

## Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION



Flowers above ferry landing

### WHY & HOW FRIDAY HARBOR IS PLANNING UNDER GMA

#### *Overview*

In 1990, the Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, legislation that significantly changed the process for land use planning in the State of Washington. The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires counties, cities and towns to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans, and development regulations to implement them.

The 2002 Comprehensive Plan was developed in accordance with Section 36.70A.070 of the Growth Management Act. It represents the community's policy plan for

growth and development over the next 20 years.

#### *Local Decision Making*

GMA invests local government with significant decision making powers. The Town was asked to identify the concerns and goals of the community, to prioritize those goals, and to plan for how those goals will be achieved. While GMA established complex requirements and a long list of tasks, the outcome of the effort is in the hands of the Town.

During the last several decades, San Juan County experienced one of the highest rates of population growth in the state of Washington. Friday Harbor has seen the effects of this continuing growth manifested in the demands for important capital facilities and services. Examples include water supply, wastewater, and the state ferry system. Moreover, an increasing number of policy and regulatory decisions affecting those facilities are being made at the federal, state and regional level. By clearly articulating a plan for the community, the Town can be informed about the effects of its policy decisions, and express community concerns to regional, state and federal agencies.

In addition, GMA requires that state agencies comply with local comprehensive plans and development regulations. Therefore, the Comprehensive Plan and implementing regulations allow the Town to assert local control over certain issues with the assurance that state agencies will respect its decisions in a way that will protect the Town's character, scale and identity.

### *Local Dialogue and Coordination*

The Town of Friday Harbor is an interdependent part of the greater San Juan Island community. At the level of local governance, this translates into the increasing need for close coordination of long term planning efforts between the two agencies most affecting that community: the Town of Friday Harbor and San Juan County.



Island Transit

Friday Harbor is the transportation gateway and center of commerce for San Juan Island. Within its limits are located the ferry terminal and the majority of businesses, government agencies, and community organizations serving the entire island population. In addition to this year-round role, the Town and the island are also major destinations for seasonal residents and visitors.

These characteristics and trends have resulted in a number of impacts to the Town resulting from external forces. Those impacts are having a profound effect on the Town's land use pattern, transportation network, and capital facilities. Even though many of the impacts to the Town are island-wide in nature there has, historically, been no mechanism in place to ensure those issues are addressed and resolved by the Town and County.

With GMA, there are now specific requirements in place to ensure dialogue and coordination between Friday Harbor and

San Juan County on growth management issues. They include:

- Joint policies, agreed to by the Town and County, to guide development of their comprehensive plans and ensure that common issues are addressed in a consistent manner;
- Agreement by the Town and County on the boundaries of the Urban Growth Area;
- Agreement by the Town and County on how new urban development in the Urban Growth Area will be served by capital facilities and services;
- Agreement by the Town and County on management of the Urban Growth Area, including land use and the provision of capital facilities and services;
- Consistency of the Town and County comprehensive plans; and
- A means of resolving disputes in areas in which the Town and County cannot reach agreement.

### *Requirements*

GMA has changed the process for guiding the development of comprehensive plans in a number of important ways:

- It established 13 statewide goals with which local comprehensive plans and subsequent land use regulations must be consistent. The goals were established in the following areas:

Urban Growth  
Sprawl  
Transportation  
Housing  
Economic Development  
Property Rights  
Permits  
Natural Resource Industries  
Open Space and Recreation

Environment  
 Citizen Participation and Coordination  
 Public Facilities and Services  
 Historic Preservation

The Town's comprehensive plan must contain the following elements:

Land Use  
 Housing  
 Capital Facilities  
 Utilities  
 Transportation.

The Town must demonstrate how the capital facilities needed to support the development envisioned by the comprehensive plans will be provided and paid for.

- Comprehensive plans of San Juan County, and the Town of Friday Harbor, must be consistent with one another.
- Counties and cities or towns must agree on Urban Growth Areas "within which urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not urban in nature." The Urban Growth Area must be able to accommodate growth that is expected to occur over 20 years.
- Counties and cities or towns must jointly adopt countywide planning policies that establish guidelines on how their comprehensive plans will be developed in order to be consistent.
- Local governments are required to establish processes for "early and continuous" public participation in the GMA planning process.

### *Organization*

The Town of Friday Harbor Comprehensive Plan is organized into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1** explains why and how Friday Harbor is planning under GMA.
- **Chapter 2** contains a detailed description of the steps in the planning process under which the Comprehensive Plan was developed.
- **Chapter 3** contains the Land Use Element designating the proposed general distribution and general location of appropriate land uses.
- **Chapter 4** contains the Housing Element that ensures the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods.
- **Chapter 5** contains the Transportation Element  
**Chapter 6** contains the Capital Facilities Element.
- **Chapter 7** contains the Utilities Element.
- **Chapter 8** contains policies on administration of the Friday Harbor Comprehensive Plan.
- The **Appendices** contain:
  - A. Glossary of Terms
  - B. Joint Planning Policy
  - C. Friday Harbor Urban Growth Area Management Agreement



View from water of Friday Harbor