



**San Juan County  
Community Development & Planning**

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**TO:** SAN JUAN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

**FROM:** RON HENRICKSON, DIRECTOR COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING

**SUBJECT:** CHANGES TO APPENDIX 1, POPULATION PROJECTIONS, OF  
THE ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, NOVEMBER 29, 2005

**FOR MEETING OF:** FEBRUARY 20, 2009

**ISSUE:** RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO  
THE COUNTY COUNCIL

**EXHIBITS:** PROPOSED HIGHLIGHTED PAGES 5, 7 and 8, APPENDIX 1  
CTED LETTER OF FEBRUARY 5, 2009

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

CD&P supports the changes to Appendix 1.

**BACKGROUND:**

This item arises in conjunction with the Hearings Board compliance order for Case No. 08-02-006 involving both the housing and land use (population) elements of the County comprehensive Plan. Compliance is due by March 31, 2009.

In 2005 the County adopted Ordinance 15 amending Appendix 1 updating population projections from 2005 to 2025, the twenty year planning horizon. While the plan assigned 50 % of the new growth on Orcas Island and Lopez Island to Eastsound and Lopez Village respectively, it assigned a much smaller percentage of growth to the Town of Friday Harbor, 29%. The proposed change increases the percentage to 50%, which is consistent with the goal of GMA to encourage more of the new growth in urban areas.

The changes in Appendix 1 can be found on page 5 & 8 and in Table 8 on page 7.

**DISCUSSION:**

For planning purposes the County has adopted the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) mid-range population forecast of growth which projects about a 2.2% increase in population per year. Based on this projection the County is expected to grow from 15,500 in 2005 to 22,534 in 2025. San Juan Island's population is projected to increase from 7,364 to 10,706 over the same period.

Increasing the percentage of new population expected to locate in the Town from 29% to 50% will decrease the growth in the unincorporated area and increase the growth in Friday Harbor. Following are the proposed changes which are shown in Table 8, page 7.

		2010	2015	2020	2025
SJI unincorporated	Adopted	5,825	6,448	7,023	7,580
	Proposed	5,645	6,085	6,491	6,885
Friday Harbor	Adopted	2,404	2,659	2,896	3,126
	Proposed	2,582	3,022	3,428	3,821

The benefits of focusing growth in the urban areas can:

- reduce impacts on the rural environment and reduce the amount of rural land lost to development. By way of illustration, if 702 individuals with a household size of 2.16 were to locate in Friday Harbor, one-third at a single family density of 4 per acre and two-thirds at a multi-family density of 14 per acre, using a market factor of 20 %, development would consume 51 acres of land. If those same individuals, with the same household size and market factor, located on 5 acre rural parcels, they would consume 1,950 acres of land.
- reduce impacts on the Island's transportation network.
- reduce the dependency of future population on the automobile and encourage pedestrian friendly growth by design.
- increase the feasibility of economically affordable housing opportunities.
- provide an increased opportunity to maintain some balance in the demographic profile of our community.

### PUBLIC MEETING:

On January 7, 2009, staff conducted a public meeting to solicit public comment on the proposed changes. The Town of Friday Harbor was also notified of the meeting and invited to comment. Four individuals attended the meeting and there was no representation from the town.

Comments expressed were:

- directing growth to the town is consistent with the goals of the San Juan Initiative and could reduce increased storm water pollution in rural areas.
- the County and Town need to develop a better working relationship to solve issues such as the need for affordable housing and addressing future growth.
- growth management criteria should not be a barrier to finding solutions to issues given that our Island community is unique.

### ADMINISTRATORS MEETING:

On January 28, 2009, the County and Town Administrators together with the planning directors met to discuss the proposed changes in Appendix 1. Although no consensus was reached, it was agreed to reconstitute the Joint Policy Planning Committee to establish a forum for further discussions related to future growth. In this regard the Planning Commission is requested to recommend a Planning Commission member for participation on this committee.

### TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING:

On January 29, 2009 I presented a report to the Town Planning Commission regarding the proposed change, and answered their questions. After discussion the Planning Commission made a recommendation to the Town Council. I anticipate that the Town Council will be submitting their comments at the February 20, 2009 public hearing.

### PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

1. Approve a recommendation to the County Council either supporting, denying or modifying the proposed changes to Appendix 1.
2. Recommend a Planning Commission member for the Joint Policy Planning Committee.