

## Chapter 2

# THE GMA PROCESS



Mt. Baker & marina at Friday Harbor

## INTRODUCTION

### *Overview*

This chapter describes the process used by the Town of Friday Harbor to develop its Comprehensive Plan. Friday Harbor uses an integrated GMA/SEPA process in its comprehensive planning effort. This approach allows the Town to meet its GMA and SEPA requirements through a single, unified process. Key features of the integrated process included: public participation, documenting existing conditions, establishing goals and objectives, developing plan alternatives, identifying potential impacts and mitigation measures, and preparing documents.

An important common feature of Friday Harbor's process is public participation. GMA requires, and SEPA encourages, early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive plans and development regulations. Further, GMA's Procedural Criteria strongly recommend communities undertake a "visioning" process to identify common community values and ideals, and to describe an image of the community's future. In addition, SEPA requires notice, public comment,

agency coordination, public meetings, and public hearings. Friday Harbor designed its GMA planning process to comply with these requirements and recommended guidelines.

### *Process*

The key steps and features of Friday Harbor's GMA planning process are summarized in the following sections. Although there was overlap in many of the steps and features over time, they are presented in the general sequence in which they occurred during the planning process. Those key steps and features include:

- The Joint Planning Policy
- Visioning
- Interim Critical Area Regulations
- Major Plan Objectives
- Urban Growth Study Area
- Interim Urban Growth Area
- Comprehensive Plan Alternatives
- Expanded Scoping
- Land Use Goals and Policies
- SEPA Impact Analysis
- The Proposed Comprehensive Plan

## THE JOINT PLANNING POLICY

### *Overview*

GMA required development and adoption of countywide planning policies in all counties planning under the Act. Within each county, cities or towns and the county were to develop and adopt written policy statements (joint policies) that promote consistency between their comprehensive plans, and coordination of their planning efforts.

### *Process*

In October of 1991 the Board of County Commissioners and the Friday Harbor Town Council signed an agreement

to develop joint planning policies in accordance with requirements of GMA. Between October and December of 1991 a joint task force developed a preliminary proposal for presentation to the Town and County Planning Commissions.

The Town and County Planning Commissions held joint work sessions during the period from January through May 1992 to consider the draft policies. A joint public hearing was held by the two planning commissions on June 12, 1992. The Town and County planning commissions each voted unanimously to recommend adoption of the Joint Planning Policy by the Board of County Commissioners and Town Council.

The Board of County Commissioners and Town Council held a joint work session on June 12, 1992 to consider the recommendations of the County and Town Planning Commissions. On June 30, 1992, they held a joint public hearing on the proposed Joint Planning Policy.

At the close of the joint public hearing, the Town Council unanimously passed a motion to support a resolution of the Board of County Commissioners to adopt the policies. On July 7, 1992 the County Commissioners adopted the **Joint Planning Policy** (see APPENDIX B).

### *Features*

The Joint Planning Policy contains policies intended to guide the planning process for Friday Harbor and San Juan County. Those policies address the following issues:

- Urban growth area designations and distribution of population forecasts
- The means to promote contiguous and orderly development and provision of urban services

- Siting of public facilities of county or state significance
- Transportation facilities and strategies
- Affordable housing
- Joint procedures for planning and annexation within urban growth areas
- Economic development
- Analysis of fiscal impacts

The complete text of the **Joint Planning Policy** appears in APPENDIX B.



Ferry approaching Town at sunrise

## VISIONING

### *Overview*

GMA requires local governments planning under the Act to establish a process of "early and continuous" public participation in the development of the comprehensive plan. The State of Washington's GMA guidelines strongly recommend "visioning" as a way to broadly define the future hoped for by local communities. Visioning is "a process of citizen involvement to determine values and ideals for the future of a community and to transform those values and ideals into manageable and feasible community goals."

*Process*

Early in 1992, the Friday Harbor community began its own visioning process. The visioning process was guided by the Comprehensive Plan Committee that included the Mayor, members of the City Council, Planning Commission, Town Administrator and other Town staff.

The visioning process included a series of workshops leading to a vision statement and set of community values for the Friday Harbor community. The vision statement and related community values are intended to guide development of the new Friday Harbor Comprehensive Plan. A summary of the workshops is presented below.

*February 27, 1992*

This workshop focused on the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA). Butler & Associates distributed a Comprehensive Plan Workbook to each committee member, and presented an overview of the key features of GMA and its relation to the process of developing the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

At the conclusion of the meeting, 35 mm slide film was distributed to each committee member with instructions for developing a photographic record of community character. The slides would be compiled and presented at the next workshop as a means focusing on community character and values.

*March 12, 1992*

At this workshop, the results of the Committee's photographic exercise were presented. The consultants presented selected slides taken by each member and asked them to share their impressions on community character. The comments were recorded as a basis for defining community values.

*April 9, 1992*

This workshop focused on Friday Harbor's Urban Growth Area, as required by GMA. Butler & Associates presented a video of areas at, and adjacent to, the Town's boundaries. The Committee's discussion focused on criteria for defining the Urban Growth Area boundaries including water and sewer service, levels of development, existing land use designations, and the role of the County and Port of Friday Harbor.

The objective of the meeting was to define a preliminary study area rather than an Urban Growth Area. The preliminary study area included the U.W. Labs on the north, the County-designated Suburban lands on the west, the airport to Cattle Point Road on the south, and Turn Point/Pear Point on the east, and Brown Island.

*April 23, 1992*

The focus of the fourth workshop was planning tools available to implement the Comprehensive Plan. Butler & Associates presented an overview of various planning tools, noting that GMA required the use of "innovative techniques" for implementing plans. Techniques discussed by the Committee include traditional zoning, performance zoning, master plan area, performance standards, mixed use, clustering, transfer of development rights, housing distribution schedule, and incentives.

*February 10, 1993*

The focus of the fifth workshop was to affirm the Committee's views on community character and identify community values by each of the 13 GMA goals. Butler & Associates presented the slides that were part of the previously completed photo exercise conducted by the Committee. Discussion focused on features that were important to community character.

The consultants then asked the Committee to identify and discuss community values associated with each of the 13 GMA goals.

*January 31, 2002*

During the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Cycle for 2002, the Town Council requested that the Planning Commission look into adding “tourism” to the Vision Statement. During this Planning Commission meeting, discussion was limited to only the “tourism” aspect of the Statement. The Commission thoughtfully considered the request and recommended a change in the text to include the word “visitors”.

### **Vision Statement**

The following is the Vision Statement for Friday Harbor with the 2002 amendments:

**"Friday Harbor will remain the center of government, finance, commerce, culture, education, and health care on San Juan Island. It maintains a compact, safe, friendly, small town character. The Town and its visitors enjoy views and vistas of its surrounding natural and rural environment. Friday Harbor will protect its historical, cultural and natural resources, and rural heritage.**

**The Town's ability to provide basic services such as public safety, parks, schools, water, sewer and transportation will not be diminished as the Town grows. Friday Harbor looks toward its actively involved and committed citizens to guide the community's well being into the future."**

This Vision Statement emerged from the efforts to identify community values. Throughout the effort, the recurring theme was of a small town, rural atmosphere, and the sense of security that appears to be inherent in that context. Adults and young people alike desire to maintain this as the community grows and expands to embrace its future.

The visioning process, vision statement, and community values are discussed in detail in the report titled *Visioning Report - Town of Friday Harbor Comprehensive Plan* that was adopted by resolution of the Town Council. The original Visioning Report is on file at Town Hall.



Whale Museum

## Community Goals

### Community Identity and Scale

Maintain the sense of community, safety, peace, and individuality.

- Perpetuate the Town's compact, village character.
- Perpetuate the Town's historic character and traditions.

### Air and Water Quality

- Maintain high clean air and water standards

### Land Management

- Preserve personal property rights, promote well designed development, and protect the natural environment.
- Encourage affordable housing and public services.

### Public Facilities

- Ensure water, sewer, fire protection, and other capital facilities are adequate to serve the needs of existing and future development.



- Support multi-modal transportation and pedestrian movement throughout the Town.

### Employment and Economic Development

- Expand education and training opportunities that relate to the needs of business and industry.
- Expand infrastructure for communication and information systems required to attract and support technology based businesses.
- Support for home occupations.

### Recreation and Cultural Facilities

- Encourage the placement of facilities that provide year-round recreation and cultural opportunities in appropriate zones.

### Conservation of Resources

- Provide information about current conservation methods, public services, grants, and other special programs.
- Encourage conservation measures through related incentive programs.
- Allow modification of building codes to accept innovative designs and proven conservation technology.
- Require proven conservation technology when the outcome is determined to be of significant benefit to the community.