

Jeff Tate indicated that during the December 12th public meeting the Planning Commission began deliberating on the population projections and UGAs. The Planning Commission discussed Langley, Coupeville and Oak Harbor's recommendations and ultimately voted to accept them.

At that point staff requested that the Planning Commission continue their deliberations to today's meeting to allow staff time to prepare a set of Findings of Fact that would reflect their recommendations and also to double check that the comprehensive plan amendments previously transmitted were still consistent with the Planning Commission's recommendations. A draft set of Findings of Fact; Comprehensive Plan amendments in strikethrough/underline format; and a cleaned up version of the Comprehensive Plan amendments were transmitted electronically to the Planning Commission on January 4th.

No substantive changes were made to the amendments from the prior version the Planning Commission received in October. He suggested that the Planning Commission deliberate and take action on the comprehensive amendments first and the findings second.

Val Hillers asked for clarification on the 50/50 rural/urban split and why the City of Langley wants it deferred and Oak Harbor feels it is lacking the public facilities and services to accommodate the additional population associated with the 50/50 allocation.

Jeff Tate noted that during the Comprehensive Plan update in 1998 there was a lot of discussion about how to encourage growth into urban areas versus rural areas. At the time the Planning Commission recognized that the trend in Island County was moving towards a 70/30 rural/urban split, which is not consistent with the Growth Management Act.

The 50/50 split came about because the County believed that if Freeland and Clinton were designated Non-Municipal Urban Growth Areas (NMUGAs) that split could be achieved. Some of the language pertaining to the 50/50 split was left in the Comprehensive Plan because there is still work being done with Freeland and Clinton, specifically Freeland, with regards to the NMUGA designation. Staff planned on revisiting some of that language at the time that the sub-area plans and designations were put before the Planning Commission

He acknowledged that he may have erred leaving in the language "The City of Langley would like discussion of the 50/50 split deferred until second annual review." One of the reasons that the City of Langley expressed a desire to revisit the 50/50 split was because in 1998 everyone was working with a different planning horizon. The County was working to 2020, the City of Oak Harbor and Langley to 2013, and Coupeville to 2011. After 1998 the County, cities and town worked together on some interlocal agreements which established and synchronized the planning horizons. The City of Langley was also concerned that because they are the only city on South Whidbey there would be pressure to absorb all of the population growth.

When the language was put in the Comprehensive Plan there was an assumption that the City of Langley's concerns would have been addressed by 2005 because the Freeland sub-area plan would have already been before the Planning Commission, which has not happened. It may be appropriate to remove that term "second annual review" and replace it with language to the effect that the 50/50 split will be reconsidered when the sub-area plan is brought before the Planning Commission.

Val Hillers said what seems to be missing is a sentence that states, "The currently existing cities do not have the capacity to absorb 50% of the expected growth of the population."

Jeff Tate said to help clarify the issue language could be added to the effect that "the current UGAs do not have the capacity to achieve the 50/50 split" and then to reinforce the concept that because Freeland and Clinton play a role in helping achieve that goal "the city would like discussion of the 50/50 split deferred until the time when those sub-area plans are brought before the Planning Commission."

Mike Joselyn asked when those sub-area plans were expected to come before the Planning Commission.

Jeff Tate noted that Commissioner Shelton has made it very clear that the Freeland sub-area plan needs to go before the Planning Commission in 2007. A proposed schedule for the coming year will be discussed at the joint meeting in February.

Scott Yonkman asked if anything was being done to address the transportation issues on Camano Island.

Jeff Tate noted that Public Works will be asking the Planning Commission for their suggestions for transportation improvements for their Six Year Transportation Plan for 2008-2013.

He acknowledged that there are certain stretches of Camano Island roads, which are County maintained and operated, where the Level of Service is at a grade lower than anywhere else in the County. The concurrency element of the Transportation Plan has identified what needs to be done, specifically with East Camano Drive, in terms of widening and signalization. The problem is even with improvements to East Camano Drive you still have the bottleneck at the Mark Clark Bridge. Public Works staff is communicating with the state and there are statements in the Transportation Plan to the effect that as soon as the state starts making plans to do something about the bridge the County will react as well.

Wayne Havens asked if any thought has been given to going around to the north and bypassing all the traffic lights on SR 532 as you go through Stanwood.

Jeff Tate agreed that the solution is not the bridge alone, the solution runs from I-5 all the way through to the bridge. You can't just look at one of those segments without looking at the whole system.

Alan Schell moved to accept the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The motion was seconded by Deb Eidsness and opened for discussion.

Val Hillers moved to amend the motion to include the following changes:

Rural and Urban Population Growth

It is estimated that an additional 38,492 people will be added to the County's population by the year 2025. This represents an increase of 53% over the next twenty years, producing a total population of 110,050. The rural portion of the County will accommodate 26,182 to 29,187 new residents, or 68% of this growth, while the urban growth areas will add 12,307 persons, or 32%. As one of the implementation strategies of this plan, the County has committed to studying the Freeland and Clinton areas for consideration as non-municipal urban growth areas. If these areas become non-municipal growth areas and the urban growth areas expand for Oak Harbor and Langley as shown on the future land use maps at the end of this chapter with cooperation of the municipalities, the rural/urban split of population growth would change dramatically; the estimated result would be a 50% growth in rural areas and 50% in urban areas from 1996 through the year 2020. The three existing Urban Growth Areas do not have the capacity to achieve the 50/50 urban/rural split. The City of Langley would like discussion of the 50/50 split deferred until NMUGA designations are presented ~~until second annual review.~~ It is anticipated that a Freeland NMUGA designation will be before the Planning Commission for consideration in 2007. The City of Oak Harbor has said they currently lack the public facilities and services to accommodate the additional population associated with the 50/50 allocation. Coupeville is currently not considering expansion of its Urban Growth Area for residential purposes due primarily to water supply problems.

The motion was seconded by Sheilah Crider and carried unanimously.

The vote on the main motion carried unanimously.

Jeff Tate noted that the Findings have been broken down into a countywide set reflective of the 2004 deliberations, as well as regional projections and each of the individual cities.

Sheilah Crider noted that they may have to re-evaluate the population projections for Camano Island if the current trend holds.

Jeff Tate noted that the Planning Commission will be reconsidering the figures again in 2010 or 2011 in order to meet the statute requirement for completing the 7 year update by

December of 2012. However if there is a need the figures can be reconsidered prior to that date. Starting the update in 2011 will give them the benefit of the 2010 census figures.

Deb Eidsness asked how OFM factors in NAS Whidbey.

Jeff Tate noted that OFM has a group that looks at Naval bases individually considering impacts on the economy, housing needs and issues of that nature when preparing their projections and estimates.

Val Hillers moved to accept the Findings of Fact for CPA 155/04 Population and Urban Growth Areas as written. The motion was seconded by Mike Joselyn

Review of the Hazard Mitigation Plan

Handouts:

Letter dated 1/9/07 from Jeff Tate to Mike Simmons, Island County Department of Emergency Management (Growth Management Record #9125)

Jeff Tate noted that on September 27th, Mike Simmons from the Department of Emergency Management, briefed the Planning Commission on hazard mitigation planning in Island County.

FEMA requires that counties, cities, special taxing and utility districts work cooperatively to come up with plans for what to do in the event of an emergency. Access to Federal grants requires an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan. The first step was to identify the different natural hazards that occur in Island County, develop a plan of action for what can be done prior to a natural disaster to prevent or eliminate loss of life and property, and then develop a response plan for what to do after there is an event.

A lot of the regulations and policies that come before the Planning Commission are evaluated with respect to several of the potential natural hazards that have been identified. The Department of Emergency Management is asking that the Planning Commission review and comment on the Hazard Mitigation Plan and also provide a public venue for the plan.

Staff indicated at the September 27th meeting that they would be reviewing the plan and would prepare a response to bring back to the Planning Commission for further discussion. Staff has provided a letter of support to Mike Simmons and requested that the Planning Commission review the letter and either today or at a later date move to approve the Chair to sign it.

Alan Schell expressed concern that other possible hazards have not been addressed in his letter.

Jeff Tate noted that there are a number of hazards that are identified in the Hazard Mitigation Plan that are outside of the scope of the Planning Department. His letter really focuses on the regulations and programs that are currently administered by the Planning Department and reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Scott Yonkman inquired as to whether there was a requirement for public input.

Jeff Tate pointed out that an open public hearing had been noticed and held previously on September 27th.

Alan Schell asked if ingress and egress for emergency vehicles should be addressed in the plan.

Jeff Tate noted that there is a review process for all types of development that occurs at the county level regarding ingress and egress for emergency vehicles. If the Planning Commission feels that it is appropriate he can add another more encompassing statement that says there are many other regulations and requirements that are in place for development that are intended to address emergency situations.

Scott Yonkman pointed out that in Mike Simmons's presentation he stated that mitigation funds are to mitigate or to upgrade not to fix something that is broken or damaged by a storm. This plan is more about preparing and planning and mitigating so that we are better prepared for the event.

Jeff Tate said it will enable the Department of Emergency Management to secure funds to get more into the nuts and bolts of identifying if there are deficiencies and how to correct them.

Deb Eidsness said she was satisfied with Jeff's letter and didn't think it was necessary to expound on every potential hazard.

Alan Schell said he was also comfortable with Jeff's letter of encouragement.

Sheilah Crider moved to accept the letter dated 1/9/07 from Jeff Tate, to Mike Simmons, Island County Department of Emergency Management, regarding Island County Planning Commission's review of the draft Hazard Mitigation Plan and authorize the Chair of the Planning Commission to sign. The motion was seconded by Deb Eidsness and carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Dill
Administrative Assistant