



# ISLAND COUNTY PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Keith Higman, Interim Director

## Island County Planning Commission

Ray Gabelein, Chairperson

PHONE: (360) 679-7339 ■ from Camano (360) 629-4522, Ext. 7339 ■ from S. Whidbey (360) 321-5111, Ext. 7339

FAX: (360) 679-7306 ■ 1 NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street, P. O. Box 5000, Coupeville, WA 98239-5000

Internet Home Page: <http://www.islandcounty.net/planning/>

---

### Findings of Fact

#### RE: Camano Gateway Land Use Designation

#### Summary:

Amendments to portions of the Island County Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations that regulate commercial development within the Terry's Corner and Camano Gateway Rural Areas of Intensive Development.

#### Background and Process:

1. On September 29, 1998 the Board of Island County Commissioners adopted Ordinance C-123-98 establishing zoning and development regulations for all of Island County. The Terry's Corner and Camano Gateway Rural Areas of Intensive Development (RAID's) were designated as Rural Village.
2. On August 18, 2008 the Board of Island County Commissioners adopted Ordinance C-71-08 which put into effect a series of interim development regulations that govern commercial development within the Terry's Corner and Camano Gateway RAID's. The purpose of the interim development regulations was to allow a community oriented process of developing permanent amendments to these two areas without the threat of a "rush to the counter" while the regulation amendment process occurred.
3. The Board of Island County Commissioners assembled a citizen working group comprised of 20 Camano Island residents, business owners, land owners, architects and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and Camano Action for a Rural Environment. The working group met on 7 occasions to discuss the appropriateness of specific land uses, architectural design, signage, lighting, setbacks, site coverage, and other standards that govern commercial development in this area.
4. Meetings were held on September 4<sup>th</sup>, September 18<sup>th</sup>, September 25<sup>th</sup>, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, October 9<sup>th</sup>, October 16<sup>th</sup> and October 23<sup>rd</sup>. At the close of this process the

working group forwarded a recommendation to the Planning Commission for further consideration. The working group's recommendation included amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. The majority of recommended amendments were unanimous, however there were some amendments that represented a majority of the opinions of working group members.

5. Areas where a unanimous decision was not reached include whether or not to allow hotels and convenience services such as gas stations. The majority opinion of the working group was to allow hotels (subject to a number of conditions) and to prohibit convenience services.
6. The Planning Commission held public hearings on Camano Island on December 2, 2008 and January 27, 2009. The written public comment period ended on February 10, 2009. The Planning Commission held a public meeting to deliberate on the proposed amendments on February 24, 2009.
7. A SEPA environmental threshold determination of non-significance was issued and noticed in the Stanwood Camano News on November 11, 2008. The SEPA threshold determination established a 14 day comment period and a 14 day appeal period. Comments were received. No appeals were filed.
8. Public notice for each of the public hearings and the public meeting was provided in the legal advertisements of the Stanwood Camano News, through published press releases in the Stanwood Camano News, on the County webpage, by direct mailer to all affected landowners, by posting signs at the Camano Annex county office, and by e-mail distribution.

#### **Proposed Amendments - General**

9. The SR 532 highway corridor is the only vehicular corridor for entering and leaving Camano Island. It is the primary gateway to Camano Island. There are two historical commercial crossroads that are located on this stretch of highway – the SR 532/North Camano Drive/East Camano Drive junction (Terry's Corner RAID) and the Good Road/SR 532 intersection (Camano Gateway RAID). Historic commercial development in these two RAIDs has been relatively uncoordinated and without any recognition of this areas uniqueness. The existing Rural Village zoning designation applies in numerous locations throughout Whidbey and Camano islands. The Board of Commissioners, under Ordinance C-71-08 agreed that it is appropriate to create unique land use regulations for this stretch of roadway in Island County. The working group, comprised of 20 Camano Islanders, was assigned the task of developing these regulations for consideration by the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners. The working group reached consensus on most of the proposed amendments.
10. The working group agreed that the best way to create a more customized set of regulations along the SR 532 corridor was to establish a zoning designation for the Terry's Corner and Camano Gateway RAID's that is different than Rural

Village. The agreed upon name for the new zoning designation is Camano Gateway Village.

11. The working group agreed that it was appropriate to focus on the range of permitted and prohibited uses within this zone, height and setbacks, site coverage ratios, lot size and density, storm water and LID, parking, signage, design, and lighting requirements.
12. The group also agreed that fire stations within these areas should be treated differently than other types of land use because of their unique needs and importance in serving the local community. As a result, specific fire station standards were created.
13. A great deal of discussion focused on the types of uses that should be allowed within these two areas. The group agreed that it is appropriate to allow small scale retail, eating and drinking establishments, office space, small scale mixed use development, temporary uses and lumberyards. It was further agreed that once any use gets above a certain size or intensity that additional public review is appropriate. Thresholds are established that define when public notification is required.
14. An equal amount of discussion focused on the types of uses that should not be allowed. The group agreed that most buildings above 10,000 square feet are out of scale in this area (exceptions are provided for specific uses); that large scale retail is not consistent with the historic development pattern and should therefore not be allowed; wholesale of bulk materials such as soil, rock, bark, etc. are not appropriate; that drive thru food restaurants are not appropriate; and that outdoor sale of pre-fabricated homes, mobile homes, recreational vehicles, boats, cars, etc. are not desired.
15. The working group did not reach consensus on whether to allow overnight lodging or convenience services such as gas stations within the Camano Gateway Village Zone. The majority of working group members believed that overnight lodging is an appropriate use while the majority also agreed that convenience services such as gas stations and mini marts were not appropriate. As a result, convenience services were listed as prohibited and overnight lodging was listed as permitted subject to a number of development standards.
16. The Planning Commission finds that incentives and opportunities should be included throughout these amendments for the use of sustainable building practices and low impact development. While the working group's recommendation focused some of these concepts on specific types of land use proposals, the Planning Commission modified the amendments to ensure that these principles are considered and/or incorporated into development proposals whenever possible.
17. The Planning Commission agrees with the concept of placing well designed buildings closer to public roads and zoning boundaries in order to better screen pavement and/or parking areas. However, some sites are particularly challenging

because they may be surrounded on two or three sides by public roads or adjacent non-commercial zones. Topography, berms, landscaping and other natural features can be used to achieve this goal. Flexibility should be incorporated into the development review process to encourage innovative ideas in achieving the goal of screening parking lots and pavement.

### **Proposed Amendments – Overnight Lodging**

18. Amendments to ICC 17.03.180 are necessary for regulating overnight lodging that may be permitted within the Camano Gateway Village zone. These standards dictate the maximum size and intensity of overnight lodging, signage and setbacks, architectural design, landscaping, parking, and potable water.
19. Objections to overnight lodging were rooted primarily in the potential impacts to aesthetics, traffic, water use, and septic discharge. There was very little objection to allowing very small scale (8 or fewer units) overnight lodging opportunity within these two areas. Therefore, overnight lodging of 8 or fewer units is listed as a permitted use. Proposals that exceed 8 units are required to obtain a conditional use approval in order to be established. Moderately sized proposals that are 9 to 20 units are required to obtain a Type II conditional use approval while larger proposals are required to obtain a Type III conditional use approval.
20. More robust design, landscaping, parking, and signage standards were established as a means of mitigating the aesthetic impacts of overnight lodging which is likely to be larger than the other types of allowed uses within the zone.
21. An intensity level of 20 units per acre was established as a means of addressing potential water and septic concerns. An overall cap of 40 units is established in order to control the overall size and intensity of any future proposals. Therefore, a 40 unit hotel would require a minimum of 2 acres of land in order to be permitted. The 20 unit per acre intensity level was established as a result of an evaluation of the likely septage effluent rates that are associated with hotels. State of Washington standards indicate that a single family residence is equivalent to approximately 7 hotel units. The maximum residential density within a RAID is 3 dwelling units per acre. 3 dwelling units located on 1 acre is approximately equivalent to 21 hotel units located on 1 acre. While this equivalency calculation is already considered conservative, the overnight lodging intensity was rounded down to 20 units per acre. An additional safety net has been built in that prohibits on site laundry facilities and instead requires that laundry service be provided at a different location. Therefore, the only water and septage usage will be generated from showers, toilets and bathroom sinks. Given that on-site laundry service is one of the largest users of water and generators of effluent, 20 units per acre will more closely resemble a residential density of 1.5 dwelling units per acre.

### **Proposed Amendments – Convenience Services**

22. The working group reached near consensus on the decision to prohibit convenience services such as gas stations and mini marts. There was one dissenting vote. The reasons for believing these types of uses should be

prohibited varied amongst members. Some felt that they were aesthetically unappealing, others felt that the traffic impacts could not be adequately mitigated, and others felt that the ground water and surface water impacts could not be adequately mitigated.

23. The Planning Commission reversed the working groups' recommendation and added convenience services as an allowable use. With the exception of one Planning Commissioner, all those present voted in favor of allowing convenience services. The Planning Commission finds that the aesthetic impacts, traffic impacts, and water impacts can all be adequately mitigated with the existing array of development regulations. The Planning Commission also felt that because Camano Island only has three gas stations, one grocery store, and a few small scale independent convenience stores that the community would be well served to have access to additional services – especially if there are events that lead to closure of SR 532 during emergency situations.

**Conclusions:**

The Island County Planning Commission has reviewed the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance as they pertain to the Camano Gateway and hereby recommends that the Board of Island County Commissioners adopt the proposed amendments and findings of fact.

Respectfully submitted through the Island County Planning Department to the Board of Island County Commissioners, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.040 and ICC 16.26, this  
13<sup>th</sup> day of March 2009 by,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Ray Gabelein,**  
**Island County Planning Commission, Chairperson**