To: Board of Island County Commissioners

From: Island County Planning Commission


Date: May 11, 2015

Summary

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities and counties to periodically review and update their Comprehensive Plans. The GMA also establishes a specific schedule for the completion of periodic updates. Pursuant to RCW 36.70.130(5)(b), Island County is required to complete a periodic update by June 30, 2016.

To guide the periodic update process, the Board of Island County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted a Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule. The Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule divides the Comprehensive Plan update into two distinct phases; a preliminary information and data gathering phase, followed by a plan development and implementation phase. The first phase is comprised of six individual tasks, five of which are now complete. The sixth and final phase one task specifies the BOCC adopt a resolution stating the Comprehensive Plan has been reviewed and identifying areas to be updated or amended.

In order to provide the BOCC with guidance on this crucial step, the Planning Commission has reviewed documents created by the Planning and Community Development Department, and has a recommendation for the BOCC. This recommendation identifies those elements of the Comprehensive Plan that must be updated to address new GMA requirements, decisions by the Growth Management Act Hearings Board, changing local conditions, and judicial interpretations. In addition, the Planning Commission’s recommendation identifies other issues that should be addressed based on staff experience, public input, and Planning Commission deliberations.
Findings

1. Island County conducts planning activities in accordance with Chapter 36.70 RCW (The Planning Enabling Act).

2. The planning activities of Island County, and the planning activities of municipalities within Island County, are further regulated by the provisions of Chapter 36.70A RCW (The Growth Management Act).

3. The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that counties subject to the GMA adopt Comprehensive Plans in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 36.70A RCW.

4. In 1998, Island County adopted a Comprehensive Plan in order to address the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act.

5. The GMA also requires that counties periodically review and update their Comprehensive Plans and development regulations (RCW 36.70A.130).

6. The review and evaluation required by the GMA must, at a minimum, include consideration of critical areas, an analysis of the population allocated to the County by the most recent ten-year population forecast issued by the Office of Financial Management (OFM), and a review of mineral resource lands designations and development regulations.

7. The GMA establishes a specific schedule for the completion of periodic updates. In accordance with RCW 36.70A.130(5)(b), Island County must review, and if necessary, update its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations on or before June 30, 2016.

8. Island County began the process of reviewing its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations by adopting a "Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule" through Resolution C-45-13. This document established a general schedule and outlined essential public participation strategies that would be employed by the County at each stage of the Comprehensive Plan update.

9. The Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule divided the Comprehensive Plan update project into two broad phases; a preliminary review and information gathering phase, followed by a plan development and implementation phase. Island County has substantially completed five of the six tasks identified in the first phase of the Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule.

10. The sixth and final task identified in first phase of the Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule specified that a detailed review be conducted to identify areas of the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations that should be addressed during the second phase of the project.
11. The formal review identified in task six is intended to guide the subsequent development of a detailed work plan and is further intended to identify areas where the County will focus its efforts during the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan update based on (a) legal and statutory requirements, (b) public input, and (c) input from the BOCC and Planning Commission.

12. The Planning Department reached out to members of the public to gather input on the Comprehensive Plan update effort. The Planning Department received over 900 responses through an online survey, public meetings, and email communication.

13. The Planning Department prepared three documents which summarize this input (see GMA #11397 “Community Meeting Questionnaire Results”, GMA #11398 “Survey Monkey Results”, and GMA #11399 “Emailed Comments”)

14. The Planning Department has reviewed relevant GMA requirements, recent court cases, decisions by the Growth Management Act Hearings Board, and input from the public and Board of County Commissioners, and produced a table which identifies “required”, “recommended”, and “optional” areas of focus for the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan update (see GMA # 11418 “Revised Formal Review Table”)

15. The Planning Commission has reviewed the table prepared by the Planning Department and finds that given time and resource constraints, the Planning Department should address those items identified as “required” or “recommended” during the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan update. Other items, and items identified as "optional" may be addressed through the annual review docketing process in the years following the completion of the Comprehensive Plan update.

16. In order to clearly illustrate the priorities for the Comprehensive Plan update, a list of ten specific goals has been prepared (see GMA #11417 “Project Goals”). The Planning Commission finds that these goals are appropriate and should be used by the Planning Department to develop a detailed work plan for the completion of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

17. The Island County Planning Commission finds that all of the Essential Public Participation strategies outlined in the “Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule” have been completed; however, the Planning Commission would like to clarify the following points: First, technical advisory groups have been formed to assist with the transportation and critical areas components of the update. Second, the Planning Commission finds that the Planning Department memo, Formal Review Table, and summary of public input constitute the primary basis of our findings regarding the recommended scope of the Comprehensive Plan Update.
18. The Island County Planning Commission finds that the project scope proposed by the Planning Department will address all applicable Washington State Planning laws and regulations, particularly RCW 36.70A.130 & 140.

Conclusion

The Island County Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed scope of the Comprehensive Plan Update and hereby recommends that the Board of Island County Commissioners adopt a resolution directing the Planning and Community Development Department to address all of the areas identified in the Revised Formal Review Table (GMA # 11418) as "required" or "recommended". The Island County Planning Commission further recommends that this resolution direct the Planning and Community Development Department to develop a detailed work plan and schedule for the completion of the Comprehensive Plan update based on the Formal Review Table (GMA #11418) and the Project Goals (GMA #11417).

Respectfully submitted through the Island County Planning Department to the Board of Island County Commissioners, pursuant to RCW 36.70.430, this _____ day of ___________, 2015 by,

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Chair, Island County Planning Commission