Regarding: Planning Commission Findings for PLG 007/12 – Comprehensive Update of the Island County Shoreline Master Program

Summary: The Island County Planning Commission is forwarding to the Board of Island County Commissioners a comprehensive update of the Island County Shoreline Master Program, including technical documents, consistent with terms of the grant agreement G1100007 between Island County and the Washington State Department of Ecology.

Findings: Planning Commission Findings of Fact and Reasons for Action

1. The Washington State Legislature passed the Washington State Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58 [SMA]) in June 1971 and it was passed by public initiative in 1972. Under the SMA, each county and city is required to adopt and administer a local shoreline master program (SMP) to prevent the uncoordinated and piecemeal development on shorelines of the state consistent with the Act.

2. The Shoreline Master Program guidelines (WAC 173-26) are the standards and guidance that have been adopted by the Department of Ecology that local governments must follow in drafting their shoreline master programs.

3. The Island County Shoreline Master Program was originally approved and adopted on June 26, 1976. The County’s SMP has been amended several times since its initial adoption, including updates in 1985, 1992, and 2001.

4. Pursuant to the SMA, at RCW 90.58.050, Island County and the State Department of Ecology share joint authority and responsibility for the administration of the Island county SMP. Because the Island County Shoreline Master Program is approved by the State Department of Ecology, it has the authority of state law.
5. A binding agreement was entered into on July 28, 2010 by and between the State of Washington, Department of Ecology and Island County, Washington to provide state funds of up to $450,000 for the County to prepare a locally adopted comprehensive Shoreline Master Program update consistent with SMA Grant Agreement No. G1100007.

6. In 1995, the State Legislature amended the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A [GMA]) and the SMA to partially integrate the provisions of the two statutes. The amendments collectively added the goals and policies of the SMA as a 14th planning goal under the GMA and clarified that the goals and policies of an approved SMP shall constitute a shoreline element of the County's Comprehensive Plan (RCW 36.70A.480).

7. Shoreline Master Programs are both policy and regulatory documents. The SMP goals and policies, shoreline environment designations map, and Shoreline Restoration Plan are to be adopted as the shoreline element of the Comprehensive Plan. Island County Code Chapter 17.05A comprises the shoreline regulations and administrative procedures for shoreline permits as the regulatory portion of the SMP.

8. Critical areas within shoreline jurisdiction will be governed by provisions contained in the updated SMP.

9. A Shoreline Inventory and Characterization report, dated March 2012, provides a baseline inventory and characterization of ecosystem-wide functions, processes, and existing shoreline conditions for a total of 207 miles divided into forty-four reaches at enable a more detailed evaluation and assessment.

10. As part of the approved Public Participation Plan for the SMP update, a Technical Advisory Committee consisting of government and agency representatives was formed to focus technical discussions, identify and verify sources of current, accurate, and complete scientific and technical information applicable to shoreline issues of concern in Island County.

11. As part of the approved Public Participation Plan for the SMP update and local adoption process, County staff has presented project status updates, and preliminary drafts to the Island County Planning Commission.

12. The Island County Planning Commission hosted public meetings on the SMP update at three different locations to encourage public involvement. Meetings were held on August 14th in Coupeville, August 16th in Freeland, and August 21st on Camano Island. The Planning Commission held three public hearings on September 6th, 11th, and 25th.

Findings of Fact
Island County Planning Commission
PLG 007/12 – Island Co. Shoreline Master Program
Page 2 of 3
13. The Planning Commission finds that this comprehensive update of the Island County SMP, consisting of Shoreline Goals and Policies, Shoreline Environment Designation Maps, and a Shoreline Restoration Plan, to replace the existing Shoreline Element in the Island County GMA Comprehensive Plan together with new Chapter 17.05A ICC meets State requirements as well as accurately reflecting local circumstances.

14. A high priority of the SMP is to address public beach access in a proactive and goal-oriented manner similar to the way that the Shoreline Restoration Plan relates to ecological concerns.

15. The Planning Commission finds that aquaculture operations present an important opportunity and challenge due to the proliferation of such practices and that this will require diligent management and oversight.

**Conclusions:** The Island County Planning Commission has reviewed PLG 007/12 and hereby recommends that the Board of Island County Commissioners adopt the Island County Shoreline Master Program update. Staff is authorized to correct any typographical errors, spelling, formatting and to make other minor revisions to improve the reader's comprehension of the document provided that any revisions do not alter the regulatory meaning and intent and provided further that said edits are shown at the time of ordinance adoption.

Respectfully submitted through the Island County Planning & Community Development Department to the Board of Island County Commissioners, pursuant to RCW 36.70.430, this 25th day of September, 2012 by,

\[ Mitchell Howard \]

*Mitchell Howard*
*Island County Planning Commission, Chair*