developments in mixed-use LAMIRDs in Clinton.</p>
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<p><b>Policy LU 1.5:</b> Modify the development standards for parcels along SR 525 in coordination with WSDOT, such as decreasing setbacks, to more easily permit pedestrian access to new development, especially on parcels that have unique shapes/sizes.</p>
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<p><b>Policy LU 1.6:</b> Evaluate the potential for changes within the right-of-way on Island County owned roads to further traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and wayfinding.</p>
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**Policy LU 1.7:** Evaluate permitted uses within the Rural Center zone in Clinton to expand the types of businesses and services that can be located in the downtown core.

**LU Goal 2: Establish a defined physical character that facilitates growth while maintaining a small town look and feel.**

**Policy LU 2.1:** Create zoning standards to help establish or reinforce the desired character of Clinton for future use development abutting SR 525.

**Policy LU 2.2:** Enhance pedestrian connectivity through dedicated bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that allows safe and efficient movement throughout the community.

**Policy LU 2.3:** Enhance Clinton’s public areas, including improved sidewalk and pedestrian areas along SR 525 and the removal of unnecessary curb cuts, which increase vehicular/pedestrian conflict areas.

**Policy LU 2.4:** Create a standardized signage and wayfinding program.

**LU Goal 3: Study appropriate area boundaries for a Clinton Non-Municipal Urban Growth Area (NMUGA).**

**Policy LU 3.1:** Develop materials to provide the community with information on what becoming an NMUGA would mean for Clinton and meaningfully engage the community for input/feedback.

**Policy LU 3.2:** Establish a boundary for the Clinton NMUGA based on accommodating projected growth over the succeeding 20-year period.

**Policy LU 3.3:** Conduct a financial feasibility study to determine the potential cost and available funding sources for providing necessary urban governmental services, including storm drain and sewer services.

**Policy LU 3.4:** Evaluate the need for land use designation changes or the establishment of new land uses within Clinton.

**Policy LU-3.5:** Determine appropriate urban densities for the future NMUGA based on population projections and the County’s population growth projections.

**Policy LU-3.6:** Consider Environmentally Critical Areas in and around Clinton to inform a future NMUGA boundary.

## Chapter 4. Housing

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter analyzes existing housing conditions within Clinton, including existing housing stock, potential future growth, the limitations that the community faces as a LAMIRD, and programs and policies that may help residents who are currently cost burdened relating to housing. Housing within Clinton is primarily single-family in nature and has seen a slowing in growth in recent years with very few new units being constructed. Housing growth is tied to infrastructure availability and creative solutions will need to be explored in order for the community to see meaningful growth while still staying rural in nature as the LAMIRD designation requires. Vacation rentals constitute a substantial share of Clinton’s existing housing stock.

### 4.2. Existing Conditions

Clinton is designated as a LAMIRD which indicates that it can accommodate more housing and commercial growth than the surrounding rural areas. While Clinton has this designation within the County’s Comprehensive Plan, it is not an incorporated City or in an UGA. It is primarily rural in nature with mostly single-family residences with lots ranging in size from one-tenth of an acre to ten acres. Housing stock within the community is generally older as shown in **Table 4-2**, Housing Stock (by Age of Unit) and are typically one-story ramblers focused on neighborhood streets. A visual assessment of the community showed that houses are generally well-maintained, but a number of units showed signs of deferred maintenance and general wear and tear that may require repairs in the near future.

#### 4.2.1. Housing Stock

Clinton has 719 total units of housing within its Census designated place (CDP) boundary, approximately 122 (17 percent) of which are vacant. Clinton is primarily comprised of single-family housing units, which make up 663 (92.2 percent) of the total units. The remaining units are a mixture of multiple unit buildings (16units) and the remaining four units are mobile homes. Community feedback indicates that there may be recent construction of more manufactured homes in Clinton in addition to those reported by the Census Bureau, though not a significant number. Per the 2023 ACS, the median home price is \$603,900, slightly above Island County’s median of \$595,100.

**Table 4-1: Housing Mix**

Housing Mix	Units
Total housing units	719
1-unit, detached	663
1-unit, attached	0
2 units	0
3 or 4 units	16
5 to 9 units	0
10 to 19 units	0
20 or more units	0
Manufactured home	40

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Clinton’s housing stock tends to be older with 61 percent of homes constructed before 1980. This indicates slow housing construction in recent years and census data estimates that no new units have been built in the community since 2020 as reflected in the census data, although public comments have noted that new homes have been built in the area after 2020. **Table 4-2**, Housing Stock (by Age of Unit) shows the breakdown of homes by year built:

**Table 4-2: Housing Stock (by age of unit)**

Year Built	Number of Units
Built 2020 or later	0
Built 2010 to 2019	47
Built 2000 to 2009	148
Built 1990 to 1999	32
Built 1980 to 1989	14
Built 1970 to 1979	109
Built 1960 to 1969	24
Built 1950 to 1959	103
Built 1940 to 1949	113
Built 1939 or earlier	35

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**4.2.2. Housing Occupancy and Tenure**

Nearly 20 percent of homes in Clinton are classified as vacant. The census does not have formal methodology for counting vacation rentals, but most are classified as vacant which may explain the higher than average vacancy rate when compared to Island County and Washington State. However, this is not absolute and some vacation rentals likely show up as rentals. When compared to Langley, which has some similar geographic features and location characteristics, Clinton’s occupancy rate is nearly identical. **Table 4-3**, Housing Occupancy Rates, shows Clinton’s occupancy rate compared to other areas within Island County as well as the County and the State as a whole.

**Table 4-3: Housing Occupancy Rates**

Housing Occupancy	Clinton	Langley	Freeland	Island County	Washington State
Occupied Percent	81.1	81.8	66.7	85.7	94.7
Vacant Percent	18.9	18.2	33.3	14.3	5.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing tenure describes housing occupancy characteristics and distinguishes between how many units are owner-occupied and how many units are renter-occupied. In Clinton, 82.2 percent of units are owner-occupied and 17.8 percent renter-occupied. As noted in the previous section, it is difficult to clearly distinguish between owner-occupied and renter-occupied for second units that may be vacation rentals or secondary residences. This may account for the large percentage of renter-occupied units in Langley, as shown in **Table 4-4**, Housing Tenure. Clinton is relatively equivalent to Freeland and has a higher percentage of owner-occupied units than Island County as a whole. This is likely due to an increase in rental units, such as apartments or single-family rental units, in cities such as Langley and Oak Harbor.

Table 4-4: Housing Tenure

Housing Tenure	Clinton	Langley	Freeland	Island County	Washington State
Owner-Occupied	82.2	66.8	86.7	76.4	63.7
Renter-Occupied	17.8	33.2	13.3	23.6	36.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

### 4.2.3. Housing Costs

Individuals or households paying more than 30 percent of their monthly income towards housing, are considered housing burdened. In Clinton, approximately 29 percent of occupants fit this classification, similar to the state average of 33 percent. **Table 4-5**, Housing Burden in Clinton shows the breakdown of housing owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units organized by household income as well as percentage of monthly housing costs compared to household income in the past 12 months.

Table 4-5: Housing Burden in Clinton

Monthly housing costs as a percentage of household income in the past 12 months	Occupied Housing Units	Percent	Owner-occupied Housing Units	Percent	Renter-occupied Housing Units	Percent
<b>Less than \$20,000</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13.3%</b>
Less than 20 percent	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20 to 29 percent	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30 percent or more	52	10.3%	40	9.6%	12	13.3%
<b>\$20,000 to \$34,999</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Less than 20 percent	6	1.2%	6	1.4%	0	0.0%
20 to 29 percent	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30 percent or more	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>\$35,000 to \$49,999</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11.1%</b>
Less than 20 percent	16	3.2%	16	3.8%	0	0.0%
20 to 29 percent	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30 percent or more	51	10.1%	41	9.8%	10	11.1%
<b>\$50,000 to \$74,999</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>26.0%</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Less than 20 percent	80	15.8%	80	19.2%	0	0.0%
20 to 29 percent	46	9.1%	46	11.0%	0	0.0%
30 percent or more	6	1.2%	6	1.4%	0	0.0%
<b>\$75,000 or more</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>41.8%</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>43.6%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>33.3%</b>
Less than 20 percent	135	26.6%	109	26.1%	26	28.9%
20 to 29 percent	51	10.1%	47	11.3%	4	4.4%
30 percent or more	26	5.1%	26	6.2%	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>469</b>		<b>417</b>		<b>52</b>	
<b>Housing Burdened</b>	<b>29%</b>		<b>27%</b>		<b>42%</b>	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Island County offers a range of housing programs and resources to assist residents with their housing needs. This includes a variety of grant and loan programs to assist renters, homebuyers, homeowners, and affordable housing developers. These programs include diversion, deposit assistance, rent assistance, and referrals to temporary housing when available, including transitional and emergency

housing. These types of programs may help Clinton residents who are housing burdened. Statistics are not available on how many residents typically utilize rental assistance services on yearly basis.

**4.3. Buildable Lands Analysis**

As part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update, a land capacity analysis was conducted for Clinton to analyze the capacity for residential development under existing zoning standards. This analysis used the methodology described in the Island County CPPs for LAMIRDs to access the Rural Center and Rural Residential zoned lots in Clinton.

The analysis did not identify a housing unit allocation set specifically to Clinton and instead focused growth targets across the mixed-use LAMIRD’s within Island County, of which Clinton is a part of. Until a more locally specific study is done, this information is the best available for use in helping understand Clinton’s future need. This methodology is helpful for planning future zoning standards and population growth. A total capacity of 158 dwelling units in the Rural Center zone and 88 units in the Rural Residential zone was identified for a total capacity of 246 dwelling units in Clinton, as shown in **Table 4-6**, Clinton Housing Capacity Analysis.

**Table 4-6: Clinton Housing Capacity Analysis**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Gross Acres of Eligible Lots*</b>	<b>Net Acres after Deductions**</b>	<b>Density Assumption</b>	<b>Housing Capacity</b>
RR	186.32	29.59	3 du/ac	88
RC	65.61	13.20	12 du/ac	158
Totals	251.93	42.79		246

*\*Eligible lots are those identified as being vacant, re-developable, or partially vacant under Island County CPP definitions.*

*\*\*Deductions include public use adjustment, critical area factor, seasonal/recreation use adjustment, and removal of lots with no capacity for housing, but were still classified as eligible (for example, a vacant lot under 10,000 sf in the RR zone).*

It is important to note that as of the publishing date of this draft report, Island County has not made a final decision or determination on the appropriate density limits for LAMIRDs. The numbers shown above are draft and being used for planning purposes but will not be final until adopted in the County’s 2025 Comprehensive Plan and updated development regulations.

**4.4. Housing Constraints**

**4.4.1. Limited Housing Growth**

As Clinton grows, housing prices, vacancy rates, mix in housing types, and construction starts are meaningful data to collect and analyze to assess the health of the local housing supply. Home prices will likely continue to climb as the area grows and demand for housing increases. Proximity to the ferry combined with being a tranquil community along the Sound make it a desirable place to live. To accommodate likely future demand for housing at lower costs than single-family houses, more housing construction will need to occur that includes more affordable housing including duplexes and townhouses. These are the most likely market-rate affordable housing types based on current and likely near-term infrastructure and utility availability. Recent trends are not favorable to housing growth keeping up with population growth as only 7.5 percent increase in existing housing stock has been built since 2010, while

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the population has grown by nearly 400 people. This indicates a potential housing shortage as population continues to increase. Affordability will continue to be an issue in Clinton given there are many housing burdened individuals, especially renters. To help with this, construction of more units of a diverse single and multi-family mix for both rental and ownership is recommended.

### 4.4.2. Infrastructure Constraints

One of the greatest barriers to housing growth is sewage capacity or other alternatives to individual septic systems. Individual septic systems limit growth. Island County is researching strategies to address infrastructure constraints as part of implementation of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update.

Sewage or community septic solutions will be needed to support development of a range of housing types in the Rural Center and Rural Residential zones. Pursuing NMUGA designation may facilitate the future development of a sewage or community septic network that could create much needed capacity and flexibility in development options.

Infrastructure within Clinton is discussed in more detail in **Chapter 5**.

## 4.5. Housing Goals and Policies

**HO Goal 1: Align growth, including uses and densities, with the needs of the community while diversifying housing mixes and opportunities.**

**Policy HO 1.1:** Evaluate existing development standards in the Rural Residential zone to allow additional housing types, including duplexes, cottage housing, and townhomes.

**Policy HO 1.2:** Complete a septic study to evaluate the feasibility of alternative septic systems as well as sewer service to accommodate growth.

**Policy HO 1.3:** Encourage the building of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) with single-family residential development.

**Policy HO 1.4:** Modify existing development standards in the Rural Center zone to allow additional housing types, including duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes.

## Chapter 5. Utilities, Infrastructure and Services

### 5.1. Introduction

Utilities, infrastructure, and other public services such as waste removal, recycling, fire safety, and more serve instrumental functions for the day-to-day activity within communities. Clinton's designation as a LAMIRD and development regulations within the Island County Zoning Code, as described in the **Section 4, Zoning and Land Use**, also mean that future residential and commercial growth is directly tied to the availability of water and sewer capacity to serve new buildings. Clinton relies on capital facilities beyond its LAMIRD, therefore, planning for utilities in the Comprehensive Plan will have great effect on Clinton. This chapter reviews Clinton's existing water and sewer availability as well as the County's Capital Facilities element and Capital Improvement Plan to determine what future improvements are planned.

#### 5.1.1. Other Related Plans

This chapter is based on the capital facilities plans, master utility plans and studies prepared by facility and service providers operating in the community. The following planning documents were used:

- Island County Draft Comprehensive Plan, December 2024
- Island County Capital Facilities Plan
- Island County Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)
- Island County Coordinated Water System Plan
- South Whidbey Fire/EMS Strategic Plan, 2020-2025
- South Whidbey School District 10-Year Facilities Plan

## **5.2. Capital Facilities**

### **5.2.1. Drinking Water Availability**

#### **System Description**

All residents in Clinton are dependent upon groundwater for their source of clean water. The Coordinated Water System Plan oversees the management of drinking water systems in Island County, including Clinton. The CWD is a Group A water system, providing water to a 1.9 square miles area encompassing nearly all the Clinton CDP. CWD utilizes a gravity system and pulls water from four areas reservoirs to provide residents with drinking and usable clean water.

#### **Level of Service Analysis**

Per the Clinton Water District Annual June 2024 Consumer Confidence Report, the CWD is current with all required testing by the State Department of Health. The District's sampling for Volatile Organic Compounds and Synthetic Organic Compounds has shown no detection of any of the regulated contaminants established by the Environmental Protection Agency.<sup>2</sup> The last water quality monitoring performed was in 2024, with the next round occurring in 2025. As of the 2016 analysis, all of the compounds found in Clinton's water supply were found to be at lower levels than the U.S. EPA allows. CWD currently has 792 connections, serving a population of approx. 1,940 people, and has an unspecified capacity per the [Washington Department of Health](#). In the 2006 [CWD Water System Plan](#) update, it was determined that the district has the capacity to support approx. 835 connections; however, as a Group A water system, CWD has the ability to apply for more water rights.

### **5.2.2. Wastewater**

#### **System Description**

All residents in Clinton utilize individual Onsite Sewage (septic) systems as there is no dedicated sewer infrastructure. The low-population density of Clinton does not support a traditional wastewater facility; however, individual septic systems present a barrier for future development due to the high costs and potential site barriers. In an attempt to mitigate this issue, the County is currently working on a septic study to identify alternative solutions to support future growth.

#### **Level of Service & Capacity Analysis**

Clinton does not have unique LOS standards. More information can be found in the Capital Facilities Element and Plan within the Island County 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update.

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<sup>2</sup> Clinton Water District Consumer Confidence Report (June 2024). Available at: [https://clintonwaterdistrict.org/?page\\_id=662](https://clintonwaterdistrict.org/?page_id=662)

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### 5.2.3. Stormwater

#### System Description

Stormwater is managed by Island County Public Works. Stormwater in Clinton is drained through a series of catch basins and culverts with a drainage easement depositing stormwater into the Puget Sound. Clinton's shoreline is part of the Clinton Critical Drainage Area.

#### Level of Service & Capacity Analysis

Clinton does not have unique LOS standards. More information can be found in the Capital Facilities Element and Plan within the Island County 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update.

## 5.3. Utilities

### 5.3.1. Electricity

#### System Description

Electricity is provided to the Clinton area by Puget Sound Energy (PSE). PSE provides electrical and natural gas service to over 1.2 million customers across the Puget Sound region of Western Washington, including 33,339 electrical connections to residences and 5,207 electrical connections to commercial businesses in Island County per the 2024 Island County Energy Community Profile.

### 5.3.2. Waste and Recycling

#### System Description

Island Disposal provides residential and business waste and recycling services, including dumpster rentals. In Clinton, solid waste and recycling services are provided through a contract with Island Disposal and the County does not directly provide any waste services.

## 5.4. Other Services

### 5.4.1. Law Enforcement

#### System Description

Island County Sheriff's Office provides community-oriented police services to the entirety of Island County, including South Whidbey. The Clinton area is served by the South Precinct in Freeland, located at 5521 East Harbor Road.

#### Level of Service & Capacity Analysis

Clinton does not have unique LOS standards. More information can be found in the Capital Facilities Element and Plan within the Island County 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update.

### 5.4.2. Fire Protection

#### System Description

South Whidbey Fire/EMS (SWFE) is an all-hazards fire and rescue department serving all people on Whidbey Island south of Mutiny Bay Rd. Established in 1950 and staffed mostly by volunteers, serves 66 square miles of the southern portion of Whidbey Island. This includes a permanent population of approximately 15,000, though visitors to the island increase that to a daily effective population of approximately 25,000 people. The district has stations in Freeland, Clinton, Maxwellton, Langley, Saratoga, and Bayview. Additionally South Whidbey Fire/EMS has a maintenance facility in Langley. Services are provided by 15 paid firefighters/EMTs, 9 volunteer firefighters/EMTs, 2 volunteer firefighters,

and 13 volunteer EMTs. Services provided by the district include fire suppression, emergency medical, marine and cliff rescue, fire and safety education, disaster preparation, and community risk reduction.

**Level of Service & Capacity Analysis**

The Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau rates the unincorporated areas served by the District at Fire Protection Class 7, which exceeds currently adopted Class 8 LOS for fire protection.

The Clinton Station (#32) is located at 6435 Central Avenue. The station houses 1 engine, 1 tender, and 1 large scale multi-casualty incident trailer.

**Deficiencies & Proposed Improvements**

In January 2020, the Board of Fire Commissioners for South Whidbey Fire/EMS approved a five-year Strategic Plan covering 2020-2025. The Strategic Plan identifies how South Whidbey Fire/EMS will meet the challenges to service for an aging population and increasing emergency call volumes. The top initiatives in the Strategic Plan are to improve survival chances for victims of fire and emergency medical calls. A key result of this plan was a Levy Lift which was approved and has allowed the district to hire 12 firefighter/emergency medical technicians and start replacing aging apparatus. Prior to this, the majority of South Whidbey Fire/EMS staff was volunteer. The Strategic Plan also calls for improving the community's fire insurance rating. This rating is linked to the amount home and business owners pay in insurance premiums. The Strategic Plan is evaluated annually and a status report produced. The Strategic Plan can be found on the [South Whidbey Fire/EMS webpage](#).

**5.4.3. Schools**

**System Description**

The South Whidbey School District (District 206) serves the communities located on the south end of Whidbey Island in Washington State. The district is 60 square miles in size and serves approximately 1,100 full-time students on three campuses. Kindergarteners through 5<sup>th</sup> graders are in the South Whidbey Elementary North Campus. The following schools are available to serve Clinton residents but are not located within Clinton. The Transitional Kindergarten and Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) programs are located in the South Whidbey Elementary South Campus with the District Offices. Grades 6-12 are located in the South Whidbey Secondary Campus (known as South Whidbey High School). Lastly, the district also has the South Whidbey Academy (SWA) choice program. The 10-12<sup>th</sup> grade SWA program is located in the South Whidbey Secondary Campus.

In addition to public schools, Clinton is also home to the WEEKDAYS South Whidbey Preschool which is a nature-based preschool serving children 1-6 years of age. The WEEKDAYS school has the ability to serve approximately 30 students. There are several other private schools outside of the Clinton area which may serve Clinton residents, including the Whidbey Island Waldorf School (preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade) and schools within the nearby communities of Langley and Freeland.

**Level of Service & Capacity Analysis**

The South Whidbey School District employes approximately 144 full-time equivalent teachers and 185 staff. Through the 2025 Island County Comprehensive Plan periodic update, County staff is collaborating with the school district to better understand future needs in relation to level of service and capacity needs.

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### Deficiencies & Proposed Improvements

On July 24, 2024, the Board of the South Whidbey School District adopted its 2024-2025 academic year goals, including:

- **Social-Emotional Learning.** We will deepen our school culture of care and belonging with particular attention to systems, practices, and staff intra- and interpersonal capacities.
- **Academic Growth.** We will continue to use best practices that nurture and create innovative learning environments supportive of every student's resilience and success in the future they choose.
- **Logistics.** Through mission-aligned use and stewardship of our district assets (land, facilities, people, money, institutional knowledge, and time), we will create the conditions for a new superintendent's success.

The school district website contains a 10-Year Facilities Plan which identifies the following District-wide improvement needs: water distribution and purification system, septic systems and drain fields, water heating systems, access control and keying systems, technology infrastructure systems, and student/staff furniture modernization. Additional improvements have been identified for the South Whidbey Elementary School and South Whidbey High School facilities. A full list of identified improvement needs can be found on the [South Whidbey School District website](#).

In the November 7, 2023, special election, the South Whidbey Community voted to authorize a total of \$79,800,000 in bonds to fund future projects, including construction and maintenance of facilities. The school district has prepared a comprehensive plan for future capital improvements to be covered under the bond measure.

### 5.5. Capital Improvement Plan

In July 2024, Island County prepared and adopted a six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which identified anticipated spending and project priorities from 2024 through 2029. Project descriptions are identified by group and by separate planning and program efforts, which may apply countywide. The CIP will be continually updated to address future projects as priorities and funding sources change. More information can be found in the Capital Facilities Element and Plan within the Island County 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update.

### 5.6. Utilities, Infrastructure, and Services Goals and Policies

<b>UT Goal 1: Plan for capital facilities to be available prior to or concurrently with new development.</b>
<b>Policy UT 1.1:</b> Collaborate with ICPH on the outcomes of their 2025 septic study to promote creative alternative solutions to private septic service.
<b>Policy UT 1.2:</b> Continue to require that new development makes code required improvements to infrastructure and utilities.
<b>Policy UT 1.3:</b> Coordinate with utility providers to adequately plan for capital facilities to support future growth in the community.

## Chapter 6. Environment and Climate

### 6.1. Introduction

Clinton is a rural area surrounded by significant natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas, including almost three miles of shoreline, densely forested areas, wetlands, streams, and steep slopes. As Clinton grows, it will be increasingly important that these natural resources are protected and managed in an environmentally considerate manor. Part of Clinton's growth will be adapting to present and future climate and natural hazards. This chapter evaluates the hazards and environmental constraints Clinton faces and policies to promote a resilient and conservation conscious future for its citizens and assets.

### 6.2. Existing Conditions

Critical Areas in Island County are environmentally sensitive natural resources that have been designated for protection and management. Critical Areas include wetlands, geologically hazardous areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, frequently flood areas, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas. In Island County, development in or near Critical Areas are regulated by Island County Code Title XVII, Chapter 17.02B and 17.05. The critical areas for island County will be updated in 2026 as part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update.

Critical Areas in Clinton have been identified and mapped to protect these sensitive areas during future development. The following sections detail each type of Critical Area found within Clinton and considers how this may impact future growth in the community. Future site-specific development plans will still require additional fieldwork completed by a qualified professional to identify site specific conditions.

#### 6.2.1. Wetlands

Per the US Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Inventory wetlands in Clinton are relatively small, with the largest being around 5-acres. As shown in **Figure 6-3**, wetland areas are found throughout the study area, primarily in residential areas. Regardless of size, these wetlands provide benefits including food and habitat for fish and wildlife, including western toads, regulating water level and flow, stabilizing streams and shorelines, and improving water quality. Human disturbances to wetlands, including run-off, landscape alteration, and changes in drainage, threaten the beneficial functions of wetlands, specifically water quality and habitat. Parcels with identified wetlands will need to undergo development review to protect wetlands and see how potential impacts due to development may be avoided or mitigated.

#### 6.2.2. Geologically Hazardous Areas

Geologically Hazardous Areas are areas susceptible to erosion, landslides, or seismic activity. In Clinton, steep slopes are a potential hazard. Mapping from the US Geological Survey shows the majority of Clinton's shoreline is located on a steep bluff that runs parallel to the shoreline, presenting landslide potential. Developments in Geologically Hazardous Areas in Island County are subject to the requirements established in the Island County Code, Chapters 11.02, 11.03, and 17.02B.

#### 6.2.3. Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas

All of Island County is considered a Critical Aquifer Recharge Area since the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency designated Island County with "Sole Source Aquifer" status in 1982. This means that a majority of the population relies on aquifers as the main source of drinking water, and therefore,

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contamination of the aquifers would create a public health hazard. Rainwater infiltration is the only source for regenerating the water supply available in aquifers and also serves to prevent sea water from entering the aquifer. Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas are ranked into three categories: “low,” “medium,” and “high” risk of contamination. Development in Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas in Island County is subject to the requirements of local, state, and federal permits and laws.

### 6.2.4. Frequently Flooded Areas

Frequently Flooded Areas include streams, rivers, lakes, coastal areas, wetlands, or other high groundwater ponds that could be threatened by flooding due to intense storms, high tides, sea-level rise, or other hydrologic phenomena. Development in Frequently Flooded Areas in Island County are subject to the requirements established in the Island County Code, Chapter 14.02.A. King tides and sea level rise are of specific concern to Clinton and its residents who have and will be impacted by king tides. Rising sea levels are expected to increase the areas of Clinton exposed to frequent flooding whether through rising seas, king tides, or inland flooding from a higher water table. The 2025 Comprehensive Plan update contains an interactive [vulnerability study](#) which explores the impacts of frequently flooded areas and other climate exacerbated hazards. Refer to the Island County Planning and Community Development Comprehensive Plan website for modeling and maps on the subject.

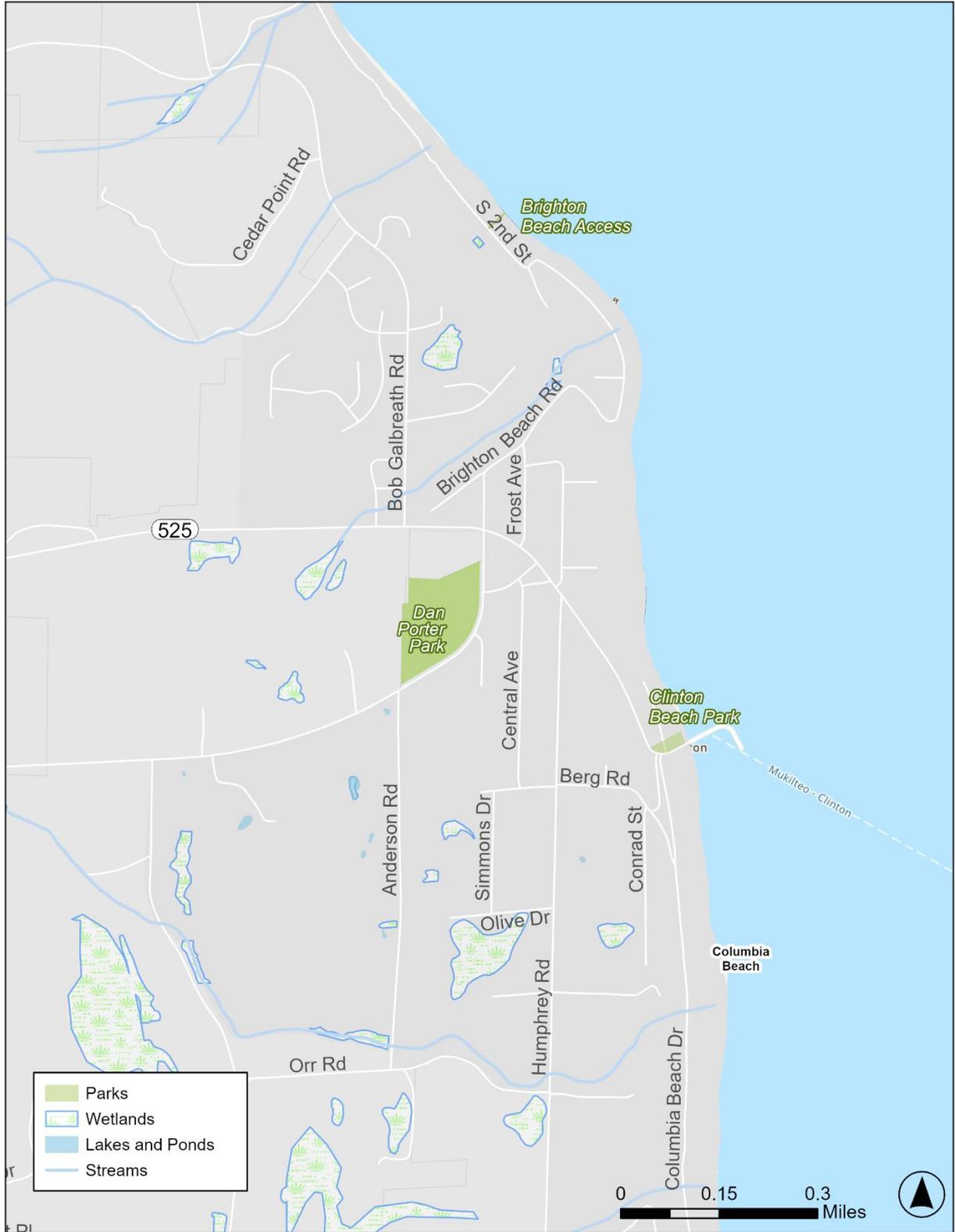
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates boundaries of high-risk flood zones. The entire shoreline of Clinton is designated as a high-risk flood area as shown in **Figure 6-6**.

### 6.2.5. Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas include areas associated with endangered, threatened, and sensitive species, streams and waterbodies, natural preserves, and habitats of local importance. These areas are particularly sensitive to pollution from development and other human activities.

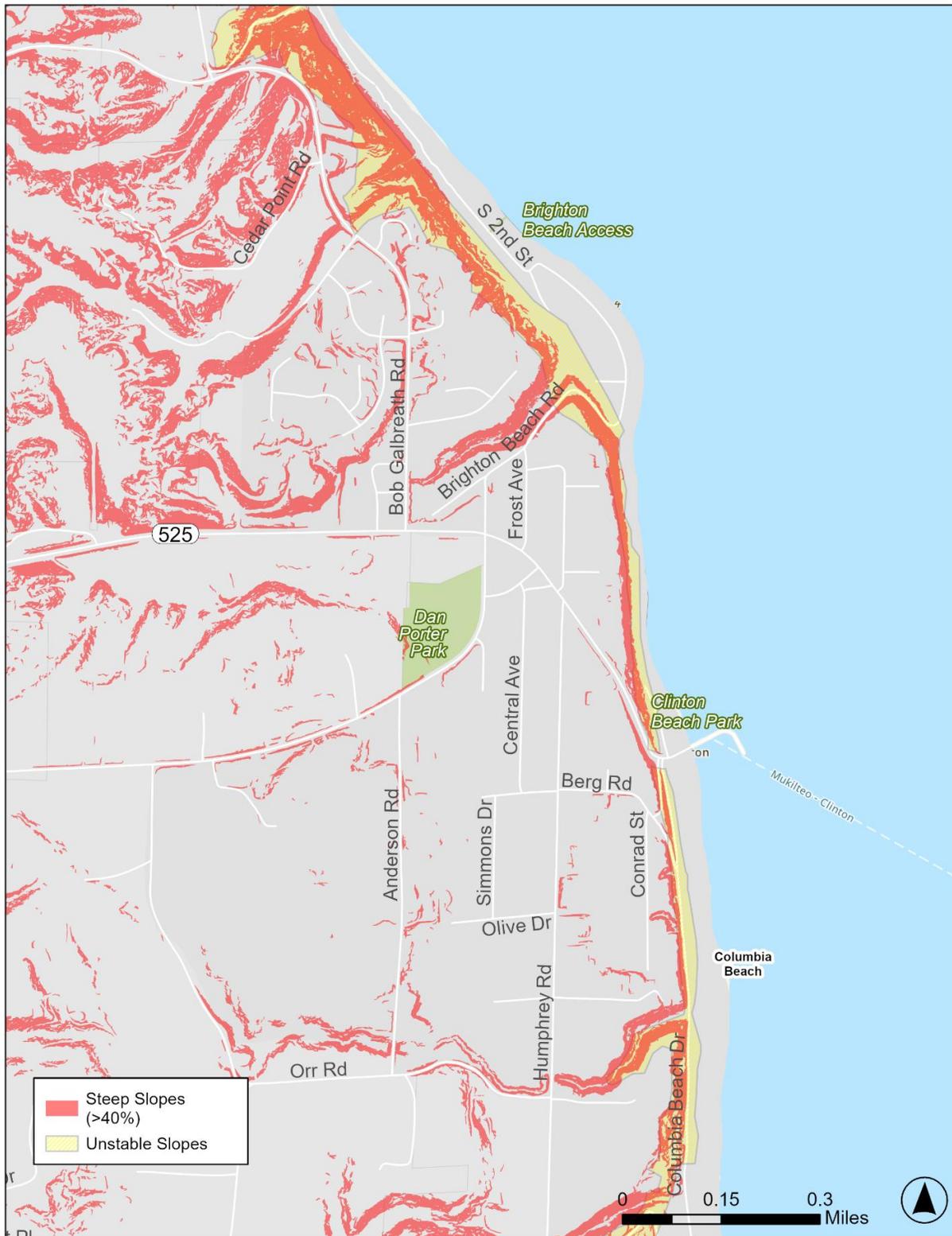
Two streams, Deer Creek and an unnamed stream along Brighton Beach Road, in Clinton are designated by the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife as fish distribution streams for salmon, one for the endangered Coho salmon population. In addition, the proposed Ken's Korner to Clinton Trail is in the vicinity of the headwaters of Old Clinton Creek. Clinton has almost three miles of Shoreline along the Puget Sound – an important habitat for marine species. Shorelines are regulated and protected separately by the Island County Shoreline Master Program in Island County Code, Chapter 17.05.A.

Figure 6-1: Wetlands



Source: US Fish and Wildlife Service, ESRI

Figure 6-2: Geologically Hazardous Area – Step and Unstable Slopes



Source: US Geological Survey, ESRI

Figure 6-3: FEMA Flood Zones



Source: FEMA

### 6.3. Environmental Factors and Considerations

Clinton’s largest environmental considerations are its relationship with its Environmentally Critical Areas and the Puget Sound and its tributaries in the area. For example, protections for fish in its streams and sensitivity of the area’s groundwater supply mean future development in the area will have to meet regulations intended to protect water quality and habitat areas. Much of the shoreline is exposed to king tide flooding and sea level rise, located in flood zones, and thus require developmental considerations and limitations to ensure these have minimal impacts on the community. This plan’s environmental policies intended to reinforce existing county policies to allow the community to develop in a manner ensuring habitat and environmental protection as well as a resilient community against natural hazards.

### 6.4. Environment and Climate Goals and Policies

Goals and policies are not included for this section of the Subarea Plan because the County’s Critical Areas Ordinance (Chapter 17.02B ICC) and Shoreline Master Program (Chapter 17.05A ICC) are our environmental code and policy documents.

<b>ENV Goal 1: Encourage protection of the environment and enhancement of the area’s quality of life while still permitting growth with respect to natural limitations.</b>
<b>Policy ENV 1.1:</b> Evaluate the potential impacts of present and future hazards when planning for future growth and discourage growth in areas subject to natural hazards.
<b>Policy ENV 1.2:</b> Maintain an updated set of Critical Areas data to inform residents and applicants of potentially environmentally sensitive areas within their properties
<b>Policy ENV 1.3:</b> Evaluate, record, and preserve established wildlife corridors.
<b>Policy ENV 1.4:</b> Promote the use of native vegetation in residential neighborhoods.
<b>Policy ENV 1.5:</b> Using updated modeling, appropriately regulate development in frequently flooded areas along sole access roads exposed to sea-level rise and king tides, including exploring the establishment of an overlay allowing for greater landscaping and lower density in such exposed areas.

## Chapter 7. Parks and Open Space

### 7.1. Introduction

Parks and open spaces such as trails, community gathering areas, and natural areas are central components of any community’s well-being, allowing accessible spaces to connect with nature, participate in physical activities, and build community. Clinton’s coastal location provides the community with access to the Puget Sound and beaches such as Clinton Beach Park. Additionally, there is one designated park in Clinton with many others near the area. Maintaining access to and quality of parks and open space es is vital to the health, prosperity, and natural resources in any community. This section lays out the existing conditions for Clinton’s parks and open space, as well as policies to future evaluation of level of service and potential maintenance and improvement.

## 7.2. Existing Conditions

### 7.2.1. Local Parks

Clinton has two designated parks – Dan Porter Park and Clinton Beach Park (see 7-1, Parks and Open Space).

- Dan Porter Park is a 9.4-acre park located on Deer Lake Road. The park includes 5.4-acres of forested land and features a ballfield, playground, covered structure, and additional open green space.
- Clinton Beach Park is a small 0.6-acre park located next to the Ferry Terminal. The park provides direct access to the beach and also includes bathrooms, covered bicycle parking, tables, and informational signage.

As a rural area, many of the lots for single-family residences in the area have large yards for recreational use as well. While not publicly accessible, they do provide many residents with outdoor spaces for recreation and activities such as gardening as a hobby or for food production.

### 7.2.2. Open Space

Open Space is a broad term that includes all land which contains natural areas, habitat lands, natural drainage features, and/or other environmental, cultural, scenic resources, and interior gathering spaces. Interior gathering space can be especially beneficial during winter months. This includes Critical Areas, trails, forest lands, waterways, and civic spaces. Most open space is privately owned and intended to remain largely undeveloped, except for civic spaces. In addition to Critical Areas (discussed in Chapter 6), Clinton also has one civic space – the Clinton Community Hall (see 7-1, Parks and Open Space).

The Clinton Community Hall is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, community-supported organization located off of SR 525 between Dan Porter Park and the Ferry Terminal. The Clinton Community Hall was formally incorporated in 1910 as Clinton Progressive Association that operates a civic, non-partisan, non-denominational and non-profit organization to benefit the entire South Whidbey community. Currently, a seven-person Board of Directors manage the Community Hall, which serves as a community gathering and event space and can be rented out for private events.

## 7.3. Considering Needs

The Island County 2045 Comprehensive Plan Parks and Recreation Element uses benchmarks as a measurement for how well served residents are with park and open space areas. Island County benchmarks include the number of acres of open space available per 1,000 population. For example, the Parks and Recreation Element includes a finding that the County has 43.3 acres of open space per 1,000 population and that with the projected population growth, the County will, without buying any additional open space, have 36.5 acres per 1,000 population. In both cases, this is found to be considerably above peer jurisdictions. The Parks and Recreation Element does not break the County down into subareas. Based on the 2022 U.S. Census Bureau Clinton has 1,165 residents and approximately 10 acres of park space between Dan Porter Park and the Clinton Beach Park. Clinton does not have any formal trails, though the rural nature and ample natural areas provide for a number of unofficial trails. As discussed in the Transportation Chapter of the subarea plan, the Island County Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) in the Comprehensive Plan 2025 update identifies the Clinton to Ken's Korner multi-use Trail along SR 525. This trail is proposed to run from Deer Lake Road in Clinton to the Ken's Korner shopping center which is approximately 2.5 miles. A portion of this is within the Clinton community study area.

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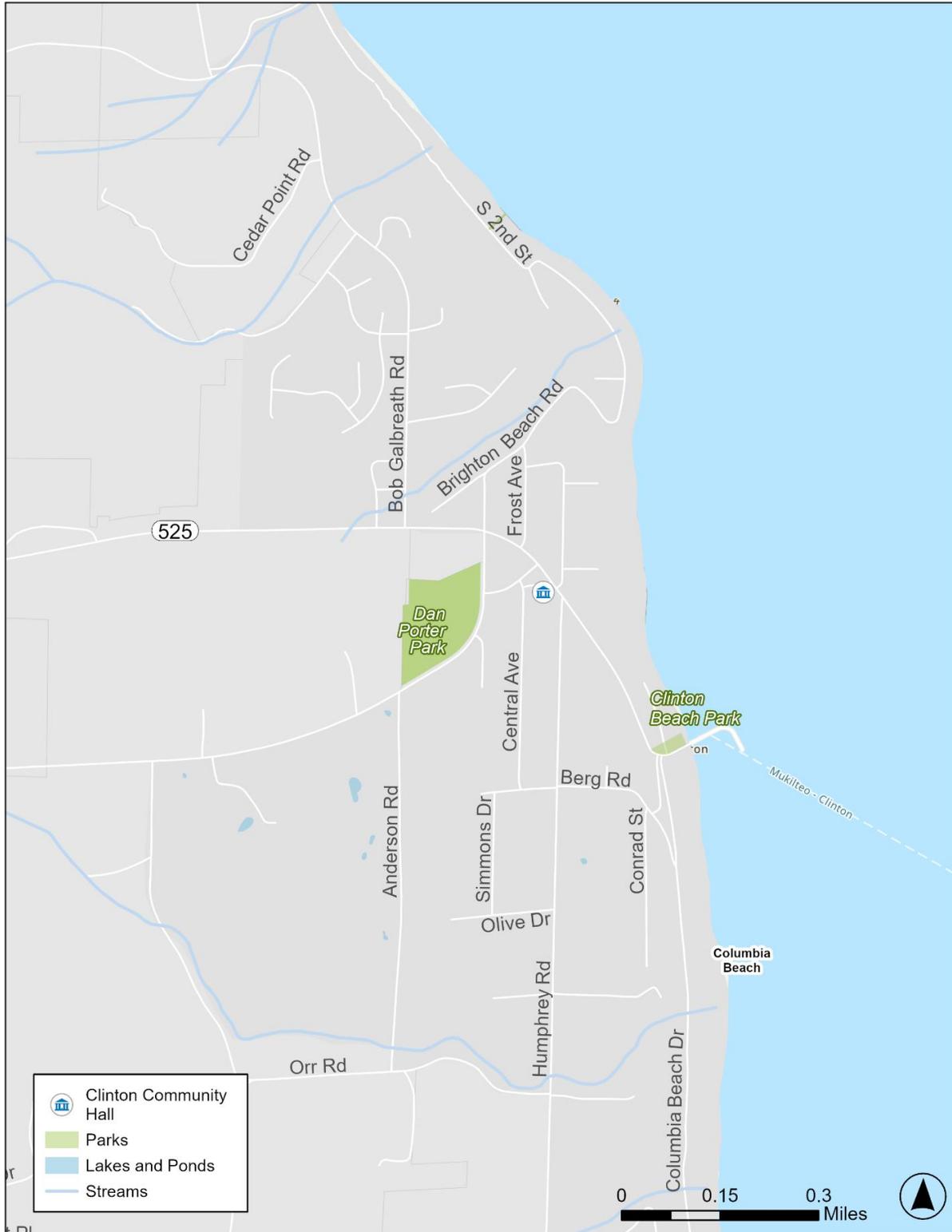
Acres of park land is only one way to measure the service residents are receiving from existing parks and open space facilities. If parks are consolidated into one larger, regional serving park, it may often leave neighborhoods without easily accessible open space. Given the long, linear shape of Clinton, much of the community is not within a ¼ mile (generally regarded as a comfortable 10-minute walking distance for most people) distance of the existing park either Dan Porter Park or the Clinton Beach Park. This is shown in **Figure 8-2**, Parks Level of Service. To create equitable parks and open space opportunities for all residents, neighborhood park areas should be identified and acquired such as in both the northern and southern residential areas of Clinton.

### 7.4. Park and Recreation Demands

As noted above, the Clinton community is well-served based on a traditional LOS analysis and does not need to add any park facilities to meet current demand. However, additional opportunities could help make open space closer to the areas of the community outside the ¼ mile travel distance of the existing parks. Largely private beachfront access and large lots with yards for recreational use provide additional opportunities for outdoor recreation that are not included within that LOS calculation. One potential public beach access point to explore is east of Brighton Beach Road where it curves before turning north along the shoreline. Neighboring unincorporated areas as well as the cities of Langley and Freeland provide more park and open space opportunities in close driving distance and many youth leagues and other programs span the South Whidbey area.

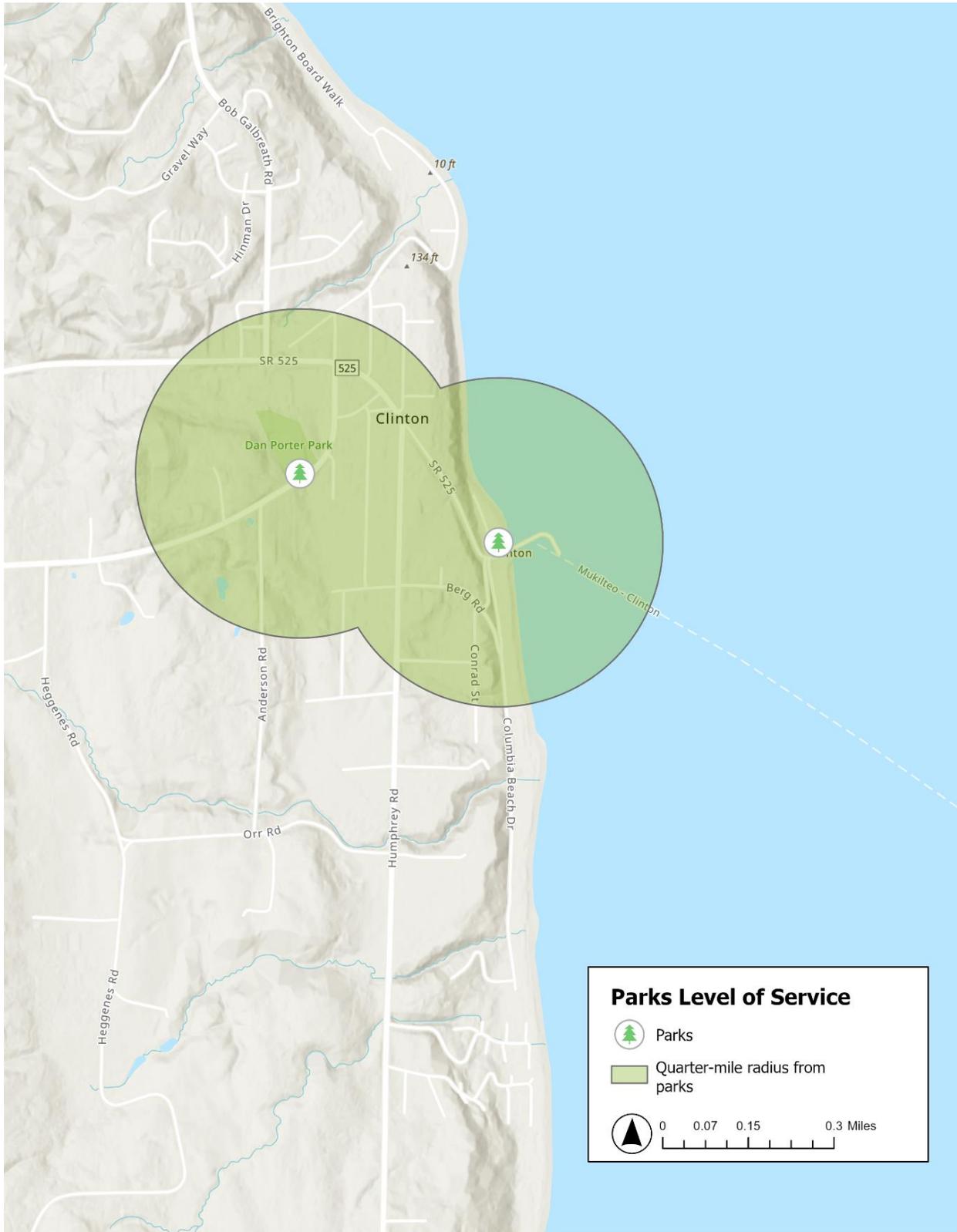
Island County is in the process of updating the Parks and Recreation Element of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan. Additional recommendations for improvements in Clinton may result from future studies or plans.

Figure 7-1: Parks and Open Space



Source: ESRI

Figure 7-2: Parks Level of Service



## 7.5. Parks and Open Space Goals and Policies

### POS Goal 1: Preserve and enhance Clinton's existing park and open space areas.

**Policy POS 1.1:** Carry out the project list for Dan Porter Park in the 2025 Island County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element and look for opportunities to complete an assessment of Clinton Beach Park for projects to include in future Comprehensive Plan periodic updates

**Policy POS 1.2:** Promote a community volunteer cleanup program.

**Policy POS 1.3:** Identify and apply for funding opportunities including grants, local partnerships, and sponsorship, and consider park impact fees to fund future park and open space acquisition and maintenance.

### POS Goal 2: Expand open space and recreational opportunities in Clinton.

**Policy POS 2.1:** Identify land, including Environmentally Critical Areas, in Clinton for potential acquisition as neighborhood parks and open space.

**Policy POS 2.2:** Catalog existing official trails to identify gaps in service and increase community connectivity.

**Policy POS 2.3:** Advertise local recreational opportunities organized by the Clinton Community Council and other local organizations.

**Policy POS 2.4:** Encourage the development of vacant and underused land as pedestrian-oriented community spaces in the downtown core area.

## Chapter 8. Transportation

### 8.1. Introduction

The way in which people move around a community is critical to how it functions. Transportation impacts long-term economic development, community character, safety, and the overall urban design.

Transportation mobility typically includes personal vehicles, public transit, rideshare and carshare, and active modes such as walking, biking, and rolling (wheelchairs and mobility devices). Planning for transportation improvements in Clinton focuses primarily around SR 525 as it plays such a prominent role in not just how residents move within Clinton, but how visitors and residents of the larger Whidbey Island area move through Clinton. Future planning for local roadways that run perpendicular and feed into SR 525 is also an important consideration as these roads are the primary way for residents to access the community's main commercial services area.

#### 8.1.1. Other Related Plans

Several regional, County, and local transportation planning documents are also relevant to the Transportation chapter of the Clinton Subarea Plan. These include the:

- Island County Comprehensive Plan, 2025
- Island County Six-Year TIP, 2025-2030
- Island County Non-Motorized Trails Plan, 2018

### 8.2. Existing Conditions

Clinton is primarily served by SR 525, which originates from the ferry terminal and runs through Clinton into the rest of Whidbey Island. Clinton businesses are largely located along SR 525, which serves as travelers' main access from the ferry through Clinton into Whidbey Island. Humphrey Road is the primary collector road, running north-south from the residential area to the south of the terminal up to SR 525. Island transit provides public transit services to and from the ferry terminal.

#### 8.2.1. Roadways

Per the Transportation Element of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, Clinton's roadways have the following designations. These are shown in **Figure 8-1**, Island County Roadway Classifications (Clinton), and defined consistent with the Comprehensive Plan as follows.

##### **State Highways (Washington State Route 525)**

The State Highway system serves as the primary roadway system within Island County. State Highways connect many of the subareas within the County, including Oak Harbor and Clinton on Whidbey Island and Camano Island to the City of Stanwood. WSDOT classifies certain State Highways, including SR 525, as Highways of Statewide Significance. This designation indicates that the highway has travel characteristics indicative of substantial statewide and interstate travel and are needed to connect major communities.

SR 525 is the only state-maintained road and highway in Clinton, with the rest being local streets. The speed limit of SR 525 within Clinton is 30 mph, and the speed increases once vehicles exit the Clinton boundary. The rest of the roads within Clinton are local with speeds around 35 mph. To the east, SR 525 runs up until the Ferry Terminal, including a 2-mile shoulder for the ferry vehicle queue, and continues south at the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal towards the City of Lynnwood. To the west, SR 525 provides access to the rest of Whidbey Island by traveling to Freeland and continuing north until it intersects with and continues as SR 20, traveling the remainder of Whidbey Island to the Deception Pass Bridge, then on to provide access, via a branch off the main part of SR 20, to the Anacortes Ferry Terminal, on Fidalgo Island.

##### **Secondary Arterial**

Secondary Arterials support the Major Arterial system by providing another tier of mobility and access between the Major Arterial and Collector networks. These roadways also connect two or more communities and may serve as an alternate route to a Major Arterial or State Highway. While still some of the busiest roadways on the county roadway network, Secondary Arterials typically have lower traffic speeds and/or volumes as compared to Major Arterials.

In Clinton, Bob Galbreath Road, which connects Clinton to the City of Langley, and Deer Lake Road, which connects Clinton to the Major Arterial of Cultus Bay Road, are identified as Secondary Arterials.

##### **Collector Roads**

Collectors provide both access and mobility for Island County between the arterial network and local access streets. The predominant function of these roadways is to collect traffic from neighborhoods and local streets. They may provide for considerable local traffic that originates or is destined to points along the corridor, while providing direct access to adjacent properties.

In Clinton, Humphrey Road running south adjacent to the shore is classified as a Collector.

**Local Access**

Local access streets provide for direct access to adjoining properties, commercial businesses, and similar traffic destinations. Local access roads typically carry low volumes of traffic to low activity land uses. While these roadways typically have low speeds, some of the rural access roadways have higher posted speeds.

All other roadways within Clinton are classified as local access roads and provide access to the surrounding residential community off of SR 525.

Figure 8-1: Island County Roadway Classifications (Clinton)



Source: WSDOT

### 8.2.2. Functional Roadway Classifications

In addition to the Functional Classification system adopted by Island County, there are Federal and State roadway designations that are used to determine funding eligibility under Federal-Aid programs. The Federal Functional Classification system provides a hierarchy of roadways as defined by the Federal Highway Administration and is maintained for Washington State roadways by WSDOT<sup>3</sup>. Due to the regional context of the Functional Roadway Classification, some roadways may have different designations.

Within Clinton, SR 525 is classified as an Other Principal Arterial while Humphrey Road, Bob Galbreath Road, and Deer Lake Road are all Minor Collectors.

### 8.2.3. Roadway Classifications

In 2022, the National Cooperative Highway Research Program produced a Research Report (Report No. 1022) on contextual classifications for highways within the United States. Per the report, the purpose of context classification is to characterize roadways based on land use data and define how users expect to move in and around an area (known as transportation expectations). Understanding context clarifies the multiple roles a roadway plays or is intended to play in the community. It lets practitioners identify and analyze the impacts and tradeoffs necessary to balance user needs and safety and address other community issues.<sup>4</sup>

There are five major context classifications, of which Rural Town is most applicable to Clinton and specifically to the role that SR 525 plays within the community. While designated as a State Highway, it also serves as a primary commercial core of the community, which would typically warrant lower traffic speeds and additional pedestrian focus. Based on case studies and analysis, the Research Report recommends that Rural Town transportation expectations should generally match the following characteristics<sup>5</sup>:

- **Users/Vehicles:** Regional vehicle and freight traffic. Moderate pedestrian activity. Potential for some bicyclists.
- **Movement:** Moderate quality of service and slower vehicle speeds. Delays acceptable to local traffic. High quality of service for nonmotorized users due to street-oriented development patterns
- **Permeability:** High vehicle, bicyclist, and pedestrian access opportunities. Direct pedestrian access to land uses. Vehicle and bicyclist access may be provided on adjacent roadways within the network.
- **Network:** Expanded street network within a limited area serving immediate land uses. May include cross streets accessing dispersed areas in surrounding rural area(s). Through traffic concentrated on the primary roadway.
- **Speed:** Motorized 25 to 35 miles per hour (MPH)

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<sup>3</sup> WSDOT Functional Classification Map Application. Available at: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/transportation-data/roadway-data/functional-classification>

<sup>4</sup> NCHRP Research Report 2011. Available at: [Chapter 1 - Context Classification System Overview | Context Classification Application: A Guide | The National Academies Press](#)

<sup>5</sup> NCHRP Research Report 2011 (Chapter 4). Available at: [Chapter 4 - Rural Town | Context Classification Application: A Guide | The National Academies Press](#)

## 2025 Clinton Subarea Plan | Island County Comprehensive Plan

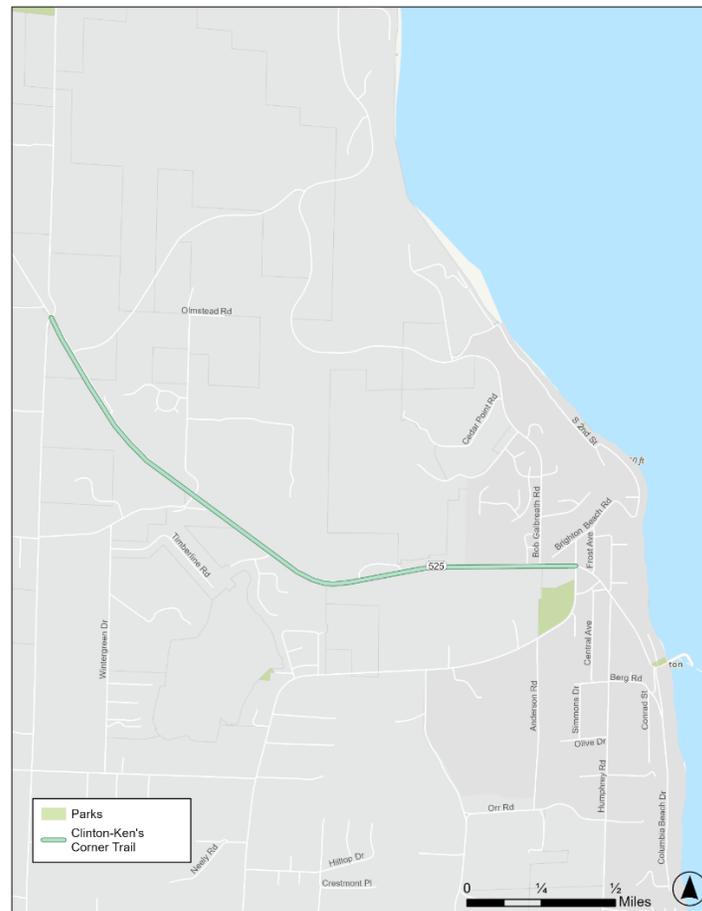
While Clinton matches much of the same characteristics described above, the presence of the Washington State Ferry Terminal at the waterfront creates the need to expedite traffic off the ferry and through Clinton to maintain route timing. Slowing traffic through traffic signals or other traffic calming measures may necessitate modifications to the ferry schedule or identification of an alternative off-loading method that does not pass directly through the community center. The current posted speed through Clinton (30 mph) is within the recommended Rural Town range, however it is noted that speeds, especially heading downhill towards the ferry terminal, regularly exceed this limit due in large part to the wide nature of the roadways and lack of pedestrian crossings.

Policies for coordination with the WSDOT, jurisdiction over SR 525, are included within this section.

### 8.2.4. Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

There are some sidewalks along SR 525 near the Ferry Terminal and other retail frontages, but most streets do not contain sidewalks. There is no existing bike infrastructure – including trails or bike lanes – within Clinton, however, the construction of the approximately two-mile Clinton to Ken’s Korner multi-use trail from Deer Lake Road to Ken’s Korner shopping center is planned for construction, as described in Island County’s TIP. When completed, this project will provide Clinton with its first paved multi-use trail.

**Figure 8-2: Proposed Ken's Corner to Clinton Trail**



At present, there are two marked pedestrian crossings of SR 525 within Clinton, located at the intersection of Deer Lake Road and SR 525, and at Hunziker Ln (private)/Columbia Beach and SR 525. The existing infrastructure has a marked crosswalk and a continuous overhead flashing pedestrian signal meant to warn cars of the potential of pedestrians to cross in this area. There is no ability for users to activate the signal on demand or to have it change to stop traffic. Pedestrians are forced to rely on drivers seeing them attempting to cross and stopping which may not occur across all lanes simultaneously. A small bulb-out on the southern side of the street is intended to shorten the distance that pedestrians are in the street area. An image of the current intersection is shown in **Figure 8-2**, Existing Pedestrian Crossing.

**Figure 8-3: Existing Pedestrian Crossing at Deer Lake Rd.**



To maximize pedestrian safety, the existing marked crosswalk should be enhanced to meet industry best practices, WSDOT design standards, and the [Federal Highway Administration's Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian \(STEP\)](#) guidance as they continue to evolve around pedestrian safety. This could include improvements relating to ADA and accessibility, pedestrian-actuated signals or other traffic calming measures, which increase pedestrian safety when crossing SR 525. One consideration is a stop light at one of the collector streets, Dear Lake or Humphrey, that could be electronically activated to prioritize west-bound off-boarding ferry traffic, while allowing for easier pedestrian and vehicle crossings of SR 525 at other times.

Depending on the type of future improvement considered, WSDOT may require the County to perform an Intersection Control Evaluation, which may result in WSDOT recommendation for a specific type of intersection improvement which best fits this particular intersection. This may include signalized intersection improvements, pedestrian walk signals, or installation of a roundabout. The multimodal safety benefits of roundabouts are well-documented, but roundabouts on State highways often require a larger physical footprint than pedestrian crossings or traffic signals and are far more expensive to construct.

### 8.2.5. Washington State Ferries (WSF)

Washington State Ferries (WSF) provide a vehicle and pedestrian connection across the Puget Sound between the Clinton Ferry Terminal and the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal. SR 525 runs through Clinton directly to the Ferry Terminal and has a 2-mile shoulder for the ferry vehicle queue. There is a small parking lot at the terminal and two park-and-rides: Deer Lake Road and Humphrey Road. The trip between Clinton and Mukilteo takes approximately 20 minutes, depending on weather conditions. Once in Mukilteo, riders can resume travel on SR 525 or other regional transit services to make connections to their destination.

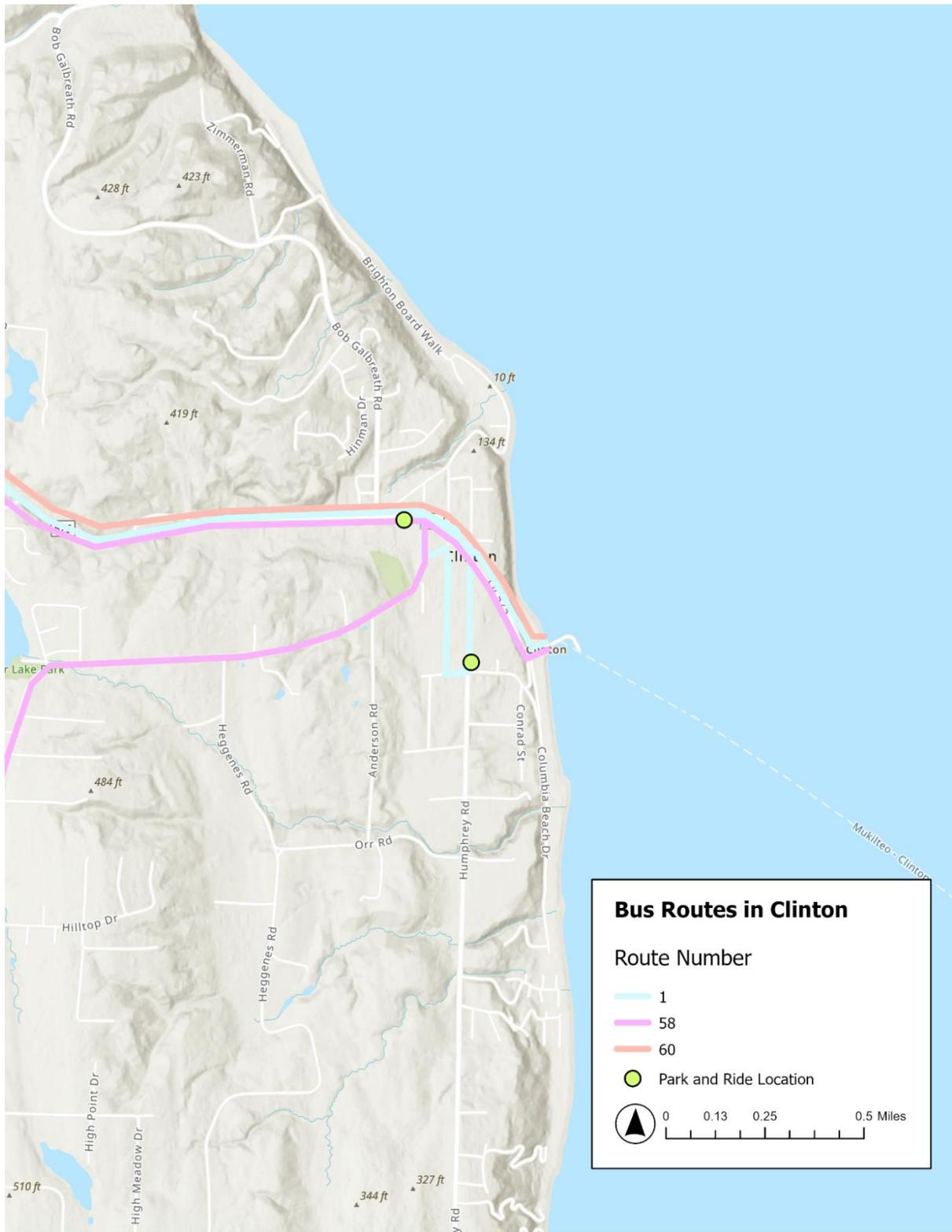
WSF operate 39 daily sailings to and from Clinton, with departures every 30 minutes between 4:40am and 10pm with hours sailings from 10pm until 12:30am. With 3.4 million passengers riding the route in 2022, Clinton sees approximately 240 passengers per sailing pass through or stop in town. Ferry traffic is critically important to the Clinton community and Whidbey Island as a whole. While ferry traffic does present some safety concerns within the community relating to SR 525, it also provides a method for residents and visitors to access the community which would otherwise only have limited accessibility from the north.

WSDOT periodically provides updates to the Clinton Community, generally through presentations at the regular Clinton Community Council meetings. Meetings have covered such topics as updates on future timing/availability as well as improvements, including the electrification program. The WSF 2040 Long-Range Plan calls for construction of overhead loading and holding area improvements, with terminal electrification anticipated to occur on a similar timeline as the terminal overhead loading project. Clinton Terminal electrification construction improvements are planned to begin in 2027 Community engagement will be an important component of future planning efforts with WSDOT anticipating future meetings being used to inform the community of timing and process updates.

### 8.2.6. Public Transit

Island Transit provides fare-free transit service on Whidbey and Camano Islands including routes in Clinton. Route 1 runs between Harbor Station in Oak Harbor and the Clinton Ferry Terminal and includes stops at three park-and-rides. Passengers can transfer to other Island Transit Routes at Harbor Station. Route 58 provides service between the Clinton Ferry Terminal and Scatchet Head. Route 60 provides service from the Ferry to Freeland and includes stops in Langley and along SR 525. The Clinton Commuter Route provides six weekday evening trips from the Ferry Terminal to Clinton park-and-ride and Humphrey Road park-and-ride. Paratransit service is also provided within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of each route. **Figure 8-4, Clinton Public Transit Routes and Facilities**, shows the location of current transit routes available to serve residents. These routes are subject to change based on service providers as well as changes in land uses over time which may increase or decrease demand in different parts of the county.

Figure 8-4: Clinton Public Transit Routes and Facilities



Source: Island Transit

### 8.3. Level of Service (LOS) Analysis

More information can be found in the Capital Facilities Element and Plan within the Island County 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update.

### 8.4. The Island Regional Transportation Organization (IRTPO)

The IRTPO, founded in 2016, carries out joint transportation planning efforts by Island County, cities, ports, Island Transit, major employers and the WSDOT. Their current regional plan recognizes that WSDOT has adopted LOS D for SR 525, but as a Highway of State Significance facility, SR 525 is not subject to Island County's transportation concurrency ordinance requirements for development review to maintain LOS D. WSDOT's LOS standards recognize that SR 525 serves urban and rural areas that are generally farther from transit alternatives, have fewer alternative roadway routes, and locally adopted LOS standards in these areas are generally LOS "D" or better. This means that cars can travel the posted speed limit at least two thirds of the time between 4:00 and 6:00 PM. Traffic Operations Forecast

The Federal Highway Administration uses a Safe Systems Approach in transportation planning. The system involves anticipating human mistakes by designing and managing road infrastructure to keep the risk of a mistake low. When a mistake leads to an accident, the impact on the human body is minimized and doesn't result in a fatality or serious injury. Safe Systems can be used to help carry out a goal of making Clinton's transportation network safer and more efficient.

In addition, WSDOT uses a contextual roadway classification system to balance multiple considerations, including land use function, when designing roadway improvements. Such an approach can help SR 525 in Clinton function like a main street, providing a range of goods and services as well as accommodating the cars and freight that need to use the highway for other destinations.

### 8.5. Finance Plan

Clinton does not have an individual financing plan for transportation projects. Instead, the TIP is adopted annually for a six-year period.

### 8.6. Transportation Goals and Policies

<b>TR Goal 1: Increase Clinton's transportation network safety and efficiency.</b>
<b>Policy TR 1.1:</b> Coordinate with state, regional, and local agencies, including WSDOT, to implement a "safe systems approach" using best practices to advance transportation safety for all users of the transportation system including transit, bicycle, and pedestrian activities.
<b>Policy TR 1.2:</b> Create clear wayfinding signage to move residents and visitors more efficiently through Clinton and to Clinton's commercial goods and services.
<b>Policy TR 1.3:</b> Coordinate with WSDOT to evaluate the potential classification of SR 525 under a contextual roadway classification system.
<b>Policy TR 1.4:</b> Where feasible, upgrade and expand sidewalks in strategic locations such as the Rural Center Zone, around daycares, schools, and in high traffic areas.

<b>TR Goal 2: Increase pedestrian and bicycle safety and connectivity.</b>
<b>Policy TR 2.1:</b> Complete the Clinton to Ken's Korner multi-use trail along SR 525.
<b>Policy TR 2.2:</b> Conduct an ADA assessment of public realm areas to ensure usability for all residents.

**Policy TR 2.3:** Minimize vehicular curb cuts into businesses from SR 525 through shared access or rear access off alleys and secondary roads.

**Policy TR 2.4:** Introduce physical barriers such as planter strips between pedestrian walkways and travel lanes where possible.

**Policy TR 2.5:** Coordinate with WSDOT and relevant agencies to study the reduction of speed limits and potential for pedestrian buffers along SR 525 and collector streets in Clinton’s core.

**Policy TR 2.6:** Study pedestrian safety design techniques such as lowering the speed limit on County roads to 30 mph or adding enhanced crossing improvements.

## Chapter 9. Economic Development

### 9.1. Introduction

Clinton’s location as the gateway to Whidbey Island from the Clinton Ferry terminal gives the area unique potential to capture revenue from a consistent stream of ferry traffic while catering to existing and future residents. There are a small number of businesses in Clinton and this section will focus on the present state of Clinton’s economy and put forth policies which capitalize on Clinton’s unique characteristics to enhance local economic activity.

### 9.2. Existing Conditions

Clinton’s economy is largely based around uses serving local residents and visitors to South Whidbey. Whether it is car rentals for those travelling the island or quick serve retail and restaurants, Clinton’s small economy is primarily visitor-serving uses. Most of Clinton’s workers leave the area for work elsewhere, with few living and working in Clinton. **Table 9-1:** Clinton Jobs by Category, Clinton Jobs by Category, shows the breakdown of jobs in Clinton by industry. In 2017, the Port of South Whidbey performed a market study which looked at how Clinton can enhance its Rural Center zoned area to bring about more development, jobs, and commerce. The study identified six action items to help realize the market opportunities in Clinton’s center:

- Complete streets
- Electronic queuing for ferry
- Establish a community drain field
- Catalytic projects to increase development in the urban center
- Develop a road grid
- Recruit new businesses

Economic development goals and priorities in this section seek to incorporate these goals in the context of creating realistic growth and development targets for Clinton.

**Table 9-1: Clinton Jobs by Category**

Job Category	Count	Share
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0.0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0.0%
Utilities	2	1.0%
Construction	34	17.0%

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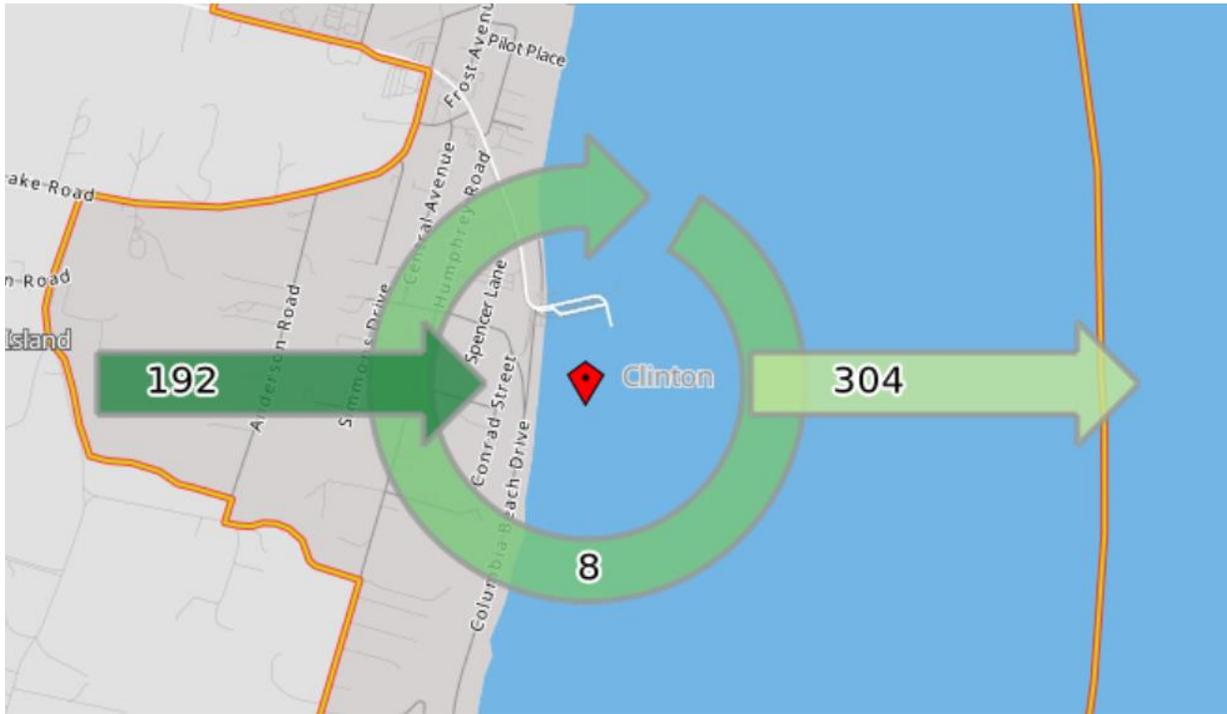
Job Category	Count	Share
Manufacturing	2	1.0%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.0%
Retail Trade	14	7.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	17	8.5%
Information	9	4.5%
Finance and Insurance	4	2.0%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1	0.5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	21	10.5%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0.0%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	15	7.5%
Educational Services	0	0.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	4	2.0%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0	0.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	48	24.0%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	29	14.5%
Public Administration	0	0.0%
Total	200	

Source: LEHD OntheMap, US Census Bureau

Clinton is home to approximately 200 jobs and 504 employed persons, per 2023 US Census estimates. The majority of Clinton’s residents commute out of the area for employment as shown in **Figure 9-1, Employment Inflow/Outflow for Clinton**. Those working in Clinton overwhelmingly commute in, with few living and working in town. Given the rural nature of Clinton, this can be expected, however it does put added emphasis on the importance of SR 525 to access communities within Whidbey Island to the north and the Washington Ferry System to provide access to the larger King and Snohomish County areas, which have larger employment opportunities.

The largest industries in terms of employment within Clinton are accommodation and food services (24 percent of total employees) and construction (17 percent). The median income in Clinton is \$69,570, with most residents earning between \$50,000 and \$150,000 annually.

Figure 9-1: Employment Inflow/Outflow for Clinton



Source: LEHD OntheMap, US Census Bureau

### 9.3. Business Profile

According to ESRI Business Analyst data, there are approximately 57 businesses incorporated in Clinton. This figure includes personal LLCs and other flow-through entities. The largest employers in Clinton are the ferry terminal and Clinton's Fire/EMS station. The Shrimp Shack at Cozy's is one of the largest private employers. There are few chain businesses in Clinton, making most locally owned small businesses. A strong community of local businesses is an important foundation in the economic development of any area. Initial feedback from Clinton residents has shown a stated need for increased investment and focus on enhancing and expanding local business opportunities in Clinton's core.

Per ESRI and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Clinton's residents spend less than average communities per capita on many consumer goods and food. They spend more on gifts donation and healthcare than the average community. These trends may be reflective of a small number of restaurants and consumer goods stores in the Clinton area. It is important to remember that given the relatively small population in Clinton, trends based on this data are likely to be more variable.

Given the number of small local businesses and the limited consumer market with physical constraints of being on an island, small businesses can often struggle to stay afloat. The Economic Development Council for Island County often provides grants for small businesses (as recently as 2023) and offers business advising for small businesses looking to expand or start. Additionally, Island County's Rural County Economic Development initiative provides grants to local governments and public organizations with the goal of stimulating private investment and retaining employment in the county's rural areas.

### 9.4. Opportunities for Economic Development

Island County's employment opportunities and commerce options are currently limited and stand to grow. Successful economic development in Clinton can turn the area into an economic node. Economic development has strong ties with nearly all other sections of this plan to improve the economic state of the Clinton area. Clinton's location at the nexus of SR 525 and the ferry terminal can be seen as a unique opportunity to capitalize on a consistent source of potential revenue in the area. Currently, there are few employers in the Clinton area and future development is limited by sewage capacity. For a substantial increase in business development to occur, utility upgrades, including sewer will need to be planned and built, intrinsically tying economic development in Clinton to the utility policies and measures outlined in Chapter 5. Further barriers to development exist due to limited workforce housing, potentially posing hiring challenges for local businesses and in turn, leading to a smaller consumer base due to a smaller resident population. Clinton's economic opportunities are twofold, capturing activity from ferry traffic and increasing the number of people living in Clinton. For workers, the ferry terminal presents an opportunity for Clinton's residents to easily commute to Everett, Mukilteo, and beyond. Therefore, housing and employment in Clinton will benefit from any increased commercial or residential density. Increased housing and commercial options with access to the ferry terminal eases the ability of those living near the terminal to commute across the sound and encourages ferry traffic to stop in Clinton. Enhancing advertising for and increasing the number of businesses along SR 525 has been a long-identified need in past and present studies of Clinton's economic opportunities.

The focus of Clinton's economic development is to create a sustainable commercial environment in the area's core serving residents and ferry traffic. By encouraging ferry traffic to stop for food, goods, and services in Clinton, the area can have self-sustaining commercial amenities and begin establishing itself as an economic node. Many existing barriers exist to becoming a self-sustaining commercial area. As of 2022, only four people had moved into Clinton in the last year, indicating a minimal population influx. This minimal growth, along with stagnant commercial development, means there is currently little development in Clinton. To encourage growth, Clinton should:

- strive to improve how the rural center zone is developed,
- implement traffic calming and signage to increase commercial activity,
- work with the community to promote local development and businesses, and
- ensure utility infrastructure supports growth.

Economic policies in this plan utilize planning solutions to encourage commercial activity in Clinton and along 525. It is important to note the broad multi-disciplinary impact all areas of planning have on economic development. Many policies in other sections of this plan will impact Clinton's economic development and a Clinton's potential success is rooted in the community's housing market, transportation structure, utility availability, and general character.

### 9.5. Economic Activity Tracking

To aid in the growth of Clinton, tracking economic data over time will allow future planning efforts and growth to understand how spending, trips, businesses, and visitation change in response to implementing the policies in this section. For example, a yearly update of business revenue for retail and food-based businesses along 525 will show if efforts to market and direct ferry traffic to stop in Clinton are having a meaningful economic impact. Furthermore, creating a living tracker for areas where development

standard changes are implemented will reveal the effectiveness of the standards and what changes are required over the course of the creation of a Clinton NMUGA. Island County does not currently track economic activity in this manner, partnerships with a local entities such as the Clinton Chamber of Commerce or the Economic Development Council of Island County should be explored to track this information.

## 9.6. Economic Development Goals and Policies

### ED Goal 1: Increase economic growth opportunities in Clinton’s downtown core.

**Policy ED 1.1:** Explore the creation of a business improvement district to combine resources and focus on collectively addressing future needs within Clinton’s commercial areas.

**Policy ED 1.2:** Provide businesses with information on economic resources available through Island County’s Rural County Economic Development initiative as well as external resources.

### ED Goal 2: Address barriers to commercial development.

**Policy ED 2.1:** Study opportunities for sewer and septic solutions to ease the individual burden of septic for new businesses.

**Policy ED 2.2:** Amend development standards such as setbacks within the Rural Center Zone along SR 525 and cross-streets in Clinton to create flexibility in future development.

**Policy ED 2.3:** Coordinate with WSDOT on implementing traffic calming measures on SR 525 between Humphrey Road and Bob Galbreath Road to increase pedestrian safety and walkability. (See Transportation goals and policies)

### ED Goal 3: Establish a cohesive sense of place along Clinton’s SR 525 frontage.

**Policy ED 3.1:** Create zoning standards for future commercial development abutting SR 525. (See Land Use goals and policies)

**Policy ED 3.2:** Coordinate with WSDOT on future streetscape improvements along SR 525, such as street trees, street furniture, and landscaping.

## Chapter 10. Implementation

The Clinton Subarea Plan is a component of the overall Island County Comprehensive Plan and provides goals and policies specific to the identified needs of the Clinton community. This document guides future growth and development within Clinton and should be the basis for decision-making within Clinton in the future.

This subarea plan includes policies for development standards that are unique to Clinton and are included in the Island County Code Appendix A, LAMIRD. All land use and zoning is consistent with the broader Island County classifications and the Rural Center and Rural Residential zoning, which exists within the Clinton community to govern future development. The Island County zoning code does have some provisions that are unique to Clinton and some of the other rural areas within the County. As part of implementing actions resulting from adoption of the comprehensive plan or with a periodic zoning code update, Island County may choose to amend, add, or remove zoning standards specific to Clinton consistent with the goals and policies within this plan.

This subarea plan is community-driven and action in the future is intended to be a collaboration between the community, Island County, and other entities such as the Washington State Department of Transportation and Washington State Ferries.

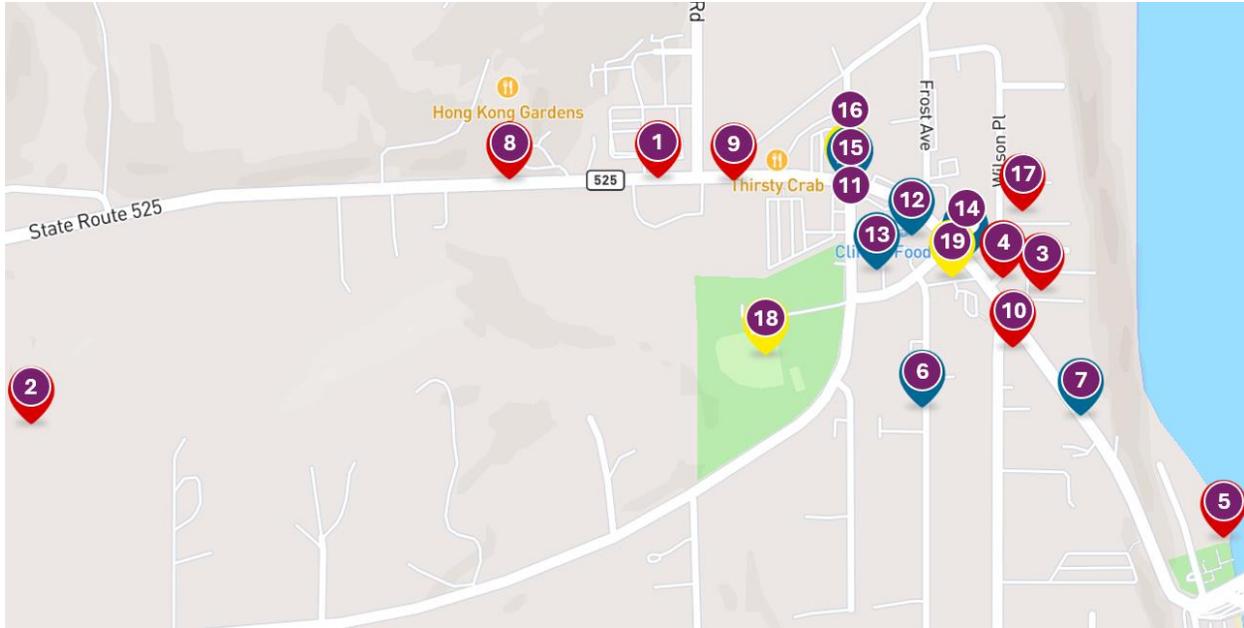
This plan is intended to be updated periodically in order to stay relevant in relation to changing social, technological, and market factors. Community engagement throughout the life of the plan, both during

update processes and during implementation periods, is important to keeping the plan actionable and at the forefront of decision-making within Clinton.

## Appendix A: Community Engagement

### Webmap

The online interactive map was available between June 26, 2024 and September 13, 2024 and accessible for comment on Island County’s 2045 webpage. The answers were publicly displayed on Island County’s Interactive Community map webpage. The responses and location of response are displayed below. The final two comments (18 and 19) are examples, not community responses.



Map Number	Comment
1	<p>This area is ripe for business. We should be looking at other successful tourist/seaside communities businesses and see what we are lacking and what is successful.</p> <p>If we can give ferry-goers a reason to stop it will help other surrounding businesses. A rising tide lifts all boats...</p> <p>Promoting development will help retain jobs on island and offer careers for youth.</p>
2	<p>Explore ways to expand public access/ swimming area at Deer Lake. Consider eliminating motorized boats for such a small lake it is dangerous and polluting.</p>
3	<p>Clinton would benefit from more walkable sidewalks, accessible for wheelchair users, stroller users, pedestrians, and other travelers. It would benefit from landscaped paths for dog walkers and parents with kids who want to stop and look at plants, bugs, and flowers. Landscaping in the median and on the verges would help slow traffic, cool the ferry waiting area, and increase the feeling of "community" vs "thoroughfare" for Clinton. Working with the DOT to make the highway feel more like a neighborhood might be tricky but the side streets could be designed, planted, and landscaped for a more walkable community.</p>
4	<p>Clinton needs sewage treatment capacity or a septic alternative if it is going to evolve into the thriving mixed use commercial/residential gateway community that it can be.</p>
5	<p>Acquiring and expanding access to public beaches would strengthen Clinton's identity as a beachfront community for guests and residents alike</p>

Map Number	Comment
6	If Clinton is to be a walkable neighborhood, typical urban design standards should be required at infill lots- Limit fences at the street, provide sidewalks, porches to address the street, etc.
7	Clinton lacks a coherent look. Street trees, either in the median strip, or at the roadsides would be a really helpful, and welcoming signal to both visitors and regulars that there is a worthwhile community here. They might also help slow traffic.
8	Sometimes a start-up businesses throw all their junk out in their yard, and call that merchandise display. These junkyard businesses make everything around them look like junk. Is there some kind of regulation we could look into to limit this kind of activity in the future?
9	Clinton is basically a drive-through for people rushing to and from the ferry. Clinton could be more of a destination with restaurants and shops that would attract tourists and us folks further up the island. Hopefully, it could also be an area for low-income housing, especially useful as it is close to the ferry and bus routes.
10	Add sidewalk at least at SE corner of 525/Humphrey to keep parked cars from blocking sightlines of drivers trying to watch for uphill traffic and to allow pedestrians to walk without being in ferry waiting lane.
11	If you think about adding more growth to Clinton - apt. buildings, etc. it's important to consider that we are on wells, and many of us are having water issues already - where will you get additional water from? it is too expensive to pipe it in and then there is septic issues. I don't think a lot of businesses will go for spending money to hook up to sewer and where would a sewer treatment plant be located.
12	1. The highway traffic coming into Clinton towards the ferry is usually coming fast. It needs to be slowed down. It is dangerous for pedestrians to cross safely. It's also not very pretty. 2. There are multiple areas where people cut into the ferry lane, causing road rage.
13	The support and development of a "Clinton Arts District" could be a major reason for tourists to stop and visit Clinton, as their first destination, on arriving to the island. This would in turn include visiting one of our local eateries, and exploring our village, before continuing on their island adventure.
14	Need to slow traffic and provide safe pedestrian/bike crossing of State Route 525
15	Dangerous intersection due to ferry line, speed of traffic, and short sight distance around downhill curve.
16	Clinton to Ken's Korner Trail is a much-needed future planned facility to safely get pedestrians and bicyclists away from fast moving vehicles getting off of the ferry. The trail will also provide transit and bike route connections into the City of Langley.
17	This bluff area should not be commercial. sensitive area.
18	Example comment: This park gets a lot of use during the summer!
19	Example comment: This is my favorite coffee shop to stop at before the ferry!

## Online Survey

Between June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the online survey was available to take. The survey asked respondents about five questions related to the Clinton Subarea Plan Below are all responses sorted by the five questions.

<b>Online Survey Feedback</b>
<b>What challenges do you think Clinton faces?</b>
Traffic, reasons to capture business including year round, an aging population, erosion, failing septic, invasive plants
To be more than just a place you pass through on your way to and from the ferry. Becoming a destination.
The highway bisects the downtown corridor, hindering walkability and viability of business. The county has never successfully figured out how to have septic and businesses operate in a way that leaves building owners feeling positive about their government
Layout and ferry lines
Lack of businesses such as cafes, small stores and gardening
Inadequate representation, resources, and attention given its population
Over-development and construction of huge residential structures along Maxwellton Beach by distant landowners, who only care about making money and nothing about their devastating impact on septic systems, the aquifer, the wetlands and the beach.
Due to highway speeds and funky street layouts, businesses in Clinton struggle with visibility. I also think the current infrastructure is somewhat dangerous for bicyclists.
Need more restaurants, shops.
We MUST have (desperately need): 1. better health care, 2. better ferry service; 3. better retail compatible with arboreal environment
Concerned citizens need to be proactive, and work as a team rather than focused on individual, self-beneficial agenda's.
Walkability / bikeability. lack of a central "hub" or ability to walk to multiple shops within a single errand (with rare exceptions). Being bisected by 525. The hill makes walking more challenging
Need to limit density. Improved walkability and bikeability.
<b>What opportunities are there to grow the Clinton community?</b>
Day tourism, food, beach attractions, motorcycle events (FIFO ferry privileges like Isle of Vashon and the Tiddler), Arts/Farms/Garden tours
The ability and need to expand business opportunities.
Actually build a relationship with DOT and figure out walkability across the highway. Figure out parcel zoning to build necessary infrastructure.
Lean in to ecotourism activities, cycling and active health
Check out the newish Speak Easy. Cannot get into it. Also, why aren't wineries marketing in dt Clinton?- Good trails and/or pedestrian paths. Walking on 525 or Bob Galbraith is not fun.
Incorporate!
A major purpose of the LAMIRD is to provide housing for some percentage of new growth to So Whidbey. This was the purpose of the UGA we created in Freeland some 20 years ago. The Freeland UGA is totally non functional, don't repeat in Clinton
We don't want to grow it! Protect its natural beauty, the environment, the quiet, our aquifer, and our quality of life.
A larger library and more casual restaurants would help provide meeting places for residents.

<b>Online Survey Feedback</b>
I have a fantasy of taking the complex at the food mart and turning it into a college...maybe move Skagit valley college,,, and as an incentive like many cities do for corporations, we lessen taxes, or deal on water... etc.
more everyday/common retail with prices competitive to Amazon; more decent restaurants, open full time; BETTER SIGNAGE
Being uphill from the ferry dock, Clinton could become a community for mainland day-trippers. Clinton would need small, niche-filling shops and eateries similar to those found in Port Gamble, Edmonds, the San Juan Islands, Anacortes, and Port Townsend.
More businesses and shops. Better connection between shops. Better marking for pedestrian crossings & bike lanes
It depends on what you mean by growth. Growth to me means improving the community as it is for the benefit of the current citizens.
<b>What do you love about your community?</b>
Walkability, friendliness of neighbors, dog access, good food, kitschy/fun shops, easy access to the south island
It's location.
Clinton is for the actual locals.
The farms and rural feel
Convenience to ferry.
Individuals and businesses working together
The incredible natural beauty. Having neighbors we know, not rental strangers who disrespect us, shooting off fireworks, hitting golf balls into the Sound, flying drones in front of our houses, burning fires in drought, holding raucous parties at night.
I love that many fellow residents maintain both an independent spirit and a care for neighbors and our natural environment.
that there are no chain stores... (not sure how that Dairy Queen snuck in there)
sense of community, big trees
We have lived here 12 years, and even though our home tripled in value during the pandemic, we chose to stay in Clinton. We can safely walk to the grocery store, library, park, post office, pub, or ferry dock.
There are already lots of great businesses in Clinton - the community hall, Nosh - a post office, library, park food store, brewery - a new yoga studio! a small salon. And being close to the ferry is convenient as a resident.
It is slow paced. It is not too dense so that we are elbow to elbow but yet we have a sense of community. Minimal traffic congestion
<b>What are important community assets in Clinton?</b>
Community Center, Library, Ferry Terminal, a Myriad of parks, walkable streets, transit, the people,
The beach, community hall, the current businesses.
Beer
Small farms, natural beauty, agritourism and ecotourism
All the businesses in Clinton main st, library and park
The parks. The Whidbey Institute forests. The trails. The beaches. The natural beauty. The views. The Maxwellton wetlands. The relative quiet. The residents.
Library, parks, bus system, parking for transit & ferry
close proximity to the ferry. why don't we have something to cash in on all those day walk ons?
library, post office, grocery stores
It's just-up-the-hill from the ferry dock, with many empty buildings that could transform into boutiques, book stores, antique shops, or special interest shops to attract day-trippers.

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<b>Online Survey Feedback</b>
Proximity to the ferry, hub for people who live far out in south Whidbey, things to do that aren't a 15-minute drive to Langley
It depends on how you define Clinton. I personally have everything I want now.
<b>As we begin to draft the Clinton Subarea Plan, are there questions or comments the team can answer?</b>
How will we plan for a rapidly aging community and the much younger one that will be replacing them as the housing on the mainland increases in price
Good question...I'm sure I'll have some as the plan progresses.
Yes, what happened to the feedback from two years ago at the Progressive Hall.
What assurances do we have that our input will matter?
why hasn't drainage been a priority? We all lost possessions during King Tide that could have been alleviated with some good drainage in beach communities. Island County is more concerned about salmon than owners' safety.
How can we get Clinton on a path to incorporation?
Do we have to accept the state's growth projections? How can we avoid overpopulation, urbanization, pollution, stress on our aquifer, salt water intrusion, destruction of our water from septic waste, and degradation of our environment?
so many places are empty in Clinton, I'd love to see an extra "eye sore" tax. rather than have owners just 'sit' on the properties.
Why does county prohibit big signage and allow trashy-looking little signs, including POLITICAL, to litter roadsides? (There should be uniform signs at side roads for products and services. Look at Maine and Sanibel Island for examples.))
Along with a 20-year-plan, there should be 2, 5, 7, 10, and 15 year goals that work towards the 20 year plan. Long term goals can only be met achieving short term goals.
Room for development along a side street - like Humphrey, Deer Lake Road or S. Central Ave - could give Clinton a more "Langley"-like feel. How can we make it easier to walk across the street vs. drive across the street to run multiple errands in Clinton?
More specific about the outcomes expected and what this means for the community both short term 5-10 years and long term 20-30 years.

## Sticky Note Outreach

The following are key themes and the areas with the most emphasis from community members at the Clinton Summer Market and Open House events. Feedback was gathered from questions about what residents want to see in Clinton in the next 20 years and about specific parts of the sub-area plan such as parks and economic development.

Responses have been simplified into themes and categories to emphasize areas of greatest concern.

Total number of responses: 64

<b>Feedback</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Notes</b>
The ability to safely cross 525 on foot	12	Responses ranged from wanting a tunnel/ bridge to the need for more walkability at the businesses on 525 to safety concerns
More biking/multiuse paths and trails	7	Residents want more grade separated ways of getting around Clinton whether for recreation or transport
Water shortages/conservation	6	Clear concern about the ability of the county/utilities to provide water for Clinton's present and future demands
Housing	6	Affordable housing and increasing housing stock through smaller apartments and some density were highlighted multiple times.
Residential Ferry Treatment	4	Residents wanted some form of priority or reservation system for boarding the Clinton ferry.
Increased business activity	4	Residents want a way to increase local small business activity (not chains) and bring in more jobs

**Trends**

- 525 and the inability to cross it and safely walk across it and the highway's knock-on effects were the largest concern. Ranging from simply being able to cross the road to the economic impacts on businesses to the lack of sidewalks, the highway's effect was a concern across all events and topics.
- Respondents were generally in favor of increasing housing options, stock, and affordability.
- Most comments centered around obstacles to creating a community feel and placemaking. Examples are the highway bisecting the town, a desire for more trails and sidewalks, how to increase housing and local business numbers, and the barriers water shortages and sewer pose for placemaking in Clinton.
- Overall, respondents were receptive to the idea of growing Clinton and were proactive in voicing concerns and hopes for how to do so.

Community Meeting Response Boards:

**Parks and Open Space**

- What improvements could be made to existing parks and open space facilities?
- Do you feel Clinton is well served with parks, open space, and recreational activities?

*Handwritten notes on sticky papers:*

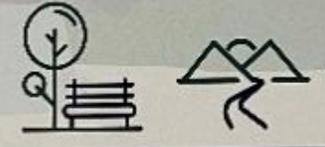
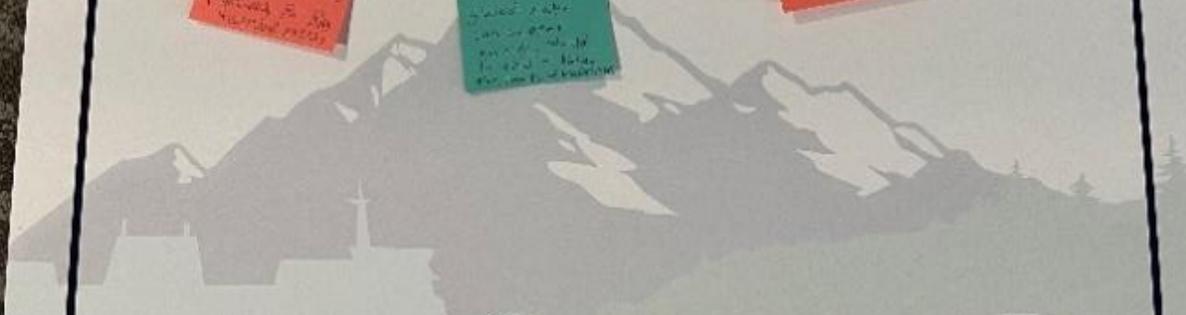
- Continue with park - 2.5 - 3.5 - 4.5
- More open space - 2.5 - 3.5 - 4.5
- More open space - 2.5 - 3.5 - 4.5
- More open space - 2.5 - 3.5 - 4.5
- More open space - 2.5 - 3.5 - 4.5
- More open space - 2.5 - 3.5 - 4.5
- More open space - 2.5 - 3.5 - 4.5
- More open space - 2.5 - 3.5 - 4.5
- More open space - 2.5 - 3.5 - 4.5
- More open space - 2.5 - 3.5 - 4.5

**Natural Resources**

- What concerns do you have about Clinton's natural resources?
- What solutions could help address continued protection of natural resources in Clinton?

*Handwritten notes on sticky papers:*

- Protect the forest and preserve the natural resources
- Protect the forest and preserve the natural resources
- Protect the forest and preserve the natural resources



**CLINTON** SUB AREA PLAN

Community Meeting Response Boards:



Community Meeting Response Boards:

# What would you like to see in the Clinton community in 20 years?



**SMALL-SCALE SUSTAINABLE AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

NO FURTHER state intervention

20% limit on size of 2 units to prevent residential from being forced

Revised definition of residential that includes new residential units

Challenging the political climate

CHANGING TIMES, COMMUNITY, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CLIMATE

Greenwalks! Living trails

'down town' development to slow traffic and build up existing SFR units

People built ready to use trails to encourage

multifamily housing (smaller units and mixed) that are affordable and in demand

improved transit

Public space with program

What is Affordable Housing? range?

Preservation support for living

How can we encourage SFRs to become affordable housing?

Alternative types of housing that support the culture of workers and what that happens in the summer, what are ways from other cities and what are the pros?

A new housing type

Living within a living budget to ensure that you get out of the car and walk to work, school, etc.

A new path from Clinton to Duvall

Priority housing on ferry for local residents

More mixed uses mixed of apartment-condos

More people, affordable rental, contribute to workforce.

Ferry route - provide separate space for 10% of the available space

sustainable water use that allows people to keep operations up at all times around water, how to help water use, how to grow instead of buying it

good transit options for multi-unit housing, in particular, how can we have out of home, up to good transit, multi-unit, neighborhood, transit

for everyone in the process of that, that is Clinton County, the highest priority, how to get out of the car

Revised the buildings for commercial/retail, supporting a mix of housing, affordability, support for business already

Clinton needs more parking as business and more people

Foot traffic, ferry needs more parking, access and connection to Island Transit

100 sidewalk, bike lanes, planters, painting for better security identification

No street-view design standards, Times, sidewalks - walkways, signage standards

Clinton needs better walking paths, sidewalks, bike lanes, painting for better security identification

**CLINTON SUBAREA PLAN**



## Appendix B: Comprehensive Plan Consistency Matrix

The purpose of this Appendix is to show the consistency of the Clinton Subarea Plan with the Island County Comprehensive Plan as required by the Growth Management Act (GMA). A subarea plan is a long-range planning document for a specific geographical area. It includes goals and policies that form the planning framework for future development. The policy framework for the subarea plan comes from the GMA, regional policies, and the Island County Countywide Planning Policies. The Clinton Subarea is a part of the Land Use Element within the Island County Comprehensive Plan. The Clinton Subarea Plan provides additional detailed policies to a specific geographic location for future designation as a Non-municipal Urban Growth Area.

**RCW 36.70A.080 Comprehensive plans- Optional elements (2)** “A comprehensive plan may include, where appropriate, subarea plans, each of which is consistent with the comprehensive plan.”

The Clinton Subarea Plan is consistent with the Island County Comprehensive Plan and meets the requirements of the GMA.

CONSISTENCY	
<p><b>Consistency with County Wide Planning Policies (CWPPS)</b> All plan elements must be consistent with relevant county-wide planning policies (CWPPs) and, where applicable, Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs), and the GMA.</p> <p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.100, RCW 36.70A.210, WAC 365-196-400(2)(c), WAC 365-196-400(2)(c), WAC 365-196-305, and WAC 365-196-520)</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All plan elements are consistent with the relevant policies from the CWPPS to the GMA..</p>
<p><b>Consistency Between Elements</b> All plan Elements must be consistent with each other.</p> <p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070 and WAC 365-197-400(2)(f))</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elements have been updated to reflect the new CWPPs and updated population and employment projections.</p>
<p><b>Consistency with Other Jurisdictions</b> The plan must be coordinated with the plans of adjacent jurisdictions.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant joint planning efforts occurred in the development of the new CWPPs and the related Plan updates.</p>

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<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.100 and WAC 365-196-520)</i></p>		
<p><b>Public Participation</b></p>		
<p><b>Ensure public participation in the comprehensive planning process</b> A process for early and continuous public participation in the development regulation development and amendment process.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>See Appendix A, which outlines the community engagement framework undertaken for the subarea plan.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.020(11), RCW 36.70A.035, RCW 36.70A.130, RCW 36.70A.140, WAC 365-196-600(3), RCW 36.70A.130(2), RCW 36.70A.130(2)(b), and RCW 36.70A.130(2)(a))</i></p>		
<p><b>PLAN AMENDMENTS</b></p>		
<p>The plan describes the process for making amendments. Plan provides that amendments are to be considered no more often than once a year, not including the exceptions described in RCW 36.70A.130(2).</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The subarea plan is being adopted as part of the 2025 update to the Island County Comprehensive Plan.</p>
<p><i>(See: WAC 365-196-640)</i></p>		
<p><b>Future Land Use Map</b></p>		
<p>A future land use map showing the city limits and urban growth area (UGA) boundaries.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The Clinton is designated as a LAMIRD with the intent of exploring future designation as a NMUGA in the Land Use Element of the Island County Comprehensive Plan.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(1), RCW 36.70A.110(6), WAC 365-196-400(2)(d), and WAC 365-196-405(2)(i)(ii))</i></p>		
<p><b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</b></p>		

<p>Consideration of urban planning approaches that increase physical activity.</p> <p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(1) and WAC 365-196-405 (2)(j))</i></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>See Land Use Goal 1 in the Clinton Subarea Plan promotes pedestrian access and safety.</p>
<p><b>Designating Natural Resource Lands</b></p>		
<p>Criteria for designating natural resource lands consistent with minimum guidelines to classify agricultural, forest, mineral lands and critical areas.</p> <p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.050, WAC 365-190, and WAC 365-195, see 900-925)</i></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>No natural resource dedicated lands currently exist in Clinton.</p>
<p><b>Uses on Agricultural Land</b></p>		
<p>Policies for agriculturally designated lands limiting non-agricultural uses to lands with poor soils or otherwise not suitable for agricultural purposes, and policies limiting the allowable range of accessory uses to those allowed by statute. (See: RCW 36.70A.177(3))</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>N/A. None in Clinton.</p>
<p><b>Designation of Mineral Lands</b></p>		
<p>Review of designated mineral resource lands taking into consideration new information, including data available from the Department of Natural Resources, relating to mineral resource deposits when reviewing</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>N/A. None in Clinton.</p>

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<p>mineral resource land designations. Minerals include sand, gravel and valuable metallic substances.</p>		
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.131, RCW 36.70A.030(11), and WAC 365-190-070)</i></p>		
<p><b>Major Industrial Development or Master Planned Locations</b></p>		
<p>If the county is eligible and has designated a major industrial development or master planned location outside of the UGA, is the area consistent with the criteria in the GMA?</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.365, RCW 36.70A.367, WAC 365-196-465, and WAC 365-196470)</i></p>		
<p><b>Master Planned Resorts</b></p>		
<p>If the county has permitted a master planned resort, meet all requirements.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.360, RCW 36.70A.362, and WAC 365-196-460)</i></p>		
<p><b>Rural Element</b></p>		

<p>A rural element that establishes patterns of rural densities and uses considering local circumstances.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The sub-area plan does not seek to or propose any changes to lands zoned rural, thus ensuring there will be no infringement on rural lifestyle uses under the plan's jurisdiction.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.030(15), RCW 36.70A.030(16), RCW 36.70A.030(17), RCW 36.70A.070(5), and WAC 365-196-425)</i></p>		
<p><b>Limited Urban Services</b></p>		
<p>Policies that limit urban services in rural areas. The plan may include optional techniques such as Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRD) and to plan for isolated pockets of more intense development in a rural area.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Clinton is already a LAMIRD and has Rural Center and Rural Residential Zoning that includes measures designed to promote more intensive development and preserve rural lands. Non-urban level services are anticipated to serve the area, until such time a study is completed about a NMUGA designation.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.110(4), RCW 36.70A.070(5)(b), and WAC 365-196-425(6))</i></p>		
<p><b>C. SHORELINE ELEMENT</b></p>		
<p><b>Shorelines of the state</b></p>		
<p>Plan acknowledges that for shorelines of the state, the goals and policies of the shoreline management act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020 are added as one of the goals of this chapter as set forth in RCW</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Shoreline Management Element (SME) of the Island County Comprehensive Plan applies, which are the goals and policies approved in accordance with RCW 90.58.</p>

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<p>36.70A.020 w/o creating an order of priority among the fourteen goals.</p>		
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.480 and WAC 365-196-580)</i></p>		
<p><b>D. HOUSING</b></p>		
<p><b>Goals, Policies, and Objectives</b></p>		
<p>Goals, policies, and objectives for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing,</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The Housing Chapter of the Clinton Subarea Plan includes goals and policies to provide additional housing types to align with the needs of the community.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(2)(b) and WAC 365-196-410(2)(a))</i></p>		
<p><b>Inventory and Analysis</b></p>		
<p>An inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs over the planning period.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Housing policies in the Clinton Subarea Plan call for the evaluation of the RR and RC Zones to allow additional housing types.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(2)(a), WAC 365-196-410(2)(b) and WAC 365-196-410(2)(c))</i></p>		
<p><b>Sufficient Land for Housing</b></p>		
<p>Identification of sufficient land for housing, including but not limited to, government-assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, group homes, and foster care facilities.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The subarea plan includes buildable lands and housing capacity analysis. Areas suitable for housing are identified.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(2)(c))</i></p>		
<p><b>Adequate Provisions</b></p>		

<p>Adequate provisions for existing and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Housing policies allow for denser housing and more variety in RR and RC Zones, and the sub-area plan calls for a study to utility capacity for future housing density.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(2)(d) and WAC 365-196-410)</i></p>		
<p><b>Affordable Housing Program</b></p>		
<p><u>Program under RCW 36.70A.540, identification of land use designations.</u></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.540 and WAC 365-196-870)</i></p>		
<p><b>Manufactured Housing</b></p>		
<p>Policies so that manufactured housing is not regulated differently than site-built housing.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Manufactured housing is considered a single-family housing type in Island County</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 35.21.684, RCW 35.63.160, RCW 35A.21.312, and RCW 36.01.225)</i></p>		
<p><b>Accessory Dwelling Units</b></p>		
<p>The County must allow two ADUs in an urban growth area.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Housing policies in the Clinton Subarea Plan call for the encouragement of ADU construction with single-family residential development in the RR Zones.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.680 and RCW 36.70A.681)</i></p>		
<p><b>E. NATURAL RESOURCES</b></p>		
<p><b>Public Water Supplies</b></p>		
<p>Provisions for protection of the quality and quantity of groundwater used for public water supplies.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Policies in the Environment and Climate Chapter of the Clinton Subarea Plan underscore the importance of protection and enhancement of the environment.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(1))</i></p>		
<p><b>Public Lands</b></p>		

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<p>Identification of lands useful for public purposes such as utility corridors, transportation corridors, landfills, sewage treatment facilities, stormwater management facilities, recreation, schools, and other public uses.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The County’s Capital Facilities element includes locations for new facilities, and Island County will fund a study for sewer and/or alternate septic system feasibility for Clinton.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.150 and WAC 365-196-340)</i></p>		
<p><b>Open Space Corridors</b></p>		
<p>Identification of open space corridors within and between urban growth areas, including lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and connection of critical areas.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Parks and Open Space policies in the Clinton Subarea Plan call for an expansion of recreation opportunities in Clinton and exploration of a bike and pedestrian connection to Ken’s Korner.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.160 and WAC 365-196-335)</i></p>		
<p><b>Discharges into waters of the state</b></p>		
<p>Where applicable, a review of drainage, flooding, and stormwater run-off in the area and nearby jurisdictions and provide guidance for corrective actions to mitigate or cleanse those discharges that pollute waters of the state.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Critical Areas in Island County have been designated for protection and management. Critical Areas include wetlands, geologically hazardous areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, frequently flood areas, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(1), WAC 365-196-405(1)(e), and RCW 90.56.010(26))</i></p>		
<p><b>Critical Areas</b></p>		

<p>Policies to designate and protect critical areas including wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat protection areas, frequently flooded areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, and geologically hazardous areas. In developing these policies, the county must have included the best available science (BAS) to protect the functions and values of critical areas, and give “special consideration” to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Island County has goals and policies for Environmentally Critical Areas. These are anticipated to be updated, including BAS after the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.030(5), RCW 36.70A.172, WAC 365-195-900, WAC 365195-905, WAC 365-195-910, WAC 365-195-915, WAC 365-195-900, and WAC 365-195-925)</i></p>		
<p><b>Forest and Agricultural Land Inside UGAs</b></p>		
<p>If forest or agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance are designated inside an urban growth area, there must be a program authorizing Transfer (or Purchase) of Development Rights.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>N/A, no forest or agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance are designated in the to be studied as a future Clinton NMUGA.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.060(4))</i></p>		
<p><b>Conserving Forest and Agricultural Lands</b></p>		

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<p>Policies encouraging the conservation of productive forest and agricultural lands and discouraging incompatible uses.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The plan does not include any changes to existing rural lands and by extension any agricultural facilities in the Clinton area. Parks and Open Space policy in the Clinton Subarea Plan seeks to ensure protected lands, including forests are preserved.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.020(8), WAC 365-190-050, and WAC 365-196-815)</i></p>		
<p><b>F. TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT</b></p>		
<p><b>Inventory</b></p>		
<p>An inventory of air, water, and ground transportation facilities and services, including transit alignments, state-owned transportation facilities, and general aviation airports.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Transportation Chapter of the Clinton Subarea Plan overviews the transportation network in the Clinton area.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(A) and WAC 365-196-430(2)(c))</i></p>		
<p><b>Level of Service (LOS) Standards</b></p>		
<p>Adopted levels of service (LOS) standards for all arterials, transit routes and highways.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The 2025 update of Island County’s Comprehensive Plan contains these standards.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(B) and WAC 365-196-430)</i></p>		
<p><b>Locally-Owned Transportation Facilities</b></p>		
<p>Identification of specific actions to bring locally-owned transportation facilities and services to established LOS.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>None required</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(D) and WAC 365-196-430)</i></p>		
<p><b>Traffic Forecast</b></p>		

<p>A forecast of traffic for at least 10 years, including land use assumptions used in estimating travel.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The 2025 update of Island County’s Comprehensive Plan includes these forecasts.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(i), RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(E), and WAC 365-196430(2)(f))</i></p>		
<p><b>Projected Demand</b></p>		
<p>A projection of state and local system needs to meet current and future demand.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The 2025 update of Island County’s Comprehensive Plan includes system needs to meet demand.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(F) and WAC 365-196-430(2)(f))</i></p>		
<p><b>Pedestrian and Bicycle Component</b></p>		
<p>A pedestrian and bicycle component.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure concerns policies, goals, and existing conditions for pedestrians and bicycles in the subarea.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(vii) and WAC 365-196-430(2)(j))</i></p>		
<p><b>Transportation Demand Management</b></p>		
<p>A description of any existing and planned transportation demand management (TDM) strategies, such as HOV lanes or subsidy programs, parking policies, etc.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Transportation Element includes goals and policies to promote transportation demand management such as non-SOV modes of travel including vanpools and preferential ferry loading for HOV.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(vi) and WAC 365-196-430(2)(i))</i></p>		
<p><b>Future Funding</b></p>		
<p>An analysis of future funding capability to judge needs against probable funding resources.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Transportation Element including funding for future improvements as well as a method for reassessment of needs and funding.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iv)(A) and WAC 365.196-430(2)(k)(iv))</i></p>		

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<b>Multiyear Financing Plan</b>	
A multi-year financing plan based on needs identified in the comprehensive plan, the appropriate parts of which serve as the basis for the 6-year street, road or transit program.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Transportation Element includes financing methodology and a TIP.
<i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iv)(B), RCW 35.77.010, and WAC 365-196-430(2)(k)(ii))</i>	
<b>Funding Shortfalls</b>	
If probable funding falls short of meeting identified needs: a discussion of how additional funds will be raised, or how land use assumptions will be reassessed to ensure that LOS standards will be met.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Island County’s Comprehensive Plan includes these reassessment methods for funding and prioritization.
<i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iv)(C) and WAC 365-196-430(2)(l)(ii))</i>	
<b>Intergovernmental Coordination</b>	
A description of intergovernmental coordination efforts, including an assessment of the impacts of the transportation plan and land use assumptions on the transportation systems of adjacent jurisdictions and how it is consistent with the regional transportation plan. <i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(v) and WAC 365-196-430(2)(a)(iv))</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intergovernmental coordination is covered in the Transportation Element.
<b>G. UTILITIES FORECAST</b>	
<b>Location and Capacity</b>	

<p>The general location, proposed location and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Existing and proposal utilities are included in the Utilities Element.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(4) and WAC 365-195-420)</i></p>		
<p><b>H. CAPITAL FACILITIES ELEMENT</b></p>		
<p><b>Policies or Procedures</b></p>		
<p>Policies or procedures to ensure capital budget decisions are in conformity with the comprehensive plan.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>the Capital Facilities Element provides language requiring fiscal policies be consistent with the plan.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.120)</i></p>		
<p><b>Inventory</b></p>		
<p>An inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Included in the Capital Facilities Element.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(3)(a) and WAC 365-196-415(2)(a))</i></p>		
<p><b>Forecast of Needed Capital Facilities</b></p>		
<p>The forecast of future need should be based on projected population and adopted levels of service (LOS) over the planning period.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Included in the Capital Facilities Element.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(3)(b) and WAC 365-196-415(2)(b))</i></p>		
<p><b>Proposed Locations</b></p>		

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Proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new capital facilities. <i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(3)(c) and WAC 365-196-415(3)(c))</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Included in the Capital Facilities Element.
<b>Six-Year Plan</b>		
A six-year plan (at least) identifying sources of public money to finance planned capital facilities. <i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(3)(d), RCW 36.70A.120 and WAC 365-196-415(2)(c))</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Included in the Capital Facilities Element.
<b>Reassessing the Land Use Element</b>		
A policy or procedure to reassess the Land Use Element if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs. <i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(3)(e) and WAC 365-196-415(2)(d))</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policies for reassessment of the Land Use Element to help address funding short falls are included in the Comprehensive Plan.
<b>Impact Fees</b>		
If impact fees are collected: identification of public facilities on which money is to be spent. <i>(See: RCW 82.02.050(4) and WAC 365-196-850)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A - Not collected in Island County.
<b>Siting Essential Public Facilities</b>		
<b>Provisions for siting essential public facilities (EPFs), consistent with CWPPs and RCW 36.70A.200.</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Included in the Capital Facilities Element.

<p>This section can be included in the Capital Facilities Element, Land Use Element, or in its own element. Sometimes the identification and siting process for EPFs is part of the CWPPs. Jurisdictions should consider OFM's list of EPFs that are required or likely to be built within the next six years. Regional Transit Authority facilities are included in the list of essential public facilities.</p>	
<p><i>(See: WAC 365-196-340, WAC 365-196-345, WAC 365-196-400, WAC 365-</i></p>	
<p><i>196-405, WAC 365-196-410, WAC 365-196-415, WAC 365-196-420, WAC</i></p>	
<p><i>365-196-425, WAC 365-196-430, WAC 365-196-435, WAC 365-196-440, WAC</i></p>	
<p><i>365-196-445, WAC 365-196-550, RCW 71.09.020(14), RCW 36.70A.200(1), and WAC 365-196-550(d))</i></p>	
<p><b>A. URBAN GROWTH AREAS (UGAs)</b></p>	
<p><b>UGA Review</b></p>	
<p>Review and update, if needed, UGA boundaries. Based on population projection made for the County by OFM, the county and each city must include areas and densities sufficient to permit the urban growth projected to occur in the county or city for the succeeding twenty year period, except UGAs</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A, Clinton is not located within a UGA.</p>

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<p>completely within a national historic reserve.</p>		
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.110(2), RCW 36.70A.110(6), RCW 36.70A.130, and WAC 365-196-310)</i></p>		
<p><b>UGA Expansion – 100-Year Floodplain</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>No urban growth area expansions are proposed.</p>
<p>If there is an urban growth area (UGA) expansion into the 100-year floodplain of a river segment that is located west of the Cascade crest and when the river has a mean annual flow of 1,000 or more cubic feet per second, it meets the statutory exceptions to the general ban on such UGA expansions.</p>		
<p><i>(See: RCW 36.70A.110(8))</i></p>		
<p><b>Population Projections</b></p>		
<p>A consistent population projection throughout the plan which should be consistent with the Office of Financial Management forecast for the county or the county's sub-county allocation of that forecast.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The Buildable Lands Analysis was the basis for the 2025 update to the Island County Comprehensive Plan, including future designation of a Clinton NMUGA.</p>
<p><i>(See: RCW 43.62.035 and WAC 365-196-405(2)(f))</i></p>		
<p><b>Population Densities and Building Intensities</b></p>		

Estimates of population densities and building intensities based on future land uses.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Buildable Lands Analysis was the basis for the 2025 update to the Island County Comprehensive Plan, including future designation of a Clinton NMUGA.
<i>(See: RCW 36.70A.070(1) and WAC 365-196-405(2)(c)(i))</i>		