



SECTION B ELEMENT 2 LAND USE AND RURAL

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ELEMENT 2. LAND USE AND RURAL

2.1 Introduction

The Land Use Element is comprised of interrelated land use goals which form the basis of the County's land use strategy and provide for a supply and distribution of land use types to accommodate the population and employment growth for the next twenty years. It establishes the desired character, quality, and patterns of development. Land use goals, policies and Official Maps will guide how the County manages growth and development within urban growth areas; how it will reduce development pressures and patterns of sprawl within rural areas; conserve agricultural, forest and mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance; and preserve and protect open space, scenic and cultural resources.

The land use goals, policies, and Official Maps are implemented through the regulations in Title 18 San Juan County Code (SJCC) and County programs. They determine where and how future land uses develop. As a result, this element is integral in realizing the **community vision for land use:**

Neighborhoods, hamlets, villages, towns, and other activity centers are clearly defined to conserve, rural, agricultural, forest, mineral resource lands and critical areas. These areas define our heritage and sense of place: providing for commerce and community activities without losing their small scale and attractive island ambiance. The unique character of our shorelines is protected by encouraging uses that maintain or enhance the health of the shoreline environment. Through innovative land use strategies, our citizens and institutions balance and protect private property rights, public rights, and our natural environment.

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires this element to:

- Establish the general distribution, location and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, timber production, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, open spaces, general

aviation airports, public utilities, public facilities, and other land uses (RCW 36.70A.070(1)), and

- Include rural lands that are not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest, or mineral resources. This must provide for a variety of rural densities, uses, essential public facilities, and rural governmental services needed to serve the permitted densities and uses (RCW 36.70A.070(5)).

Central to the GMA planning framework are three primary land use categories: urban, natural resource, and rural lands. Figure 1 below illustrates these categories relative to the intensity of the built environment. The GMA requires the County to designate urban growth areas (UGAs) inside of which urban development is permitted and outside of which it is not allowed. Urban growth occurs at a higher intensity than rural and resource lands. Designated UGAs must be served or capable of being served by urban services such as water and sewer systems. Under the GMA, the County must designate natural resource lands with long-term commercial significance for the production of agricultural, timber, and mineral resources. Natural resource lands must be preserved from incompatible land uses to ensure that they remain available for resource industries. Finally, the GMA requires that lands that are not urban or natural resource lands be designated as rural lands. Diverse uses and densities must be allowed on rural lands to enable rural living while preserving the rural character.

Figure 1
Land Use Categories.



2.1.A Purpose

San Juan County is faced with a number of critical land use issues, perhaps the most critical being protection of the primarily *rural character* and natural environment of the islands while allowing for growth and *development* that maintains these characteristics and a healthy, diverse economy and populace. The Land Use Element of the *Comprehensive Plan*, guided by the county-wide Vision Statement, establishes the desired character, quality, and pattern of development for the physical environment of the county. It represents the policy plan for growth over the next twenty years. The goals and policies in this element direct future decisions on land use regulations, actions, procedures, and programs that will further implement the intent and purpose of the overall *Plan*.

2.1.B Land Use Concept

This Element establishes the concepts for how San Juan County should grow and develop while protecting its exceptional quality of life and natural environment, and

equitably sharing the public and private costs and benefits of growth. The concept establishes the overall direction for guiding residential, commercial, and industrial growth in a manner that protects public health and safety and private property rights while preserving rural character and the County's unique island atmosphere.

The land use concept guides San Juan County's efforts to achieve these ends by indicating where housing, shopping, community services, cultural facilities, and economic development activities should be encouraged, and where open space, rural areas, farmlands, and forested areas should be protected. It distinguishes between urban growth areas, activity centers and other areas of more intensive rural development, rural areas, and resource lands, and places the emphasis for growth in areas where adequate public facilities and services can be provided in an efficient and economic manner.

Finally, the land use concept attempts to preserve open space, protect critical areas, maintain and improve the quality of air, water, soil and land resources, and protect the historic and cultural character of the islands. The land use concept is based on the densities established on the Official Maps.

The Land Use Element consists of six major sections:

- General Goals, which provide the overall goals and policies for all lands in the county.
- Land Use Designations, which establish specific goals and policies for a number of designations within these classes:
 - Urban Growth Areas, including Towns.
 - Resource Lands including Agricultural and Forest lands.
- Special Districts of Conservancy and Natural which include goals and policies for conservation of areas with valuable natural features.
- Rural lands including activity centers, limited areas or more intensive rural development (LAMIRD), master planned resorts, Rural general use, rural farm forest, rural residential, rural industrial, rural commercial, conservancy and natural land use designations.
- Overlay Districts, which contain additional goals and policies for certain land areas and uses that warrant specific recognition and management, including Mineral Resource Lands, Critical Areas, Open Space Conservation, watershed management, and Airport Districts.

- Subarea Plans, which contain goals and policies for the creation of plans and regulations for specific geographic areas in the County.

2.1.C Existing Land Use Pattern

San Juan County is located north of Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, west of Rosario Strait, east of Haro Strait, and south of the US-Canadian border. It is composed of over 130 islands. The majority of these islands are either undeveloped or developed with rustic recreational development. Most of the land on the inhabited islands is developed with either residential, agricultural or forestry uses. Commercial and industrial development is primarily located in the County's urban growth areas (UGAs), limited areas of more intense rural development (LAMIRDs), Activity Centers and Master Planned Resorts.

The County's three UGAs are the primary social and economic centers of San Juan, Lopez and Orcas islands. Existing residential development in Friday Harbor, an incorporated UGA, Eastsound and Lopez Village is comprised of single-family residences interspersed with multifamily development. Commercial development in the UGAs includes a mix of retail, food service, and visitor accommodations. The types of existing commercial development serve the needs of both the resident population and the seasonal visitor population; reflecting the significant effect of the tourist economy. Industrial development in the County is generally limited to small-scale manufacturing of locally-sourced consumer goods such as soaps and food products.

There are four LAMIRDs designated on the Official Maps: Country Corner Commercial (Orcas), Island Center (Orcas), Island Center (Lopez), and Marine Center (Lopez). These LAMIRDs are predominately developed with commercial and institutional uses that provide services to surrounding rural areas. Commercial developments are mostly retail such as hardware stores and nurseries. The Island Center LAMIRD on Lopez Island also includes the Lopez Island K-12 school. There are few residential uses in these areas except those that are accessory to nonresidential uses.

Activity Centers and Master Planned Resorts are special types of LAMIRDs that include resorts, villages and hamlets located outside of UGAs. They provide a variety of allowed

uses and residential densities to serve the resident and visitor populations. Most of the Activity Centers and Master Planned Resorts have adopted subarea plans to guide development in these unique areas. Residential development in activity centers is mostly composed of single-family residences at higher rural density between one dwelling per two acres to one dwelling per half-acre. Commercial uses in Activity Centers are a mix of retail, food service, and visitor accommodations. Master Planned Resorts are primarily developed for recreational purposes and include a mix of residential and commercial uses that must support the on-site recreational nature of the resorts.

Agricultural and forest resource lands are primarily developed with natural resource uses such as farms and timber land. Residential development in these areas typically occurs at the lowest density allowed in the County. Commercial development is limited to uses that are accessory to natural resource development such as roadside stands and cottage enterprises that process resource products into consumer goods.

Rural areas, those that are not urban or natural resource lands, cover the majority of the County. These lands are typically either developed with residential uses or undeveloped. There are some scattered farms and timber lands in rural areas. Residential development in rural areas ranges in density but occurs at a lower rate of dwellings per acre than urban areas and activity centers. Commercial development in rural areas is predominately small-scale and limited to uses accessory to residential development.

2.1.D Population and Housing Forecasts, Residential and Commercial Capacity

San Juan County's 2016 population was 16,314. The 2036 population is projected to increase to 19,423 persons by the year 2036, an increase of 3,109 (Appendix 1 Population Forecast and Land Capacity Analysis). Table 1 shows the forecasted 2036 population growth per island. San Juan and Orcas are projected to experience the most population growth; more than 1,000 residents each. Of the ferry served islands, Lopez and Shaw are expected to have the least population growth in this period. The total projected countywide growth is 3,109 new residents by 2036.

Table 1
2036 Forecasted Population Growth per Island.

Island	2016 Population	2036 Population	2036 Population Growth
San Juan	7,810	9,298	1,488
Lopez	2,466	2,936	470
Orcas	5,395	6,423	1,028
Shaw	241	287	46
Waldron	109	130	21
Stuart	33	39	6
Decatur	89	106	17
Blakely	42	50	8
Other Islands	129	154	25
Total	16,314	19,423	3,109

Source: Appendix 1 Population Forecast and Land Capacity Analysis.

The GMA requires the County to ensure that the *Plan* and its implementing development regulations provide enough capacity of land suitable for development to accommodate the projected housing and employment growth (RCW 36.70A.115). The Land Capacity Analysis (LCA) in Appendix 1 analyzed the amount of capacity provided by the development regulations and Plan designations and densities to accommodate future growth through the year 2036.

The County’s average household size is 2.04 people per household. At this rate, the number of households will increase from 7,997 to 9,521 by 2036, an increase of 1,524 households. Appendix 5, Housing Needs Assessment, indicates there were 13,859 housing units in the County in 2016. If housing units continue to grow at an average annual rate of 209 per year (the rate between 1980 to 2016), a total of 18,059 dwellings would be expected by 2036. This is an increase of 4,180 dwelling units over 2016 levels.

Table 2 shows the residential capacity for rural, resource, urban, and mixed-use residential land use designations. It indicates that the majority of residential capacity is in the Rural Farm Forest land use designation (RFF). This is the most prevalent land use designation in the County with around 48,608 acres (forty-three percent of all acres)

designated RFF. The LCA indicates that the County’s existing land use designations, densities and regulations provide residential capacity for the development of between 2,039 and 3,392 dwelling units after accounting for market and seasonal home factors. There is sufficient housing capacity to accommodate the forecasted 3,109 new residents or 1,524 new households.

Mixed-use developments can be composed of any proportion of residential and commercial square footage. For this reason, the LCA presents mixed-use capacity in three scenarios:

- Scenario A: Mixed-use parcels develop with one-hundred percent commercial development;
- Scenario B: Mixed-use parcels develop with fifty percent of each residential and commercial; and
- Scenario C: Mixed-use parcels develop with one-hundred percent residential development.

**Table 2
Residential Capacity by Natural Resource, Rural and Urban Growth Area Designations.**

Land Use Category	Land Use Designation	Residential Capacity in Possible Dwelling Units
Natural Resource Land	Agricultural Resource	124.59
	Forest Resource	134.71
	Natural Resource Land Subtotal	259.30
Rural	Rural Farm Forest	1,131.27
	Rural Residential	150.53
	Conservancy	48.28
	Lopez Village Growth Reserve Area	0.82
Rural Activity Centers, Eastsound Subarea outside UGA, and LAMIRD	Residential Activity Center	35.32
	Olga Hamlet	5.17
	Orcas Village Residential	3.76
	Deer Harbor Hamlet Residential	16.96
	Eastsound Rural	6.94
	Eastsound Rural Residential 5P	5.69
	Eastsound Rural Residential 2P	7.79

Land Use Category	Land Use Designation	Residential Capacity in Possible Dwelling Units	
	Activity Center and LAMIRD Subtotal	81.63	
Rural Subtotal, including Activity Centers and LAMIRDs		1,412.53	
Eastsound UGA	Eastsound Residential 1	.52	
	Eastsound Residential 1P	5.69	
	Eastsound Residential 2	13.03	
	Eastsound Residential 2P	15.91	
	Eastsound Residential 4-12	7.16	
	Eastsound Residential 4P	55.45	
	Eastsound Village Residential	181.69	
	Service and Light Industrial	-5	
	Eastsound Village Commercial Scenario A	-27	
	Eastsound Village Commercial Scenario B	24.13	
	Eastsound Village Commercial Scenario C	174.65	
	Marina Scenario A	-2	
	Marina Scenario B	1.60	
	Marina Scenario C	21.58	
	Eastsound UGA Subtotal		
		Scenario A	245
	Scenario B	300	
	Scenario C	471	
Lopez Village UGA	Lopez Village Residential	121.81	
	Lopez Village Commercial Scenario A	0	
	Lopez Village Commercial Scenario B	577.34	
	Lopez Village Commercial Scenario C	1,154.69	
	Lopez Village UGA Subtotal Scenario A		121.81
	Lopez Village UGA Subtotal Scenario B		699.15
	Lopez Village UGA Subtotal Scenario C		1,276.50

Land Use Category	Land Use Designation	Residential Capacity in Possible Dwelling Units
Countywide Total	Scenario A	2,039.09
	Scenario B	2,691.14
	Scenario C	3,392.01

Source: Appendix 1 Population Forecast and Land Capacity Analysis.

According to the LCA, there is sufficient employment capacity to accommodate the projected population growth. It shows that the gross commercial employment capacity projected to be available in 2036 could accommodate between 19,062 and 12,869 jobs. Countywide employment is only projected to increase by 473 new jobs, in proportion with the population. Table 3 below shows the employment capacity for each mixed-use, commercial, and industrial land use designation in the County based on current development regulations, existing development, and 2017 Official Map designations.

Table 3
Employment Capacity by Mixed-use, Commercial, and Industrial Land Use Designations.

Land Use Designation	Developable Acres	Commercial Capacity in Square Feet	Future Employment Capacity in Jobs
Rural Industrial	49.97	27,081.91	56.29
Rural General Use	1,145.86	4,123,102.45	10,326.39
Island Center	30.44	184,505.05	422.86
Deer Harbor Hamlet Commercial	2.65	19,706.41	37.11
Deer Harbor Hamlet Industrial	4.43	22,288.00	41.97
Orcas Village Commercial	7.71	34,049.90	64.13
Marine Center	17.36	46,921.96	112.99
Master Planned Resort	133.82	362,715.75	1,149.35
Country Corner Commercial	5.76	481.82	0.91
Service Park	4.97	90,368.50	170.19
Non-UGA Subtotal	1,402.97	4,911,221.75	12,382.19

Land Use Designation	Developable Acres	Commercial Capacity in Square Feet	Future Employment Capacity in Jobs
Eastsound UGA			
Service and Light Industrial	19.98	258,911.79	487.60
Village Commercial			
Scenario A	13.18	117,073.96	220.48
Scenario B	13.18	58,308.78	109.81
Scenario C	13.18	0	0
Marina			
Scenario A	7.96	218,376.21	411.26
Scenario B	7.96	3,192.59	6.01
Scenario C	7.96	0	0
Eastsound UGA Subtotal			
Scenario A	41.12	594,361.96	1,119.35
Scenario B	41.12	320,413.15	603.43
Scenario C	41.12	258,911.79	487.60
Lopez Village UGA			
Village Commercial			
Scenario A	8.49	2,309,372.02	5,561.13
Scenario B	8.49	1,154,686.01	2,780.57
Scenario C	8.49	0	0
Countywide Total			
Scenario A	1,452.58	7,814,955.73	19,062.67
Scenario B	1,452.58	6,386,320.91	15,766.19
Scenario C	1,452.58	5,170,133.54	12,869.79

Source: Appendix 1 Population Forecast and Land Capacity Analysis.

2.1.E Population and Residential Density

This Element is consistent with the County's 2036 population projections of 19,423 (Appendix 1). This includes 9,298 people on San Juan, 6,423 on Orcas, 2,936 on Lopez, 287 on Shaw and 479 on the remaining Islands.

Residential density, the number of residential units allowed per acre, is established on the County's Official Maps. The Official Maps do not establish a minimum parcel size. New land divisions may not establish a parcel pattern which would permit development of the area at a residential density greater than that provided for in the Official Maps, or create parcels smaller than those allowed by San Juan County Code (SJCC).

The County's patterns of development have been greatly influenced by the residential densities established in the 1979 *Plan*. In many instances, the densities have been voluntarily reduced by property owners through the dedication of conservation easements with the San Juan Preservation Trust and the San Juan County Land Bank who also achieves this through land acquisition.

This *Plan* includes rural densities that allow fewer dwelling units than permitted by the 1979 plan in a number of areas. Existing parcels which were established under the greater densities of the 1979 plan may be developed for residential use, but further subdivision in these areas must meet the established density limits. *Plan* policies encourage the combination of existing lots in order to reduce the number of dwelling units that may be developed in rural areas where the existing parcel pattern would permit development at a density greater than that established by this *Plan* and the Official Maps.

2.1.F Growth Management and Resource Protection

To ensure that critical areas and rural resources are protected, and that urban governmental services will not be required outside of urban growth areas and LAMIRDs, in addition to the density requirements *Plan* policies address limits on capital facility development in the rural areas, conservation subdivision standards and other site design and performance standards.

2.2 General Goals and Policies

General goals and polices address how the county will try to achieve its Vision. They address a broad range of issues which apply to all land use designations.

2.2.A General Goal and Policies

Goal

To provide for the orderly use of San Juan County land, shorelines and water areas and to respect, protect and maintain the natural beauty and land and marine resources of the islands, maintain the rural, residential, agricultural atmosphere, and to regulate development in a manner which will protect the rights of private landowners and interests of the public.

Policies

1. Manage community growth and its associated impacts, while protecting individual property rights through adoption of a coordinated set of goals, policies and regulations to guide future development in the County.
2. Recognize and support the right of property owners to maintain and replace legal, non-conforming uses and structures.
3. Consider site capabilities and existing development patterns when determining the land use designation and appropriate locations and intensities of various uses of the land.
4. Direct high density residential and mixed use development into urban growth areas, and Activity Centers to prevent sprawl and relieve growth pressure in the surrounding rural areas.
5. Investigate the development of a program to allow for the transfer of residential density from Rural and Resource Lands to Activity Centers and other approved receiving areas to protect rural and resource lands. Transfer of residential density within Activity Centers should also be allowed.
6. Implement the Vision of preserving rural character and limited natural resources by means of voluntary, incentive-based programs, and other strategies, to reduce the maximum number of residential structures in rural areas in a manner that is fair and equitable for property owners including encouraging property owners to keep parcels whole and to preserve open space.
7. Encourage the maximum allowable residential densities specified on the Official Maps.

8. Recognize that the maximum allowable density applied to land by designation on the Official Maps reflects the general intent of this *Plan* for residential development and should be allowed unless it would exceed site capabilities or unless it would not comply with County land use regulations. Site capabilities or conditions which may indicate a density lower than the specified maximum include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Suitability of soils to sustain individual or community sewage disposal systems.
 - b. Quality and quantity of water available to serve the proposed development.
 - c. The presence of critical areas which would either be materially harmed, or which would result in hazards to life and property as a result of development at maximum density.
9. Preserve rural character outside of UGAs by requiring conservation design in new land divisions and allowing limited residential density bonuses in return for additional protection of open space resources and natural resource functions.
10. Manage runoff to prevent flooding and property damage, promote groundwater recharge and protect the quality and quantity of ground and surface water in accordance with the Water Element of this *Plan*.
11. *Vacation rental* (short-term, *i.e.*, of less than thirty days) of a principal, single-family residential unit or an accessory dwelling unit should be subject to standards similar to those for hospitality commercial establishments but should be classified as a residential use for purposes of land use regulation.
12. Limit the number of vacation rental permits on each island via permit caps established in San Juan County Code Title 18.
13. Review and revision of this *Plan* Element and the Official Maps should be based in part on the:
 - a. Sufficiency of capital facilities as provided in the Capital Facilities Element and six-year plan;
 - b. Review of development patterns, projected needs;
 - c. Availability and adequacy of water resources;
 - d. Ability to control and mitigate the impacts of development; and
 - e. Retention and protection of resource lands, special districts, critical areas, and water quality.

2.2.B Economy

Goal

To support a broad-based, diversified, stable, year-round economy which provides a range of goods, services and employment opportunities while safeguarding the rural, residential, agricultural, and marine nature of the County.

Policies

1. Provide a predictable development atmosphere through the formulation of clearly defined land use designations, regulations and standards.
2. Allow the establishment of *home occupations* and *cottage enterprises* with performance standards.
3. Retain *resource-based activities* by:
 - a. Conserving agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands;
 - b. Encouraging forest land owners to use best management practices and sustainable harvesting techniques;
 - c. Allowing resource-based processing and commercial activities to locate on resource lands and in some rural areas; and
 - d. Allowing the storage of personal commercial fishing vessels and related equipment incidental to a personal residential use throughout the county.
4. Ensure that new commercial, industrial, and institutional uses are consistent and compatible with the Islands' natural environment, community livability, and the needs of county residents by establishing performance standards.
5. Allow for tourism-related businesses and activities while maintaining a diverse and balanced economy and minimizing related negative impacts.
6. Commercial and industrial uses should be located only where directly accessible from a County road, or from a private road if traffic and maintenance impacts to the private road are minimized.

2.2.C Energy

Goal

To conserve energy and promote energy efficiency.

Policies

1. Promote education on site planning methods that maximize energy-saving features of the natural environment.
2. Provide opportunities for the development and use of alternative energy resources which are compatible with the natural environment.

2.2.D Essential Public Facilities

Goal

To ensure that the land use needs for *essential public facilities* are identified and provided for as a necessary component of a coordinated land use system.

Policies

1. Identify Essential Public Facilities (EPFs) in the County that provide a necessary public service as their primary mission, and that are difficult to site.
2. Do not preclude the siting and construction of EPFs. When possible, require that EPFs comply with existing regulations and policies.
3. Develop special siting, design and approval procedures for when Policy 2 above is not possible, or existing, non-conforming facilities need to be expanded that:
 - a. Consider impacts on existing land uses, resource lands, open space, scenic resources, shoreline master program, Critical Areas, and the natural and rural environment;
 - b. Consider the quality of service provided and the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits to the public;
 - c. Include the public in selecting sites and developing alternatives to mitigate negative impacts;
 - d. Require reasonable mitigation of negative impacts. An application for an EPF Conditional Use Permit may not be denied because impacts are not fully mitigated; and
 - e. Prevent the siting of incompatible uses adjacent to general aviation airports.

4. Do not locate EPFs within frequently flooded or geologically hazardous areas unless no practicable alternative exists.
5. Do not locate other facilities outside an UGA or LAMIRD unless its operation warrants a rural location.
6. Establish shoreline environment designation, policies, boundaries, and provisions regarding the identification, siting and design of essential public facilities located in the shoreline jurisdiction in the Shoreline Master Program Element.
7. Develop voluntary programs to protect the overall functions and values of critical areas and to support resource land uses, particularly commercial agricultural uses to help offset potential impacts from essential public facilities.

2.2.E Recreation

Goal

To provide recreational opportunities that will meet the needs and interests of County residents while ensuring that recreational uses are compatible with the natural limitations of specific sites and surrounding uses.

Policies

1. Coordinate with other public and private agencies to ensure that plans and programs provided within the County accommodate the recreational needs and interests of County residents.
2. Allow the use of public lands consistent with the physical and cultural limitations of each site and the island on which it is located.
3. Allow commercial recreational developments, consistent with the above goal to complement public recreational facilities.
4. Prohibit recreational vehicle and all-terrain vehicle parks.
5. Prohibit the development or use of land for large-scale, permanent, tourist attractions such as theme parks and casinos. Allowable tourist attractions should be limited to those that do not require significant land area.
6. Establish performance standards for public and private recreational developments to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent properties and the natural environment.

2.2.F Natural Resource Conservation

Goal

To preserve nonrenewable natural resources and conserve renewable natural resources for the benefit of existing and future generations.

Policies

1. Conserve soils capable of supporting long-term agricultural production identified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
2. Conserve forest lands in the Washington Department of Natural Resources' forest grades 1-5 classification for long-term timber production.
3. Encourage sustainable forest management in order to conserve forest lands and promote the retention and preservation of forest stands that are particularly important to visual aesthetics, wildlife habitat, groundwater retention and/or site stability.
4. Protect and preserve, wetlands, critical marine and terrestrial wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors, including breeding grounds, resting and feeding areas for migratory birds, nursery areas and habitats of threatened, endangered and sensitive species.
5. Encourage the reclamation, rehabilitation and enhancements of wetlands, marine and terrestrial wildlife habitat, and vegetated areas necessary to maintain site stability and groundwater recharge.
6. Develop voluntary, incentive-based, protection measures for natural resources including conservation easements, transfer and purchase of development rights programs, current use taxation, and public education programs.
7. Protect the health, safety and welfare of the public by ensuring that areas susceptible to geological and hydrological hazards are not developed in a manner which would result in injury, loss of life, property damage or financial losses due to flooding, erosion, landslide, or steep slope failures.
8. Incorporate low impact development standards and guidelines (based on the *Western Washington Stormwater Management Manual*) into implementing regulations for critical areas, rural and resource lands, special districts, activity centers and urban growth areas.
9. Establish provisions for Conversion Option Harvest plans in coordination with the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to clearly delineate and coordinate the authorities and responsibilities of the DNR and the County in the processing, administration and enforcement of forest practice activities, especially as they relate to the clearing of land for non-forestry uses.

10. Encourage the creation of a county-wide carbon sequestration program.

2.2.G Social Services

Goal

To augment County health and social service capabilities by allowing the development of affordable residential care facilities.

Policies

1. Allow the establishment of residential care facilities and home day care facilities in all residential land use designations.

2.2.H Historic and Archaeological Preservation

Goal

To protect, preserve, and restore significant archaeological and historical resources in the County and encourage new development that will enhance community identity.

Policies

1. Protect areas of known archaeological and historic value from incompatible development and ensure that newly discovered areas uncovered during excavation are examined by the appropriate authorities.
2. Protect through voluntary measures significant historic resources identified in an inventory, using a variety of preservation techniques including acquisition, incentives, conservation easements, transfer of development rights, overlay districts, and alternative re-use of structures.
3. Incorporate the preservation of sites and structures of historic and archaeological significance as a part of the environmental consideration in development permit and land division reviews.

2.2.I Open Space and Scenic Resources

Goal

To protect and conserve open space and scenic resources.

Policies

1. Protect open space and scenic resources identified in the County's *Open Space and Conservation Plan* through implementation of a variety of conservation techniques including fee acquisition, conservation easements, incentives, overlay districts, purchase, retirement, or transfer of development rights, and educational programs.

2.2.J Access to Public Lands and Facilities

Goal

To provide safe and convenient access to public lands and facilities without causing significant negative impacts on the quality of life or property of island residents, or adversely affecting fragile natural features.

Policies

1. Acquire or otherwise assure access to publicly owned lands and facilities that should not adversely affect the public resource or adjacent properties.
2. Mark public access areas clearly.
3. Provide greenways or buffer zones within public access areas to protect adjacent private property when possible.

2.2.K Sewage Disposal

Goal

To protect water quality and the public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring that growth and development is supported by site conditions suitable for sewage disposal systems, or by sewage treatment facilities in urban growth areas, and certain activity centers and residential activity centers.

Policies

1. Allow development only upon County approval of sewage disposal systems or upon connection to an approved community sewage treatment facility.

2. Allow innovative, functional technologies for the efficient processing of sewage with approval from the County's Public Health Officer.
3. Locate sewage disposal facilities to prevent contamination of surface and ground water resources.
4. Coordinate with the Town of Friday Harbor in the development of programs for local sewage sludge disposal which will have minimal negative impact on the public.
5. Prohibit the importation and disposal of sewage sludge to the islands from outside of the County.
6. Allow the extension of community sewage treatment facilities into rural areas only to remedy existing or potential groundwater contamination problems, or to correct existing or impending health hazards, or to provide service to public schools, and only when it meets the criteria in *Plan* Sections B.7.1.C and B.7.2.A.

2.2.L Telecommunications

Goal

To allow for the development of effective telecommunications systems in a manner consistent with the character of island neighborhoods and the rural and scenic qualities of the islands.

Policies

1. Allow telecommunications towers and antennae subject to location, siting, appearance, and performance standards.
2. Use to the maximum extent possible existing commercial telecommunications antennae and towers to accommodate future telecommunications needs before new facilities are approved.

2.2.M Physical Activity

Goal

To implement community planning and design approaches that promote walking, bicycling and other physical activity.

Policies

Policies supporting physical activity are found in Appendix 11, Parks, Trails and Natural Areas Plan and Nonmotorized Plan, and the Transportation Element of this *Plan* subarea and activity center plans.

2.2.N Agriculture

Goal

Protect agricultural land and promote diverse agricultural activities that enhance stewardship and economic viability, and maintain the rural character of San Juan County.

Policies



1. Encourage agricultural best management practices that conserve and regenerate soils; sequester carbon; build climate resilience; and protect water quality, protect wetland functions, fisheries, and wildlife through incentives, education and promotion of programs such as the Voluntary Stewardship Program.
2. Protect farmland and encourage productivity by designation and zoning, including innovative zoning techniques and accessory uses listed in RCW 36.70A.177.
3. Encourage no net loss of Agricultural Resource Land (ARL).
4. Encourage agricultural activities, ag-related facilities and infrastructure on prime agricultural lands provided these facilities are located in such a way as to minimize their impact on prime agricultural lands.
5. Prioritize agricultural production and working farms on publicly held agricultural lands.
6. Encourage the leasing of lands held in public trust for agricultural use.
7. Support agricultural viability by encouraging investment in infrastructure on agricultural lands held in public trust.
8. Encourage public agencies to develop conservation easements that support long-term agricultural viability.
9. Allow necessary infrastructure and services (which support agriculture and contribute to growing, storing, processing, and distributing a local food supply).
10. Avoid duplication of federal and state regulations that apply to agriculture, resource-based industries and value-added production while reserving the authority to address issues of local concern with regard to resource-based activities and operations.

11. Allow year round and seasonal housing limited to agricultural workers, including tiny homes, bunkhouses and other low cost and low impact solutions for working farms.
12. Encourage the recycling and beneficial use of island biomass and retention of nutrients through innovative zoning that allows composting and biochar production.
13. Allow agricultural accessory uses, such as farm stands, direct sales of agricultural products, agritourism and farm-based businesses where agriculture is allowed. Establish comprehensive definitions for agricultural accessory uses.
14. Implement right-to-farm provisions that assure agricultural uses are not considered a nuisance in San Juan County.
15. Support agricultural marketing, branding, and educational programs, agricultural policy advisory committees, and local agricultural grants.

2.2.O Climate Change



Goal 1

Understand climate change impacts and ensure that the *Plan* and development regulations are responsive to new conditions and improved approaches to climate mitigation and resilience.

Policies

1. Commit resources for a climate change impact study relying both on existing resources and reports and on new research that assesses lands and land and shoreline dependent industries that are susceptible to climate impacts and identifies hazard areas and regulatory changes to:
 - a. Make existing and future development in these areas more resilient;
 - b. Inventory greenhouse gases;
 - c. Address intersections of climate impacts and social equity; and
 - d. Develop a climate adaptation and mitigation action plan.
2. Periodically review and if necessary, update the San Juan County Comprehensive Plan and development regulations to ensure that:
 - a. *Plan* goals and policies establish clear objectives and actions to increase climate adaptation and mitigation and cultivate community resilience;
 - b. Policies and regulations are responsive when new technologies are available to address a changing climate; and

- c. The effects of climate change are addressed. These include:
 - i. Sea level rise;
 - ii. More frequent severe weather events and natural disasters;
 - iii. Constraints to potable water supply; and
 - iv. Average temperatures that change over time.
3. Seek input from local nonprofits, agencies, and special taxing districts when drafting land use regulations for responding to new technologies or strategies for mitigating the effects of climate change.
4. Engage the community when adopting changes to goals, policies and regulations to adapt to climate change. Public input improves amendments and strengthens community buy-in.
5. Allow uses that support natural resource industries in sustainably adapting to the effects of climate change.
6. Establish land use patterns that:
 - a. Reduce demand for transportation and infrastructure;
 - b. Focus new development in areas less prone to climate impacts; and
 - c. Limit human impacts on ecosystems and habitats.

Goal 2

Reduce the carbon footprint of new development through innovative development regulations and programs.

Policies

7. Establish development standards and incentives to support resource efficient design and construction.
8. Provide green building informational materials, checklists and other resources to property owners and developers.
9. Incorporate energy efficiency principles into publicly funded developments.
10. Reduce waste of natural resources and decrease greenhouse gas emissions generated by the transport of building materials by promoting the design of developments and infrastructure for disassembly and reuse or recycling.

Goal 3

Maintain and enhance both natural systems and nature-based systems in the built environment that provide valuable services that support climate adaptation and mitigation and resilience.

Policies

11. Increase resilience to climate impacts with nature-based solutions such as green infrastructure.
12. Support training for County staff on the development, incorporation, and preservation of green infrastructure.
13. Establish landscaping standards that provide functional environmental benefits such as improved air quality, carbon sequestration, temperature regulation, and stormwater management.
14. Promote and offer strong incentives for stewardship activities on forested lands, shorelines, wetlands, and agricultural lands that result in increased carbon sequestration, increased aquifer recharge, reduced wildfire risks, and reduced erosion.
15. Maintain and enhance ecosystem services that mitigate the effects of climate change particularly on natural landscapes and designated Agricultural and Forest Resource lands. Ecosystem services are features of natural areas that provide services instead of built infrastructure. Ecosystem services include:
 - a. Carbon sequestration;
 - b. Stormwater management;
 - c. Aquifer recharge; and
 - d. Erosion control.

2.3 Urban Growth Areas

Goal 1

To recognize and provide for areas of compact urban development that include urban-levels of uses and intensities which offer diverse employment opportunities, a variety of residential densities and housing types commercial, industrial, institutional, recreational, and community uses.

Policies

1. Establish different urban growth areas, each of which has a mix of land uses with housing, businesses, and services appropriate to its character, size, and location, as described *below*.

Types of Urban Growth Areas

- a. **Towns** are incorporated urban growth areas with a full range of urban facilities and services, including high-density residential, commercial, and industrial uses, schools, and neighborhood and community parks. Towns offer a variety of housing types and are pedestrian-oriented with compact development patterns. They have municipal sewage treatment facilities, municipal water systems and provide other urban governmental services.
 - b. **Unincorporated Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)** are:
 - i. adjacent to incorporated towns, are or can be served by municipal water systems and municipal sewage treatment facilities, and contain or are appropriate for a mixture of uses including general commercial and general industrial and high density residential. All or a portion of these areas may be annexed into a town within the twenty year planning time frame; or
 - ii. are non-municipal urban growth areas i.e., they provide community sewage treatment facilities and community water systems services at non-rural or urban levels of service, and provide some other services similar to towns but have no incorporated core. The UGAs provide a variety of housing types and residential densities, some of which are at urban-level densities. The remainder conditioned during land division to not preclude future upzoning. The UGAs are pedestrian-oriented with a compact village core.
2. Urban growth areas should be designated on the *Plan* Official Maps where existing or proposed uses and services will meet the above definitions. Urban growth areas designated on the *Plan* Official Maps are identified in Table 4, below.

Table 4
Summary of Urban Growth Areas.

Location	Designation
Friday Harbor	Town
Friday Harbor Urban Growth Area	Urban Growth Area
Eastsound	Urban Growth Area
Lopez Village	Urban Growth Area

3. Designate new lands as unincorporated urban growth areas only if they meet the following criteria:
 - a. The land is developed with or characterized by urban growth.
 - i. Urban growth refers to growth that makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures, and impermeable surfaces to such a degree as to be incompatible with the primary use of land for the production of food, other agricultural products, or fiber, or the extraction of mineral resources, rural uses, rural development, and natural resource lands.
 - ii. Characterized by urban growth refers to land having urban growth located on it, or to land located in relationship to an area with urban growth on it as to be appropriate for urban growth.
 - b. A range of governmental facilities and services presently exists or can be economically and efficiently provided at urban levels of service in a timely manner. These services include sewer, water, storm drainage, transportation improvements, fire and law enforcement protection, and parks and recreation.
 - c. The area has a physical connection to an existing UGA.
 - d. Additional urban growth area is needed to accommodate forecasted urban growth based on a land capacity analysis and population forecast.
 - e. The area does not have long-term commercial significance for agricultural, mineral, or forest products.
 - f. Establishing new urban development in the area will not conflict with activities on nearby designated natural resource lands.
 - g. Parcels that may not meet any of the criteria described in (a) through (f) above can be included to provide logical boundaries to the urban growth area and to avoid small areas of conflicting land uses amid urban lands. Similarly, parcels that meet some or

all the criteria described in (a) through (f) above may be excluded to provide logical boundaries to the urban growth area and to avoid conflict with existing land uses.

4. Locate new urban-level residential, commercial and industrial uses, and urban-level facilities and services only in urban growth areas, except as provided by this *Plan* and in compliance with the GMA to avoid incompatible land uses and protect the character and values of rural areas.
5. Consider the local knowledge, experience, and preferences of community residents, in addition to the directives of the GMA and this *Plan*, when establishing the type, size, character, and boundaries of an urban growth area, deciding appropriate uses and their location, determining community infrastructure requirements, and establishing standards and design guidelines to protect and retain important features which the community values.
6. Adopt subarea plans or location-specific designations and standards for urban growth areas to guide land use and development including identification of residential, commercial, industrial, and open space and park areas. Land use districts and development standards for subareas should be consistent with GMA direction to develop compact urban areas and to retain and enhance community character and values.
7. Ensure that land use districts, densities and standards for urban growth areas are consistent with GMA direction to develop compact urban areas and for most areas to ultimately achieve urban-level densities. Densities and development should be phased so as to be compatible in the near term with existing development patterns. Standards should prohibit new development during the phasing period that would physically preclude eventual higher densities.
8. Require that all new development in urban growth areas be served by urban services. Long-range sewer and water system plans should be developed or updated by the utility providers in cooperation with the County so that the plans are consistent with the growth projections, land use regulations, and subdivision patterns in each area.
9. Encourage new residential development in urban growth areas to include a full range of single- and multi-family housing types. New areas added to an urban growth area should permit minimum densities of 4 units per acre to support efficient public services and provide a full range of affordable housing opportunities in the future.
10. Establish open space design standards to maintain the rural character at the borders of urban growth areas. Open space areas, in the form of squares, green spaces, and parks within UGAs, should be an integral part of these areas to provide settings for recreation and public gatherings, and to protect critical areas, scenic qualities, and historic features.
11. Evaluate the storm drainage impacts of current and future development for each urban growth area, and develop additional design and building standards for land development and capital projects needed to control storm water runoff and associated impacts.

12. Prepare and maintain an urban growth area management agreement in accordance with the San Juan County and Town of Friday Harbor Joint Planning Policies in Appendix 3 of this *Plan*.
13. Design urban-growth areas to accommodate fifty percent (50%) of the twenty-year population growth projected for the island where the UGA is located. Development of urban areas should be encouraged consistent with smart growth principles. The Town, County, and utility providers should jointly explore infrastructure planning, construction and financing options for necessary capital improvements. Potential financing options include developer agreements, utility local improvement districts, grants, service area agreements, and impact fees.
14. Establish development standards for planned unit developments (PUD) in urban growth areas to more effectively accomplish the goals and policies of this *Plan* and allow flexibility in site planning for sites characterized by special features of geography, topography, size and shape.

Goal 2

Preserve community character in unincorporated urban growth areas.

Policies

1. Development within urban growth areas should be of a scale and intensity appropriate to the rural character of the islands, including but not limited to:
 - a. New buildings should be consistent with the size and height of existing buildings;
 - b. Large buildings, long blank walls and large expanses of concrete should be avoided;
 - c. Design of buildings and site layout should incorporate open spaces and scenic views;
 - d. The night sky should remain dark and free of light-pollution;
 - e. Development should be designed to minimize air pollution and untreated stormwater runoff to maintain excellent air and water quality;
 - f. Industrial, commercial, and other allowed nonresidential uses should be regulated to minimize their impact on neighboring residential uses and the natural environment both within the UGA and in the surrounding rural and natural resource lands; and
 - g. Urban growth areas are centered on walkable, commercial cores.
2. Establish street design standards for unincorporated UGAs to ensure improvements to the streetscape are consistent with community character.
3. Establish lighting standards for unincorporated UGAs that preserve the dark night sky.

4. Establish dimensional standards for new urban development that are consistent with the existing scale of development inside unincorporated UGAs.
5. Encourage infrastructure to support walking and bicycling within the unincorporated UGA commercial cores.
6. Establish standards that minimize air and water pollution by controlling stormwater runoff and emissions of air pollution.
7. Establish development standards for industrial, commercial, and nonresidential uses that minimize impacts to other surrounding land uses and the natural environment.

2.4 Resource Lands

Goal

To recognize and protect the physical conditions and characteristics of agricultural and forest resource lands, including social and environmental benefits, which are conducive to the use of such lands for long-term commercial production.

Policies

1. Identify lands as Agricultural and Forest Resource lands on the *Plan* Official Maps which are not designated as Activity Centers or Rural Lands.
2. Apply site planning standards for land division activities on resource lands to ensure that agricultural and forest resource lands are conserved for long-term farm and forest uses.
3. Preserve natural resource lands for their social, economic, and environmental benefits.
 - a. The economic benefits include but are not limited to:
 - i. employment opportunities;
 - ii. living wage jobs;
 - iii. food security; and
 - iv. a farming community.
 - b. The environmental benefits include but are not limited to:
 - i. carbon sequestration;
 - ii. soil health; and
 - iii. water quality.
 - c. Social benefits include but are not limited to:

- i. maintaining scenic landscapes; and
 - ii. access to recreation.
4. Implement Right-to-Farm and Right-to-Forestry provisions which establish the high priority and favored use of Resource Lands for farming and forestry operations and assure that such uses will not be considered a nuisance or inconvenience to adjacent non-farm uses.
5. Continue to apply the Open Space Conservation Overlay District regulations to Agricultural Resource Lands located within the San Juan Valley.
6. Establish clearly defined Resource Lands designations which protect and conserve long-term commercially significant agricultural and forest lands, associated uses, and benefits. The designations are: Agricultural, Forest, and Mineral Resource Lands.

a. Agricultural Resource Lands

Goal

To ensure the conservation of agricultural resource lands of long-term commercial significance for existing and future generations, and protect these lands from interference by adjacent uses which may affect the continued use of these lands for production of food and agricultural products.

Policies

- (1) Lands in agricultural use which are characterized by the following criteria may be designated as Agricultural Resource Lands:
 - i. Areas in parcels of ten acres or larger with soils capable of supporting long term commercial agricultural production. The federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) identified 34 soil types suitable for farming in San Juan County.
 - ii. The land is either currently used or has been used in the preceding ten years for agriculture.
- (2) Limit conversion of Agricultural Resource Lands to permanent non-farm uses through implementation of a purchase or transfer of development rights program, special tax assessment programs, conservation easements, and conservation site design options for residential land divisions and boundary line modifications.
- (3) Allow cottage enterprises that do not interfere with agricultural use, and allow agriculture-related activities such as processing and limited retailing facilities for locally grown products on farm sites and within agricultural areas consistent with allowances in State law for accessory uses in agricultural resource lands.

- (4) Allow farm labor housing and farm stay accommodations subject to specific performance standards on working commercial farms.
- (5) Limit the location of new roads and road realignments, access routes and other non-agricultural public and private facilities, to the least disruptive locations within agricultural areas.
- (6) Establish development standards for agricultural accessory uses, farmstands, agritourism and farm-based businesses that allow these uses while preventing the conversion of agricultural resource land to permanent incompatible uses.
- (7) Support the use of innovative technologies, procedures and practices that protect existing land, soil and water resources on agricultural land.
- (8) Support programs that promote and market locally grown and processed agricultural products.

b. Forest Resource Lands

Goal 1: To protect and conserve forest lands of long-term commercial significance for sustainable forest productivity and provide for uses which are compatible with forestry activities while maintaining water quality, water quantity, and fish and wildlife habitat.

Goal 2: To protect forest lands that provide significant ecosystem services by protecting air and water quality, reducing forest fire risks, providing access to recreational opportunities, providing carbon sequestration benefits, and improving wildlife habitat and connectivity for upland species.

Policies

- (1) Lands which are not characterized by urban growth, are used or capable of being used for forestry production, and determined to have long-term commercial significance based on WAC 365-190-060(2) and meet one or more of the following criteria may be designated Forest Resource Lands:
 - i. Lands enrolled in the designated forest land, current-use timber land, or open space-timber tax programs;
 - ii. State trust lands managed for production of forest products;

- iii. Lands managed for the long-term production of forest products with few non-forest related uses present;
 - iv. Areas with at least 100 contiguous acres of forest land developed at a density less than one dwelling unit per fifteen acres. Lands in public ownership can count toward the 100 contiguous acre threshold, even if they are not managed for commercial production of forest products; or
 - v. Parcels that may not meet any of the criteria in i. through iv. above can be included to provide logical boundaries to the Forest Resource land designation and to avoid small areas of conflicting non-forestry land uses amid resource lands. Similarly, parcels that meet some or all of the criteria described in i. through iv. above can be excluded to provide logical boundaries to the Forest Resource Land designation and to avoid conflict with existing land uses.
- (2) Areas within the shoreline jurisdiction should not be designated Forest Resource unless part of a larger parcel that is primarily located outside of the shoreline jurisdiction. Limits on harvesting in the shoreline jurisdiction reduce the commercial significance of forestlands in these areas; maintenance of forestlands in shorelines provides significant benefits to shoreline and nearshore habitat. The benefits of forestlands in shorelines include but are not limited to:
- i. Improving water quality;
 - ii. Shading nearshore fish habitat;
 - iii. Visual screening for shoreline development; and
 - iv. Supporting natural transport of shoreline sediment.
- (3) Limit conversion of Forest Resource Lands to non-forest uses through implementation of a purchase or transfer of development rights program, special tax assessment programs, conservation easements, and/or the formulation of site design standards for residential land divisions, including standards for planned unit developments.
- (4) Allow cottage enterprises, and forest resource-based industries such as lumber processing and retailing facilities for forest products.
- (5) Create land use incentives to preserve large parcels and open space in forest resource lands without converting the land to permanent incompatible non-forest uses.
- (6) Strongly encourage and incentivize wildfire risk-reduction practices such as:

- i. Vegetation management including thinning, spacing, trimming, and removing ladder fuels, and
- ii. Creating defensible space surrounding structures that will reduce the fire-spread potential between buildings and neighboring vegetation.

c. Mineral Resource Lands

Goal

Assure that mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance are conserved in order to provide continued and economical local access to valuable minerals, particularly those used for construction materials.

Policies

- (1) Upon application by a landowner, lands which are characterized by all of the following criteria may be designated as a Mineral Resource Land Overlay District (MRLO) on the *Plan* Official Maps:
 - i. Have a known or potential extractable resource in commercial quantities verified by submittal of a geologic and economic report prepared by a qualified professional or the land has a legally established mining operation, and the County Council adopts findings that the land has commercial significance for mineral resources;
 - ii. Current or future land use will not exceed a residential density of one dwelling unit per ten acres;
 - iii. Are not within an Activity Center, Rural Residential, Natural or Conservancy designation or any Shoreline designation; and
 - iv. Are not within a wetland or fish and wildlife habitat conservation area as defined in this *Plan*.
- (2) Protect mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance from incompatible land uses and land use patterns so that access to existing and potential resources is maintained. With appropriate design and performance standards land uses such as agriculture, forestry and some industries, and low-intensity residential uses (average density at least ten acres per unit), are compatible with mineral extraction and processing while other uses such as medium- to high-intensity residential uses are not.

- (3) Provide the highest priority protection for existing and potential sources of sand, gravel, and rock which are most likely to provide for long term production with only minimal impact on the environment by designating them under a MRLO and establish regulations to protect long-term access and use potential.
- (4) Allow those activities associated with long-term mineral extraction which enhance the commercial viability of extraction operations to locate within designated mineral resource lands, subject to performance standards to minimize negative impacts on the surrounding area and the environment.
- (5) Require a reclamation plan for new mining activities. An approved Washington Department of Natural Resources (WADNR) Surface Mine Reclamation Permit can satisfy this requirement.
- (6) Develop regulations to minimize impacts and provide notifications to neighbors of mining activities, and promote compliance with state and federal regulations.

2.5 Rural Lands

Beautiful rural lands are the keystone of San Juan County's sense of place and identity. The County's rural, modestly developed landscapes, marine shorelines, open spaces, water, and mountain views, barely illuminated night skies, and natural environments provide the basis for its quality of life. Preservation of the County's rural character and land use patterns from sprawl is a primary objective of this Element.

Some of the primary points the vision articulates that relate to rural lands are:

- The community is primarily rural;
- The Islands are rural, residential, quiet, agricultural, marine and isolated;
- Hamlets, villages, towns and other activity centers are clearly defined to preserve rural and natural resource lands;
- Rural lands are central to the Islands' heritage;
- The islands are a place where people respect others' dignity, privacy and freedoms;
- The community fosters a sense of neighborliness, self-sufficiency, and community pride;
- There is recognition of people's independence and self-reliance in the Islands;
- Natural resources are sustainably used; and

- The *Plan* seeks a balance between the needs of private property rights, public rights, and the natural environment.

Growth Management Act Rural Element Requirements

Under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), rural lands are those lands that are not designated natural resource lands or designated for urban growth. A majority of the County's land has been designated as rural lands on the Official Maps.

The GMA requires this *Plan* to have a rural element RCW 36.70A.070(5) which must:

“[...] permit rural development, forestry, and agriculture in rural areas. The rural element shall provide for a variety of rural densities, uses, essential public facilities, and rural governmental services needed to serve the permitted densities and uses. To achieve a variety of rural densities and uses, counties may provide for clustering, density transfer, design guidelines, conservation easements, and other innovative techniques that will accommodate appropriate rural economic advancement, densities, and uses that are not characterized by urban growth and that are consistent with rural character.”

Though rural development must include a variety of densities and uses, density in rural areas is typically lower than urban areas. There are two primary GMA mandates for rural areas. One is to reduce conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling low-density residential development (RCW 36.70A.070(5)(c)(iii)). The *Plan* must also limit the extension of some services into rural lands. Rural lands must only be served by rural governmental services which generally do not include storm and sanitary sewers.

Rural lands include limited areas of more intense rural development (LAMIRD). Activity centers and master planned resorts are sub-types of LAMIRD. The GMA allows LAMIRDs to permit a wider variety of uses in rural areas. Many of the GMA requirements for LAMIRD are included in RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d). The following types of development in LAMIRDs are allowed by RCW 36.70A.070 (5)(d)(i):

“(i) Rural development consisting of the infill, development, or redevelopment of existing commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use areas, whether characterized as shoreline development, villages, hamlets, rural activity centers, or crossroads developments.”

LAMIRDs are constrained to areas where existing development is confined within a defined “logical outer boundary.” The logical outer boundary must only contain areas or uses of more intensive rural development existing as of 1990 and not allow new patterns of low-density sprawl (RCW 36.70A.070 (5)(d)(iv)). Some public services such as water and sewer are allowed in a LAMIRD. These services are limited to those necessary to serve nonresidential uses and be provided in a manner that does not permit low-density sprawl (RCW 36.70A.070 (5)(d)(iii)).

Rural Character

Rural lands are unique because their designations and regulations must preserve rural character. Rural character is defined in this *Plan* as:

“Rural character” means a quality of the landscape dominated by pastoral, agricultural, forested, and natural areas interspersed with single-family homes and agricultural structures. Rural character refers to the patterns of land use and development established by the Comprehensive Plan:

1. In which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment;
2. That foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas;
3. That are compatible with the use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat;
4. That reduce the conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;
5. That generally do not require the extension of urban governmental services; and
6. That are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and groundwater and surface water recharge and discharge areas.

This *Plan* establishes policies that allow rural development in designated rural lands while protecting rural character. Some *Plan* policies that help protect rural character are:

- Requiring or protecting open space;
- Establishing rural road standards;
- Developing standards for clearing, grading, other development activities, and site-planning that minimize adverse impacts to natural processes;

- Establishing densities;
- Limiting the intensity of uses in rural areas;
- Limiting the extension of urban governmental services beyond existing service areas; and
- Allowing home occupation, cottage enterprise, and resource uses to provide opportunities to live and work in rural areas.

Existing Rural Development

Much of the rural land in the County is either undeveloped or developed with residential uses. Rural lands are interspersed with natural resource uses including farms and forestlands. Rural residential density outside of LAMIRDs, activity centers, and master planned resorts ranges between one dwelling per five acres to one dwelling per fifteen acres. The predominant development pattern in rural areas has led to many of the scenic areas, robust natural environment, and lifestyle that characterize much of the County.

Residential Rural Development

Residential development in the rural areas is integrated into the visual and natural landscape because it is typically set back from the roadways and separated from adjacent development by open spaces and landscaped areas. There are some existing neighborhoods that were platted prior to the establishment of maximum densities by this *Plan*. These neighborhoods are characterized by smaller parcel sizes than many other rural areas but retain vegetative buffers and open spaces where possible thanks to the “cabin-in-the-woods” aesthetic preferred by many property owners even before the County adopted development regulations. The natural environment predominates over the built environment in residential rural areas.

Residential development inside the boundaries of LAMIRD, activity centers, and master planned resorts occurs at a range of densities. The allowed density in these areas is typically higher than other rural lands, ranging between one dwelling per five acres to four dwellings per acre. The primary factor that limits residential density in these areas is the availability of water and septic services. Many activity centers have adopted subarea plans that specifically define the kinds of residential development allowed in each area.

Commercial and Industrial Rural Development

Most commercial and industrial development in the rural areas is found in the LAMIRDs. Commercial developments serve the rural and visitor populations by providing access to goods, services, and recreational opportunities. Furthermore, rural commercial developments allow the opportunity to live and work in rural areas, fostering rural lifestyles.

Outside of the LAMIRDs, activity centers, and master planned resorts, commercial development is often accessory to residential uses. Islanders utilize home occupation and cottage enterprise options to work where they live. These small-scale commercial operations support rural lifestyles by providing goods, services, recreational, and employment opportunities for residents and visitors alike. The income provided by these vital parts of the islands' economy, allow many people to afford a life here that may otherwise be out of reach.

2.5.1 General Rural Goals and Policies

Goal

To protect rural character while allowing a mix of uses that support the ability of residents to live and work in rural lands.

Policies

1. Establish setback, landscaping, and open space standards to ensure that open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment.
2. Encourage the preservation of undeveloped land in rural areas.
3. Establish standards that protect wildlife habitat in rural lands.
4. Prohibit sprawling, low-density development in rural lands. Establish rural densities at a maximum of one dwelling per five acres outside of Activity Centers, LAMIRD, and Master Planned Resorts, where density may be higher.
5. Ensure that any extension of services into rural lands is based on demonstrable need and is financially feasible.
6. Allow the location of rural industries and heavy industrial types of activities in Island Center activity centers and Rural Industrial areas.

2.5.2 Activity Centers (Including Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development)

Goal

To recognize existing areas of more intense rural development, which offer diverse employment opportunities, a variety of residential densities and housing types, general commercial, general industrial, institutional, recreational, and community uses in a concentrated, development pattern.

Policy

1. Establish different types of activity centers, each of which has a mix of land uses with housing, businesses, and services appropriate to its character, size, and location, as described below.

Identify and delineate activity centers that are Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRDs) according to RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d). LAMIRDs consist of existing (as of 1990), commercial, industrial, or residential areas in which the kinds, intensities, densities of use, or capital facilities and services that exceed the levels normally associated with rural development. Such areas allow for the continuance of the existing areas and uses, and for infill in the areas to the level of existing patterns; however, the areas must be minimized and contained, with logical outer boundaries defined predominantly by the built environment, and may not extend beyond the existing area or use.

Establish Master Planned Resorts according to RCW 36.70A.360 and .362.

Types of Activity Centers

- a. **Village Activity Centers** have only rural governmental services and are not incorporated. They provide a limited variety of residential densities, and are pedestrian-oriented with a compact village core. They provide some intensive uses and services (including community sewage treatment facilities and community water systems), but are not considered capable of or appropriate for urban-level development or expansion at this time, only for infill.
- b. **Hamlet Activity Centers** are residential areas that have some non-rural densities, and have small commercial centers which provide goods and services to surrounding rural and resource land uses. Hamlets are served by community water systems and may have community sewage treatment facilities, but have only rural governmental

services. The four hamlet activity centers are Westsound, Deer Harbor, Olga, and Doe Bay on Orcas Island.

- c. **Island Centers** are generally characterized by existing general commercial and general industrial uses and may also include some rural commercial and rural industrial uses. These centers may be served by community water systems, but have only rural governmental services. Island Centers differ from other Activity Centers in that they generally do not have a high density residential component included within the center boundaries, and new residential development (except where accessory to institutional, commercial or industrial use) should be prohibited. The commercial and industrial uses located in these centers provide goods and services island-wide.
 - d. **Residential Activity Centers** are residential areas that have existing development patterns denser than one unit per five acres, some portion of which is served by non-rural levels of capital facilities or services. The area north of Rosario master planned resort is the only residential activity center in the County.
 - e. **Master Planned Resorts** are self-contained and fully integrated planned unit developments, in a setting of significant natural amenities, with a primary focus on destination resort facilities consisting of short-term visitor accommodations associated with a range of developed on-site indoor or outdoor recreational facilities. They may contain other residential uses and commercial activities within their boundaries, but only if these uses are integrated into and support the on-site recreation nature of the resort. Master Planned Resorts may be within other activity centers.
2. Designate activity centers on the *Plan* Official Maps where existing or proposed uses and services meet the above definitions. Designated activity centers are identified in Table 5, below.

Table 5
Summary of Activity Centers.

Location	Designation	Existing Site-Specific Plans & Standards
Orcas Village	Village Activity Center	Yes
Olga	Hamlet Activity Center	Yes
Deer Harbor	Hamlet Activity Center	Yes
Doe Bay	Hamlet Activity Center	No (subject to Interim controls in village and hamlet activity centers)
Westsound	Hamlet Activity Center	No (subject to Interim controls in village and hamlet activity centers)

Location	Designation	Existing Site-Specific Plans & Standards
W. Beach Rd/Crow Valley Rd -Orcas	Island Center	No
Center Rd/School Rd - Lopez	Island Center	No
Country Corner-Orcas	Island Center	Yes
North Rosario Area	Residential Activity Center	No
Roche Harbor	Master Planned Resort	Yes (resort master plan)
Rosario Resort	Master Planned Resort	Yes (resort master plan)
West Beach Resort	Master Planned Resort	No

Source: *Plan* Official Maps

3. Locate new commercial, industrial, and institutional uses in activity centers, with the established patterns of development and use, to avoid incompatible land uses and the proliferation of these uses in rural areas.
4. Use the Roche Harbor Master Planned Resort (RHMPR) Activity Center Plan dated June 1994, and modified in April 1996, as a guide for the planned unit development of the RHMPR. The following policies are established to manage development in the RHMPR:
 - a. The RHMPR *Plan* is based on a 200-unit reduction in density from that potentially allowed under the 1979-established densities on property under Roche Harbor ownership.
 - b. A phased planned unit development (PUD), subject to the County's PUD process, should be submitted for approval of any new development in the RHMPR planning area in any one year period, when such development exceeds 4,000 square feet of gross floor area, or for any recreational facility development.
 - c. Each phase of the PUD should be accompanied by an environmental assessment prepared in accordance with the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).
 - d. Each phase of the PUD should include a detailed plan identifying the number of dwelling units, allowable uses, average density, percentage of open space, road access and circulation, and provisions for water, sewage, and stormwater management. The specific area descriptions identified in the Addendum to the modified RHMPR Activity Center Plan should be used to guide phases of the PUD. A master plan for all sanitary sewer and stormwater disposal systems should be provided by the developer for all areas included in the RHMPR and in the Westcott Bay drainage basin, exclusive of those areas in the Rural Farm-Forest designation, prior to implementation of any phase of development.

- e. At least one public meeting should be held in the Roche Harbor area prior to approval of PUD phases. Such meetings should provide opportunity for public review and comment on proposed phase plans.
5. Consider the local knowledge, experience, and preferences of community residents when establishing the type, size, character, and boundaries of an LAMIRD/activity center, deciding appropriate uses and their location, determining community infrastructure requirements, and establishing standards and design guidelines to protect and retain important features which the community values.
6. Adopt subarea plans or location specific designations and standards for village, hamlet and island center activity centers as needed to guide land use and development. Land use districts and development standards for activity centers should be compatible with existing development patterns and community character, including rural aspects. Critical areas within activity centers should be preserved and enhanced. Residential, commercial and industrial areas should be identified in each activity center, if appropriate, and specific development standards adopted for these areas.
7. Require new development in activity centers to be served by public or private community water and sewage treatment systems. System operators should be responsible for maintaining an up-to-date status of their systems including capacity and numbers of existing connections and commitments to service. For sewage treatment systems and Group A water systems in activity centers long-range sewer and water system plans should be developed or updated by the utility providers in cooperation with the County so that the plans are consistent with the growth projections, land use regulations, and subdivision patterns in each area. Service by such facilities in residential activity centers may be conditioned specifically for the individual area or portions thereof.
8. Locate mixed-uses, high-density residential uses, commercial, industrial, and public uses within activity centers where adequate facilities, services, utilities and improvements exist or are planned to support the level and type of development identified, as appropriate to the existing levels and patterns of development, and the established range of uses.
9. Allow a full range of single- and multi-family housing types and density bonuses in activity centers, except Island Centers and Master Planned Resort activity centers to achieve affordable housing goals. New residential development should be prohibited in Island Centers except as an accessory to commercial or industrial use. New residential development may take place in Master Planned Resort activity centers, but only if it is integrated into and supports the on-site recreational nature of the resort, as determined at the time of Master Plan approval.
10. Establish open space design standards to maintain the rural character in and around activity centers.

11. Require that open space areas, in the form of squares, green spaces, and parks within activity centers, be an integral part of these activity centers and provide settings for recreation and public gatherings, and protect Critical Areas, scenic qualities, and historic features.
12. Require storm drainage in the design of land development projects to control storm water runoff and erosion.
13. Establish development standards for Master Planned Resort activity centers to ensure that development is compatible with surrounding land uses and that adequate facilities and services are available for the planned level of development. Development standards should address, at a minimum, the following:
 - a. Aesthetic, visual and environmental considerations in order to provide appropriate siting of buildings and amenities to incorporate and retain, as much as feasible, significant on-site natural, historic, and other important features;
 - b. Location and design of improvements and activities in such a manner to avoid or minimize adverse effects of the resort on surrounding lands;
 - c. Water quantity and quality, including stormwater management;
 - d. Location specific standards to retain and enhance resort character;
 - e. Protection of critical areas; and
 - f. Concurrency requirements for impacts on transportation facilities and other capital facilities and services.
14. Establish development standards for Planned Unit Developments (PUD) in activity centers (where appropriate and practical, given existing development patterns, potential project sizes, available supportive services, terrain, etc.) to more effectively accomplish the goals and policies of this *Plan* and allow flexibility in site planning for sites characterized by special features of geography, topography, size and shape. PUD standards should include provisions for a mixture of housing types and residential densities, and preservation of open space and natural features, as well as concurrency requirements to address impacts on transportation and other capital facilities and services.

2.5.3 Rural Land Use Designations

Goal

To maintain and enhance the rural character of the County. Rural lands are intended to retain the agricultural, pastoral, forested, and natural landscape qualities of the islands while providing people with choices of living environments at lower densities or use intensities than those in Activity Centers. Rural lands also include the Special Districts, which are discussed further in Section B.2.6.5.

Policies

1. Identify as Rural lands on the *Plan* Official Maps all those which are not within UGAs or designated as Resource Lands.
2. Adopt performance standards for clearing and grading on Rural lands to minimize the potential adverse impacts of these activities on forested lands, soils, surface water quality and quantity, groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat and scenic resources. Grading to construct ponds and reservoirs should be located a safe distance from roads, maintain in-stream flows of natural drainage courses, and protect adjacent property from damage.
3. Establish development standards for Planned Unit Developments (PUD) in rural areas to more effectively accomplish the goals and policies of this *Plan* and allow flexibility in site planning for sites characterized by special features of geography, topography, size and shape. PUD standards should include provisions for a mixture of housing types at rural densities, and preservation of open space and natural features.
4. Implement Right-to-Farm and Right to Forestry provisions which establish the high priority and favored use of Rural Lands, except Rural Residential areas, for farming and forestry activities and assure that such uses will not be considered a nuisance or inconvenience to adjacent non-farm and non-forestry uses.
5. Consider the scope and scale of proposals for the alteration, modification, or expansion of existing camps and existing small resorts. Changes that would expand the scope of services (e.g., adding meal service or new recreational facilities, or adding new convention, hotel or marina facilities), increase the scale of facilities, or add on-site residential housing, should require discretionary use or conditional use permits. Allow expansion of existing uses that conform to the current scope and scale subject to reasonable performance standards to ensure that such uses have minimal adverse impacts on surrounding uses.
6. Allow the alteration, intensification, and expansion of existing gravel pits subject to reasonable performance standards to ensure that alteration, intensification, and expansion of such uses have minimal adverse impacts on surrounding uses. If increased off-site

impacts (noise, vibration, dust, traffic) would result from expansion or modification, a conditional use permit should be required. Modification to include a new use or operation (e.g., an asphalt plant or a rock crusher) should be a conditional use and be limited to areas where residential densities are planned at five acres or more per unit.

7. Prohibit the alteration and expansion of existing airstrips and airfields that would result in increased aircraft activity, conflict with the purpose of the applicable land use district, or cause increased adverse impacts to surrounding areas. Allow minor, low-impact changes subject to reasonable performance standards to ensure that such uses have minimal adverse impacts on surrounding uses. Alteration and expansion of existing airports should be subject to a conditional use permit.
8. Consider the total impact of the non-conforming uses as well as the added impact of the incremental changes, and the consistency of the changes with the applicable land-use designation when evaluating proposals for the alteration, modification, or expansion of non-conforming uses.
9. Establish clearly defined Rural land use designations which promote and preserve the rural character of the islands while meeting the varied needs of island residents. The designations are: Rural General Use, Rural Farm Forest, Rural Residential, Rural Industrial, and Rural Commercial.

a. Rural General Use

Goal

To provide flexibility for a variety of small-scale, low-impact uses to locate on rural lands.

Policies

- (1) Areas which are characterized by the following criteria may be designated as Rural General Use on the *Plan* Official Maps:
 - i. There is an existing mix of residential development, scattered single family residences, small farms, forestry activities, resource-based commercial and industrial uses, cottage enterprises, rural commercial and rural industrial uses;
 - ii. Parcels are generally five to twenty acres in size; and
 - iii. Soils are marginal or unsuitable for intensive commercial agriculture or forestry uses.
- (2) Allow resource-based industrial and commercial activities, rural commercial, rural industrial, and cottage enterprise uses.

- (3) Establish performance standards for the uses contained in Policy (2), above, to minimize adverse environmental and visual impacts. Standards should address access, circulation, building height and bulk, lighting, screening, signage, noise, odor, vibration, spray, smoke, water quality, waste disposal, and storm drainage control.
- (4) Allowable uses should be compatible with the existing rural character and should not result in more than a minimal and manageable increase in demand on existing rural governmental services and facilities, utilities, community water systems, sewage disposal systems, and County roads.

b. Rural Farm-Forest

Goal

To provide for rural living opportunities which are compatible with small-scale farming and forestry activities.

Policies

- (1) Areas which are characterized by the following criteria may be designated as Rural Farm-Forest lands on the Official Maps:
 - i. The predominant land use is farming and forestry mixed with residential development;
 - ii. Parcels are generally five or more acres in size; and
 - iii. Soils are suitable for small-scale agricultural or forestry uses.
- (2) Adopt site development standards for permissible uses that will maintain a predominant portion of the farm and forested areas for farming and forest uses.
- (3) Allow cottage enterprise uses and agriculture- and forestry-related commercial and industrial uses, such as processing and limited retailing facilities for farm and forest products, to be located on Rural Farm-Forest lands.
- (4) Establish development standards that allow for farm stay accommodations for agritourism enterprises.
- (5) Allow farm labor housing and accommodations subject to specific performance standards on working commercial farms.

- (6) Establish performance standards for the uses listed in Policies (3), (4) and (5), *above*, to minimize adverse environmental and visual impacts. Standards should address access, circulation, building height and bulk, lighting, screening, signage, noise, odor, vibration, spray, smoke, waste disposal, and storm drainage.

c. Rural Residential

Goal

To protect the predominantly residential character of some rural areas and provide for a variety of residential living opportunities at *rural densities*.

Policies

- (1) Areas which are characterized by the following criteria may be designated as Rural Residential on the *Comprehensive Plan* Official Maps:
 - i. There are existing small acreage platted areas generally with private covenants and restrictions, and some exclusively residential developments are expected to continue to occur; and
 - ii. Parcels are generally two to five acres in size, and may also include areas with lots less than two acres in size.
- (2) Guide the site design of new residential land divisions to retain rural character and minimize the demand for and cost of public facilities and services.
- (3) Prohibit cottage enterprises and commercial and industrial uses, other than home occupations and uses of comparable impact on residential use.
- (4) Community facilities such as fire stations, club houses and associated recreational amenities should be allowed in Rural Residential areas to serve these residential communities.

d. Rural Industrial

Goal

To provide areas for rural oriented industrial uses which are not generally compatible with activity center land uses, which complement rural character and development, and which can be served by rural governmental services.

Policies

- (1) Areas which are characterized by the following criteria may be designated as Rural Industrial on the *Plan* Official Maps:
 - i. Lands with an existing or historical commitment to rural industrial uses;
 - ii. Lands with direct access to a public roadway classified as a minor or major arterial;
 - iii. Lands where on-site physical features can be used to protect surrounding lands from negative impacts; and
 - iv. Areas with parcels sizes large enough to accommodate expansion of existing uses or serve several new uses in a concentrated area.
- (2) Rural industrial uses should be limited to those which are most appropriately located in the rural environment because of incompatibility with intensive, mixed use development patterns characteristic of activity centers. Such uses include, but are not limited to, storage yards, lumber mills, wood craft manufacturing, gas storage facilities, and cement batch plants.
- (3) New residential development (except where accessory to commercial or industrial use) within these areas should be prohibited.
- (4) Establish performance standards for all development in Rural Industrial areas to ensure that allowed uses are consistent with the rural character of the area and minimize adverse environmental impacts. Standards should address access, circulation, signage, parking, noise, odor, vibration, spray, smoke, screening, lighting, waste disposal, and storm drainage control.

e. Rural Commercial

Goal

To provide areas for rural oriented commercial uses which complement rural character and development, and which can be served by rural governmental services.

Policies

- (1) Areas which are characterized by the following criteria may be designated as Rural Commercial on the *Plan* Official Maps:

- i. Lands with an existing or historical commitment to rural commercial uses;
 - ii. Lands with direct access to a public roadway classified as a minor or major arterial;
and
 - iii. Lands where on-site physical features and/or parcel size can be used to protect surrounding rural land uses from negative impacts.
- (2) Limit rural commercial uses to those which are most appropriately located in and are compatible with the rural environment. Such uses include, but are not limited to, veterinary clinics, nurseries, animal boarding facilities, feed stores, and some small-scale hospitality commercial uses such as country inns and restaurants.
 - (3) Prohibit new residential development (except where accessory to commercial or industrial use) within these areas.
 - (4) Establish performance standards for all development in Rural Commercial areas to ensure that allowed uses are consistent with the rural character of the area and minimize adverse environmental impacts. Standards should address access, circulation, signage, parking, noise, odor, vibration, spray, smoke, screening, lighting, waste disposal, and storm drainage control.

2.5.4 Special Districts

This section of the Land Use Element provides goals and policies for the conservation of areas with unique or valuable natural features which warrant specific recognition and protective measures to ensure their existing character is maintained. Two districts, Conservancy and Natural, fall into this category.

2.5.4.A *Conservancy*

Goal

To protect, conserve, and manage existing natural conditions, resources, and valuable historic, scenic, educational, or scientific research areas for the benefit of existing and future generations without precluding compatible human uses.

Policies

1. Areas which are characterized by one or both of the following criteria may be designated as Conservancy on the *Plan* Official Maps:
 - a. areas possessing valuable natural features or resources which will tolerate only minimal disturbance of the existing terrestrial or freshwater environments; or
 - b. areas possessing scenic, historical, or recreational qualities of considerable local, regional, state or national significance which would be adversely affected by extensive modification or intensive use.
2. Allow the reclamation, rehabilitation, and where possible, the enhancement of scenic, unusual, and fragile areas and natural resources.
3. Ensure that the location and design of all development within Conservancy areas will minimize adverse impacts on the natural features or resources of the site.
4. Allow uses and activities which promote environmental conservation and provide environmental education opportunities.
5. Prohibit all commercial and industrial uses unless such uses are accessory to an existing use (for example home occupations, cottage enterprise, and paddle boat rentals or maintenance storage yards for park and recreation areas).

2.5.4.B Natural

Goal

To preserve indigenous plant and animal species and ecosystems in a natural state for the benefit of existing and future generations.

Policies

1. Designate lands as Natural only upon request of the landowner.
2. Designate as Natural only those areas which are characterized by the presence of intact indigenous ecosystems or rare or unusual indigenous plant or animal species which are relatively intolerant of human use.
3. Prohibit uses and activities which would encroach upon and disrupt rare plant and animal species and ecosystems.
4. Prohibit land divisions for residential development.
5. Prohibit cottage enterprises and all commercial and industrial uses.

6. Allow uses and activities which promote preservation of the ecosystem and provide environmental education opportunities.

2.6 Overlay Districts

Provided below are goals and policies that supplement those above for certain land areas and uses which warrant specific recognition and management. Except as otherwise provided in this Section, the provisions of an Overlay District shall prevail over any conflicting provisions of this *Plan* or plans adopted for urban growth areas, activity centers or subareas. All other provisions of this *Plan* shall retain full effect within the Overlay District. The following types of Overlay Districts are established in this *Plan*:

2.6.A Critical Areas

Critical areas are areas within the County that are important to the healthy function of natural ecosystems, as well as areas that can be hazardous to people and their property. Critical areas include wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, geologically hazardous areas, and frequently flooded areas. The policies in this section will guide the development of County regulations and programs for critical areas to ensure they are protected. Also see the Shoreline Master Program, Section B, Element 3 of this *Plan*).

Goals

1. Protect the functions and values of Critical Areas, giving special consideration to anadromous fish.
2. Allow for use of property to the greatest extent possible while protecting Critical Area functions and values.
3. Establish Critical Area requirements that are balanced and related to impacts.
4. Establish funding mechanisms to support Critical Area protection programs including funding for voluntary measures such as education, technical assistance, and cost share programs.

Policies

1. In conformance with the GMA in designating and protecting critical areas establish regulations that protect critical areas, based on consideration of the best available science.
2. Adopt policies and regulations to protect functions and values of critical areas.
3. Develop voluntary and incentive-based programs to protect the overall functions and values of critical areas and other natural resources. Voluntary actions may include education, technical assistance, water conservation, stewardship programs, implementation of best management practices, and restoration activities.
4. Manage and mitigate the impacts of land use and development on site.
5. Consider the positive effect of all State, Federal and local environmental protection programs when developing Critical Area regulations.
6. Adopt protection standards that vary based on site characteristics to the extent possible.
7. Implement the provisions of adopted Salmon Recovery and Marine Area Stewardship Plans, giving special consideration to anadromous fish.
8. Monitor and enforce permit requirements and Best Management Practices designed to protect critical areas.
9. Control or eradicate invasive and/or noxious weeds in conformance with RCW 17.10.
10. Allow reasonable use exceptions and nonconforming uses.

Protected Critical Areas

a. Geologically Hazardous Areas

Goal

To protect the public health, safety and welfare from threats resulting from incompatible commercial, residential, institutional or industrial development being sited in geologically hazardous areas.

Policies

- i. Designate geologically hazardous areas in accordance with WAC 365-190-080(4).
- ii. Designate and classify areas on which development should be prohibited, restricted, or otherwise controlled because of danger from geological hazards based on the level of hazard or risk.

- iii. Require that significant geological impacts resulting from development are either mitigated or avoided within geologically hazardous areas.
- iv. Avoid locating essential public facilities such as hospitals and emergency response operations in geologically hazardous areas.

b. Frequently Flooded Areas

Goal

To protect the public health, safety, and general welfare, and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in special flood hazard areas.

Policies

- i. Designate and protect the 100-year area of special flood hazard as defined and mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- ii. Prevent or mitigate the impacts of development which may result in hazards to persons or property, or harm to hydrologic functions through compliance with applicable building codes, and Titles 15 and 18 of the San Juan County Code.
- iii. Minimize expenditures of public money for costly flood control projects and minimize the need for rescue and relief efforts associated with flooding.

c. Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas

Goal

Protect the quality and quantity of groundwater.

Policies

- i. Designate and classify those areas which have the characteristics of critical aquifer recharge areas.
- ii. Within critical aquifer recharge areas, regulate those uses which could potentially have a significant negative impact on ground water quality and/or quantity. Such uses include, but are not limited to, underground hazardous materials storage tanks, facilities which use or store significant amounts of hazardous materials or wastes, large on-site sewage disposal systems, petroleum pipelines, landfills, and surface mining operations.

d. Wetlands

Goal

To protect wetlands from a net loss in functions, values, and acreage.

Policies:

- i. Designate, classify, and regulate wetlands based on wetland functions and values consistent with State guidance.
- ii. Establish standards for wetland protection including use limitations and buffers based on the classification of the wetland and the potential impact of a proposed use on the wetland.
- iii. Establish a mitigation sequence which includes, in order of priority, avoiding, minimizing or compensating for adverse impacts to regulated wetlands and/or their buffers.
- iv. Define wetlands consistent with RCW 36.70A.030(21).
- v. Delineate wetlands using the definitions and methods prescribed in the 1987 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers "Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual," Technical Report Y-87-1 and rate them according to the Washington State Wetland Rating System for Western Washington – Revised (Ecology Publication No. 04-06-025), as revised by Ecology.
- vi. Establish regulations for compatible agricultural uses of wetlands and their buffers and support implementation of the Voluntary Stewardship Program.

e. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

Goals

1. To protect the functions and values of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.
2. Within and adjacent to 100 year areas of special flood hazard, protect and restore habitat for salmon listed as endangered, threatened or sensitive.

Policies

- i. Designate and classify fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas in accordance with WAC 365-190-080(5) based on type, State or Federal status, association with priority species, or species of local concern.

- ii. Establish standards including buffers, timing restrictions, and site specific habitat management plans based on the classification of the habitat area and the potential impact of a proposed use on the affected habitat.
- iii. Use the WA Dept. of Natural Resources stream typing system.
- iv. Establish clearing, grading and stormwater management regulations that protect water quality, water quantity, and fish and wildlife habitat from short term and long term impacts of land use and development.
- v. Adopt regulations prohibiting the blockage of fish passage in F type streams.

2.6.B Open Space Conservation

Goal

To protect those significant open spaces and vistas which substantially contribute to the rural character of the County.

Policies

1. Identify *open space resources of high and very high conservation priority* and establish an Open Space Conservation Overlay District for these areas. High and Very High conservation priority areas are preliminarily identified on maps in the *Open Space and Conservation Plan*. Consider applying the Open Space Conservation District Overlay to those lands that are within landscape units which are rated in the *Open Space and Conservation Plan* and which have a score of 35 and above. Seek opportunities to work with property owners to prepare conservation plans for development in these areas upon designation of an Open Space Conservation Overlay District.
2. Develop site planning standards for Open Space Conservation Overlay District areas specific to the type of open space resource and its particular sensitivity to land alteration.

2.6.C Airport Overlay District

Goal

To protect the public health, safety and welfare, to recognize those areas devoted to aviation uses and provide areas for those activities supporting or dependent upon aircraft or air transportation, when such activities benefit from a location within or immediately adjacent to a public airport, and to promote compatibility between airport uses and land uses and activities in the airport vicinity and environs.

Policies

1. Apply the Airport Overlay District designation to publicly-owned airports, and accessory uses. The boundaries of an airport overlay district may not necessarily coincide with those of a port district.
2. Designate FAA Airspace Zones within the Airport Overlay Districts and establish development standards and regulations for the lands underlying FAA imaginary surfaces including but not limited to, standards for location, design, operations, clearances, marking and lighting, buffering, landscaping, and noise abatement. Such standards should be based on Federal Aviation Administration advisory circulars regarding “Model Airport Hazard Zoning” and FAA regulations regarding “Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace” as they may be amended.
3. Designate Aircraft Accident Safety Zones within the Airport Overlay Districts and establish development standards and regulations for allowable uses, residential densities, open space, and noise to address safety issues and avoid the location of potentially incompatible uses in the airport environs.
4. Apply the more restrictive regulations if there is any conflict between regulations of an Airport Overlay District and regulations of an underlying designation.

2.6.D Watershed Management

Goal

To protect surface and ground water quality and quantity used for drinking water, and necessary to support marine areas sensitive to land use and development activities.

Policies

1. Identify surface water bodies and groundwater recharge areas used for public drinking water supplies and, if appropriate, establish a watershed management overlay designed to address the particular water quality and quantity needs for the selected areas.
2. Identify critical marine habitat areas, including but not limited to commercial and recreational shellfish areas, and establish watershed management overlays for them that, in addition to shoreline management provide sufficient protection from the impacts of upland uses and developments to maintain their habitat quality.
3. Use a watershed based approach for managing water, aquatic ecosystems and other natural resources when feasible.

2.6.E San Juan County Fairgrounds

Goal

To ensure that the San Juan County Fairgrounds are accommodated appropriately within the land use concept of this *Plan* for the 20-year planning period and beyond.

Policies

1. The Fairgrounds Overlay District is to allow land uses and developments at the fairgrounds property on San Juan Island in a manner which may not be otherwise allowed by the underlying land use district, so that the San Juan County Fairgrounds may continue to serve the county-wide community over the long term, in its present capacities and in the accommodation of future uses consistent with its continued management for public-service purposes.
2. Capital planning for fairgrounds facilities should be conducted in concert with the county capital budget cycles.
3. A master plan for the fairgrounds should be maintained by the San Juan County Fair Board, updated at least every six years, and submitted with each annual-year review cycle to the County Council for approval with the six-year capital budget.
4. The Planning Commission and the County Council shall review the development regulations applicable to the Fairgrounds Overlay District, including the list of allowable uses within the overlay district at least as frequently as the required comprehensive plan updates pursuant to the GMA. The purpose of this review is to identify and adopt any appropriate modifications based on public comment from fairground neighbors or significant changes in the environment adjacent to the overlay district.

2.7 Subarea Plans

The following goals and policies guide the development of subarea plans. Subarea plans are intended to address the needs of specific geographic areas or the management of resources when they cannot be adequately addressed by the designations and provisions of this *Plan*.

2.7.A Goals and Policies

Goal

To provide for the creation of detailed plans for village activity centers, specific geographic areas, or for resources, in order to better address the unique needs and interests of those areas, environments, or functions.

Policies

1. Require that subarea plans be consistent with, and more specific than, the goals and policies of this *Plan* and consistent with State law.
2. Allow Subarea plans to be developed to address unique circumstances and achieve specific goals which cannot be accomplished through or by amendment of the goals and policies of this *Plan* and associated regulations. Subarea plans for village activity centers may include rural and special district lands adjacent to their boundaries.
3. Allow subarea plan proposals to be initiated by public or private groups, agencies, or individuals. Subarea plans should be presented initially as a general concept so as to allow full opportunity for public and agency participation in subarea plan development. Fairness, openness, and full citizen participation shall be paramount in all subarea planning procedures and processes.
4. Include the following in subarea plan proposals: Statement of Purpose; Description of Citizen Participation Process; Description and Character of the area; and, the Vision or Goal to be achieved by the subarea plan.
5. Ensure that subarea plan proposals are preliminarily evaluated by the Planning Department and reviewed by the Planning Commission prior to authorization by the County Council for inclusion in Planning Department work programs.

2.7.B Existing Subarea Plans

The following descriptions outline the general purpose and area of application of adopted subarea plans.

1. **DNR Trust Lands Management Plan**

This policy plan adopted by the County and the Board of Natural Resources in 1986 identifies the most appropriate uses of and management plans for Washington Department of Natural Resources-managed trust land in the County. Trust lands in the County are located on six islands. Twenty-one of the properties are "common school trust lands" with limitations on their disposition and use.

2. **Eastsound Subarea Plan**

Eastsound is the largest unincorporated community in the county. It is the geographic center of Orcas Island and is the commercial and cultural center of the island community. The plan provides land use and development goals, policies and regulations specific to the Eastsound area. The *Plan* includes an official map that illustrates the boundaries of the subarea and the different land use districts within the boundaries. The *Plan* was first adopted in 1981, was completely revised in 1992, and further amended in 1996 and December 2015.

3. **Open Space and Conservation Plan**

This plan was adopted in 1991 and is intended to identify and recommend a variety of possible methods to protect those open spaces, vistas and view corridors that substantially contribute to the sense of rural character that now prevails in most of the county. The *Plan* presents the methods used for identifying significant open space resources, factors working to degrade those resources, and the effectiveness of open space conservation tools presently available. The *Plan* adopts no regulations, instead it presents specific recommendations for action to conserve open space resources.

4. **Shaw Island Subarea Plan**

The *Shaw Island Subarea Plan* was adopted in 1994 to protect the existing character and qualities of Shaw Island through goals, policies and regulations which are more specific to the needs and interests of the Shaw community. Shaw residents and property owners wish to protect the quiet, rural environment that results from limited commercial activity and a limited transportation network, and to ensure that demand does not exceed the present or planned capacity of infrastructure and public services.

5. Waldron Island Limited Development District (LDD) Subarea Plan

The *Waldron Island Limited Development District Subarea Plan* was adopted in 1995 and is a complete revision of the original plan adopted for Waldron in 1976. While Waldron is frequently characterized by the amenities it does not have (ferry service, electricity, paved roads), it is rich in attributes highly valued by the majority of its residents and property owners. Fields and forest, rock and beaches, clean air and water are part of everyday life, as are litter free, unpaved roads with minimal motor vehicle traffic. Waldron is not a wilderness, but the environment is relatively unspoiled. The plan recognizes the limited availability of government services and capital facilities existing and planned for on Waldron and is designed to maintain the existing rural, residential and agricultural character of the island.

6. Lopez Village Plan for the Vital Place at the Heart of Lopez Island (Lopez Village Plan)

The Lopez Village Plan for the Vital Place at the Heart of Lopez Island was adopted in 2019. It is a subarea plan for the Lopez Village Urban Growth Area (Village). The Village includes approximately 197 acres on the western side of Lopez Island. The Village's western boundary is almost exclusively identified by the shoreline of Fisherman Bay in San Juan Channel. The eastern boundary extends in a north/south alignment that encompasses parcels on the eastern side of Fisherman Bay Road. Lopez Village is about 1.6 miles in length and one-half mile wide.

This plan reflects the vision and core values developed by the community. It is focused on people, health, housing, connectivity, and protection of the natural environment and quality of life that makes Lopez Village a special place to live.

The Lopez Village Plan supplements the goals and policies of the SJC Comprehensive Plan. It applies to all land, land use activity, and to all structures and facilities developed within the official map of the Lopez Village Urban Growth Area. The provisions of the Lopez Village Plan will prevail over any conflicting provision of the Plan except as provided in the Shoreline Master Program.