

**ISLAND COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
4. HOUSING ELEMENT**

**E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

A variety of implementation strategies are being considered by Island County, including means to encourage the provision of special needs and low income housing, regulatory changes, accessory structures; construction of multi-family units; density bonuses and variation on development standards. In addition, the County should review alternative means of construction and financing, including:

1. Preserving the existing housing stock through liberal permitting of upgrades/remodels and use of accessory housing, with controls.
2. Lowering labor material costs by supporting and encouraging alternative housing designs, financing, materials and construction, such as self-help/sweat-equity housing and owner-built housing, including that using alternative construction methods and materials.
3. Relaxing restrictions on housing types to permit, for example, manufactured homes, and HUD-approved mobile homes in single width or larger.
4. Relaxing restriction on minimum dwelling unit size, minimum number of rooms and house shape.
5. Supporting publicly owned housing.
  - a. **Support the Housing Authority of Island County in on-going efforts to fund and sustain existing low-income housing projects in Island County. Support can come in the form of partnering in grant applications, appealing to the state to increase the Housing Trust Fund, and other measures.**
6. Using Federal low-income housing credits.
7. Developing density and other incentives to provide for affordable housing in rural area.
8. **Enacting an ordinance that grants authority to the Island County Commissioners to transfer title to surplus land holdings to the Island County Housing Authority or non-profit organizations such as the Island Affordable Housing Trust.**

- a. **Review existing surplus public land owned by Island County and other public agencies to determine if any such lands are appropriate to be transferred to a non-profit housing agency for affordable housing. In general, such lands should have access to public services or, by prearrangement, to be used in an exchange for buildable affordable housing unit sites.**
9. **Create a Planning Department staff position specifically for promotion of affordable housing creation and promotion of zoning and other County ordinances to accommodate affordable housing.**
  10. **Streamline permit review for any type of project with affordable housing, from manufactured homes to multi-family units and clustered development. This would entail reviewing the current system with the staff, officials and builders/developers to determine areas that are working well, and not so well. Examples of permit streamlining include:**
    - a. **Setting up an expedited review process with a predictable review period, such as a maximum of 60 days.**
    - b. **Create “permit ready” house plans for use on small lots. House plans can be developed by volunteer architects or through a design competition to create a set of pre-approved plans approved by a Design Review Board and acceptable to the community. Manufactured homes can be included in this process. (To promote a design competition and use of the designs, this effort can be done on a county-wide scale in partnership with the Town of Coupeville, City of Oak Harbor and the City of Langley. Builders could keep costs down with a design that has a predictable permitting period.)**
    - c. **Provide a single location in the County Zoning Code for regulations relating to the development of affordable housing.**
    - d. **Provide relief of fees for affordable housing. This would require a code amendment and can be done by adopting a separate fee schedule for projects incorporating affordable housing.**
- (Also refer to the Regulatory Barriers Clearing House at [www.huduser.org/rbc/](http://www.huduser.org/rbc/) for hundreds of examples being implemented throughout the nation).**
11. **Require Annexation of land in Urban Growth Areas to include or set aside areas for affordable housing.**
  12. **Expand non-municipal urban area (RAID’s) for medium to high density affordable housing.**
  13. **Include provisions for affordable housing in any Comprehensive Plan land use changes that increase density.**

## **Exhibit A**

**Proposed addition amendments in bold and blue print**

- 14. Develop a Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) program with interlocal agreements in conjunction with incorporated communities that allows higher densities for affordable housing within city boundaries, urban growth areas and Island County RAID's.**
- 15. Provide for special zoning considerations and density bonuses on land in the Rural Zone adjacent to RAID's and urban areas, suitable for an affordable housing project. This would also apply to surplus land discussed in 1.0. Allowing increased densities is the most basic and potentially effective technique for promoting housing affordability.**
- 16. Support and encourage partnerships with Island Affordable Housing Trust (IAHT) to build permanently affordable housing units throughout Island County.**