TO: Island County Planning Commission  
FROM: Brad Johnson, Senior Planner  
DATE: April 20, 2015  
SUBJECT: 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update – Formal Review & Scope of Work

At the April 27, 2015 Planning Commission meeting, a public hearing will be conducted to make a recommendation on the final scope of work for the 2016 Island County Comprehensive Plan Update. The recommendation will be forwarded to the Board of Island County Commissioners.

The County is currently in state-mandated Periodic Review of its Comprehensive Plan, which must be complete by June 30, 2016. This process ensures the County’s Plan remains relevant and is responsive to changing conditions. It also ensures the Plan remains in compliance with state rules and regulations. In order to focus the update process, County staff has conducted an audit of the Plan and its implementing regulations (Attachment D) to determine necessary changes needing to occur. These changes will ensure compliance. In addition, staff has completed a public outreach effort to gather feedback from the community on what other topics are important to them and need consideration as part of this update project. This community feedback has been analyzed, presented in attachments, and summarized below.

The County conducted an online survey, four community meetings, and collected email comments from citizens. The general themes that emerged:

- The rural character of Island County is important to the community
- Environmental protection and water quality are integral to Island County
- Land use and rural compatibility were expressed as a concern
- Economic development is important, although different ideas were expressed about how best to address the County’s needs
- Need to clean-up/clarify the County’s development regulations
The Planning Commission is being asked to review and evaluate this information to help make a decision on whether additional topics/tasks should be included in the final scope of work for the Plan update. The following documents are attached:

Attachment A: Community Meeting Results  
Attachment B: Online Survey Results  
Attachment C: Citizen Communications Results  
Attachment D: Formal Audit of Comprehensive Plan

In reviewing the attached materials, it is important recognize several important points. First, Planning Department resources are not unlimited and the Comprehensive Plan Update must be completed by June 2016. Accordingly, priority as been assigned to those issues, or areas of concern which must, by law be addressed. These issues and areas of concern are identified in Attachment D as “required”. Second, in allocating resources to addressing discretionary topics, the Planning Department believes that effort should be focused on laying a solid foundation for subsequent changes and are identified as “staff recommendation”. For example, while resources may not currently be available to draft a detailed economic development strategy, a policy framework can be established to guide future work. Finally, a number of the topics identified as important by the community will be addressed by “required” items. For example, providing an adequate supply of potable water for development will be evaluated as part of the Critical Areas Ordinance update effort. Another example is a very visible debate surrounding the potential expansion of currently allowed uses on certain properties. This debate will need attention, not only for this particular issue, but in general when the mandated update of the land use element of the Plan occurs.

In conclusion, staff recommends all of the items identified in Attachment D as “required” or “staff recommendation” be included in the final scope of work for the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update. Staff further recommends that all items listed as “optional” be deferred until after the completion of the update process.

If you have any questions regarding the materials and information, please feel free to give me a call or send an email, and I will get back to you before the meeting.