

# Chapter II

## PLANNING GOALS AND THE INTEGRATED PLANNING PROCESS

### II-1 INTRODUCTION

Mason County used an integrated GMA/SEPA process in its comprehensive planning effort.

This integrated approach has allowed the County to meet its GMA and SEPA requirements through a single, unified process. Mason County's unified process includes public participation, documentation of existing conditions, establishing goals and objectives, identifying alternatives, conducting impact and consistency analyses, identifying mitigation measures, and preparing documents. This chapter presents an overview of Mason County's integrated process and related public involvement. It also presents the goals developed for the plan, and the county-wide planning policies which guided the plan's formation and are integrated into it.

### II-2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

#### Overview

Both GMA and SEPA recognize public participation as a critical aspect of the planning process. Both acts provide wide latitude in creating the public participation and agency coordination process to suit the needs of individual jurisdictions. 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 engaging the community in 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, comment, agency coordination, public meetings, and public hearings.

Mason County framed its public participation strategy to comply with these requirements. The strategy included a Growth Management Advisory Committee (GMAC) representing all sub-areas of Mason County, an Ad Hoc Committee, and the Mason County Planning Commission. It also included general public involvement during the following key steps of its Comprehensive planning process:

- I. Community Visioning
- II. Community Goals/Countywide Planning Policies
- III. Plan Objectives and Alternatives
- IV. Designation of Critical Areas and Resource Lands
- V. Impact Analysis and Mitigation
- VI. Comprehensive Plan and EIS Documents

The community visioning process and expanded scoping process are summarized here. The public participation activities for Community Goals/Countywide Planning Policies are

described in section II-3, Plan Goals. Similarly, the public participation activities for Plan Objectives and Alternatives, Impact Analyses and Mitigation, and Comprehensive Plan and EIS Documents are described in those corresponding sections of this chapter.

### ***Community Visioning***

Mason County's Vision Statement translates the community's values, hopes and goals into a unified vision for the future. The county involved a broad range of community members in its visioning process. The process included a vision survey, public meetings, and a random sample telephone survey of registered voters. The vision statement provides a guide to the comprehensive plan.

### ***Mason County Vision Statement***

*Mason County will remain a primarily rural county where residents will enjoy peace and quiet, privacy, natural views, and rural enterprise. Although rural character means different things to different people, aspects of it include: natural vistas, wildlife, and natural ecosystems; fewer restrictions and more privacy than in an urban area; the easy operation of resource based industries such as timber, mining and agriculture; and the close ties of family and community to the land.*

#### *The Urban Areas*

*The City of Shelton and the communities of Belfair and Allyn will serve as the County's principal economic, civic, and social centers. Each will have a core business area anchored by retail, service industries, government, and education facilities. Shelton will also hosts a multi-county medical industry that serves the Olympic Peninsula region, and regional retail centered in the City's Olympic Highway North area. The three urban areas will provide a strong employment and tax base.*

#### *The Rural Areas*

*Natural resources will continue to provide the foundation of the County's economy. Forestry, agriculture, aquaculture including shellfish and other fisheries industries, Christmas tree farming and mining will provide employment for County residents. The County's abundance of natural amenities including mountains, lakes, rivers, and wildlife will continue to support the County's thriving tourist industries, including Master Planned Resorts. The County's land use regulations will protect natural resource lands and industries against encroachment from incompatible, competing uses.*

#### *Housing*

*Residential growth within the County will be centered in Shelton urban area, the communities of Allyn and Belfair, and a new fully contained community. Mason County will offer a range of affordable rural and urban housing choices including single family, multifamily, and mixed-use.*

#### *The Environment and Open Space*

*Mason County will protect the environment in a way which is compatible with the needs of a growing population. One focus will be watersheds and their water quality. The county will also conserve an open space network that will include wildlife habitat and corridors, greenways, estuaries, parks, trails and campgrounds. This system will help preserve the County's environment and rural character, support the County's tourism industry, and meet the recreation needs of County residents.*

**II-3 PLAN GOALS**

**Overview**

The Growth Management Act identifies thirteen goals to guide counties and cities in the development and adoption of comprehensive plans. These thirteen goals pertain to: urban growth, reduction of sprawl, transportation, housing, economic development, property rights, permits, natural resource industries, open space and recreation, environment, citizen participation and coordination, public facilities and services, and historic preservation. Mason County’s Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs) evolved from GMA’s thirteen goals and the public input gained through the County’s Visioning Process. Further, Mason County and the City of Shelton jointly participated in formulation of Mason County’s Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs). These policies have served as the underlying goals for preparation of Mason County’s draft Comprehensive Plan.

**Public Participation**

Mason County organized a public process for developing the Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs). That process established a Joint City/County Elected Official Review Board (Board). This Board included the commissioners from both Mason County and the City of Shelton. The Board was guided by the requirements of House Bill 1025 and the Mason County/City of Shelton Regional Strategy Agreement.

In addition, the Board used a twelve-step process for preparing the CWPPs. The approach focused on coordination among Mason County, the City of Shelton, and other public agencies. TABLE II.2 identifies the groups that participated in the preparation of the CWPPs:

**TABLE II.2: Mason County GMA/ SEPA Countywide Planning Participants**

Sewer Districts	Water Districts
Fire Districts	School Districts
Port Districts	Hospital Districts
Squaxin Island Tribe	The Skokomish Tribe
County/City Public Works Depts.	Mason County Fire Marshal

Public Utilities District No.1	Public Utilities District No. 3
County/City Budget Directors	County/City Planning Departments
Shelton Planning Advisory Committee	Economic Development Council
City of Shelton Fire Department	County/City Parks Departments
Shelton/Mason Chamber of Commerce	County/City Criminal Justice Dept.
Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)	Mason County Growth Management Advisory Committee (GMAC)

The first draft of the CWPPs was completed in late January, 1992. The draft went through an informal review and revision period that ended in March of 1992. The formal review period for the CWPPs began in May, 1992 and continued through August, 1992. Public hearings were held in May and June of 1992. CWPPs were revised to reflect input received through the public review process and the public hearings. Mason County and the City of Shelton jointly adopted the Countywide Planning Policies on August 17, 1992.

**Community Goals/Countywide Planning Policies**

Mason County's Comprehensive Plan addresses each of the thirteen GMA goals according to the vision shared by County residents. The following discussion identifies Mason County's Countywide Planning Policies, organized by the GMA goal they address. The policies appear as adopted.

***Urban Growth***

GMA encourages concentrating development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist, or can be provided within a reasonable amount of time.

In conjunction with the City of Shelton, Mason County adopted County-Wide Planning Policies (CWPP), some of which deal specifically with the issue of urban growth and are designed to alleviate negative aspects of growth.

CWPP 1.1. Designate Urban Growth areas around the incorporated city of Shelton and two unincorporated areas of Belfair and Allyn:

- where infrastructure exists, infrastructure is planned, as identified in an approved Capital Facilities Plan, or services can be reasonably and economically extended;
- where there is a sufficient supply of environmentally sound land to support urban densities and urban growth forecasted for the 20 year planning cycle, and
- where the community's vision has identified its area as an Urban Growth Area.

CWPP 1.4 Encouraged mixed use developments, multi-family developments, employment centers, and other urban land uses are appropriate development to be encouraged within designated Growth Areas, in order to protect rural character in the remainder of the County.

CWPP 3.8 Encourage development in Growth Areas where:

- infrastructure exists or is planned; or
- infrastructure is provided by the developer  
according to locally established minimum urban standards

### ***Reduce Sprawl***

GMA discourages the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low density development. Several of Mason County's CWPPs are designed to reduce the impacts of growth, including sprawl, in areas outside of UGAs.

CWPP 2.1 Rural areas now exist throughout Mason County that contribute a large measure of the quality of life enjoyed by residents. These areas are characterized by low housing densities, wilderness and recreational living opportunities, and open space. Other rural qualities include peace and quiet, low traffic volumes, natural views, privacy, and personal freedom. Intensive development will not be encouraged in these rural areas due to the difficulty of providing cost-effective services, or because their disappearance from the landscape would seriously detract from the desired character of the county. Rural areas of Mason County should be designated as such and protected from encroachment by intensive development. Rural areas include those portions of the County that lie outside designated growth areas, master planned communities, and destination resorts, and may have lower standards of infrastructure and service that reflect and maintain this rural character.

CWPP 2.2 Comprehensive plan policies will be designed to protect rural lifestyles and values.

CWPP 5.3 Establish Level of Service standards in Growth Areas that ensure adequate services to prevent out-migration due to congestion.

CWPP 5.3a Establish a rural land use system that provides for continued vitality of limited areas of more intensive rural development. The categories of these areas include rural activity areas, hamlets, commercial/industrial areas, and tourist/recreational areas.

### ***Transportation***

GMA encourages development of efficient, multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and are coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

CWPP 5.1 Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

CWPP 5.2 Establish Level of Service standards that encourage densities in Growth Areas where services as public transit, pedestrian, car-pooling, etc., are available.

CWPP 5.3b Establish Level of Service standards in Growth Areas which ensure adequate service to prevent out-migration due to congestion.

CWPP 5.4 Protect functions of designated high volume corridors by restricting individual access points.

CWPP 5.5 Promote interconnecting street networks which provide alternative routes.

CWPP 5.6 Encourage alternative transportation modes by providing service in growth areas such as bikeways, sidewalks, transit, etc.

CWPP 5.7 Ensure that cooperative planning efforts continue with the Peninsula Regional Transportation Policy Organization and that policies of the County and the organization are consistent and coordinated, with the Comprehensive Plan as the guiding document for Mason County.

CWPP 5.8 The County and the cities and other community growth areas therein should work cooperatively with the Mason County Transit Authority (MCTA) to provide equitable public Transit throughout the County.

### ***Housing***

GMA encourages the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population, promotes a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourages preservation of existing the housing stock.

CWPP 6.1 Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.

CWPP 6.2 Define and establish the need for affordable housing through development of a Housing Plan.

CWPP 6.3 Encourage affordable housing in urban areas through innovative land use techniques including infill housing incentives, smaller urban lots in urban areas, mixed use, multifamily units, density bonuses for affordable units. Encourage affordable housing in rural areas by utilizing the supply of existing platted smaller lots which can meet applicable subdivision, environmental and building regulations, and ensuring existing legally built lots retain their conforming status, and by allowing manufactured housing in both urban and rural areas. It is recognized that the techniques for encouraging affordable housing will differ in rural and urban areas.

CWPP 6.4 The housing and land use elements of the Comprehensive Plans for Mason County and its cities will include an assessment of land availability and general criteria for siting special purpose housing within the Urban Growth Areas to ensure that such housing can be accommodated.

CWPP 6.5 Within the Urban Growth Areas, a wide range of housing types, densities, and mixtures will be encouraged.

CWPP 6.6 As part of a comprehensive program to address the affordability issue, examine current local regulations and policies for impacts on housing cost. Prior to adoption of any new ordinance or regulation affecting home-building, evaluate the impact on the provision of affordable housing options.

CWPP.6.7 Ensure an adequate supply of urban land and affordable housing by drawing Growth Area boundaries which accommodate the Medium Growth Scenario for population into the year 2014, recognize environmentally sensitive constraints, provide for a market factor, accommodate supporting new commercial, industrial and public/quasi public uses, and utility and facility infrastructure land needs.

CWPP 6.8 Affordable housing should be convenient to public transportation, major employment centers, and public services.

CWPP 6.9 Affordable housing needs will be examined in both city and rural contexts. Strategies to address housing affordability will reflect local definitions of affordable housing, urban and rural values, cost and availability of land, infrastructure cost, private property rights, and broad-based citizen involvement.

### ***Economic Development***

GMA encourages economic development that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promotes economic opportunity for all citizens of the County, especially for unemployed and disadvantaged persons, and encourages growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the County's natural resources, public services and public facilities.

CWPP 8.1 Encourage economic development throughout the County that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of the County, especially for unemployed and disadvantaged persons, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the County's natural resources, public services and public facilities.

CWPP 8.2 Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries including productive timber, agriculture, mining and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive natural resources, and discourage incompatible uses. Assure that adjacent land uses do not contribute to the demise of the long term commercial forest and agricultural production lands and the resource based industries associated with these areas.

CWPP 8.3 Establish coordinated incentives to promote economic development with respect to Vision Statements and Goals for each community.

CWPP 8.4 Promote economic development activities where services needed by such activities already exist or can be easily and economically provided.

CWPP 8.5 Promote economic development where off-site impacts, such as transportation, can be effectively managed.

CWPP 8.6 Discourage development activities in environmentally sensitive areas which may have a detrimental effect on public health, safety, environment, and fiscal integrity of the area.

CWPP 8.7 Increase economic vitality in Mason County through the creation of jobs that provide livable wages and which promote economic diversity, stabilization, and maintenance of a high quality environment.

CWPP 8.8 Support school district, post secondary, and higher education efforts including vocational education training, and education of a highly trained, technically skilled citizenry.

***Property Rights***

GMA states that "property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions. Further, Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made.

CWPP 10.1 Property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions. Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made.

***Permits***

Both GMA and Mason County express that "applications for permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability (CWPP 10.2)."

CWPP 10.2 Applications for permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.

***Resource Industries***

GMA recommends Counties maintain and enhance natural resource based industries including productive timber, agriculture, mining, and fisheries industries, and encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.

CWPP 8.2 Maintain and enhance natural resource based industries including productive timber, agriculture, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.

### ***Open Space***

GMA encourages the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities. GMA further encourages conservation of fish and wildlife habitat, and increased access to natural resource lands, water and developed parks

CWPP 1.5 Designate and map open space areas in coordination within the incorporated and unincorporated areas designated as Urban Growth Areas. Criteria for designation shall include:

- lands that do or can provide multiple use open space,
- are environmentally unique and or fragile,
- can act as separators between incompatible land uses,
- have been used historically by the public and are included in the UGA's vision statement.

Provide incentives and regulations that provide accessible public open space or protect environmentally important areas without compromising private property rights.

CWPP 1.5a Identify and prioritize open space areas, both urban and rural, which should be purchased with public funds or conserved through other public means such as conservation easements, life estates, and/or conveyance to a land trust. Assure that private property rights are protected. Through regulations and/or incentives, continue to allow low-impact rural uses and densities in environmentally fragile areas designated as open space, consistent with critical area regulations.

CWPP 3.2 Encourage retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities.

CWPP 3.4 Encourage increased access to publicly owned natural resource lands. Protect existing public access to shorelines and water. Encourage acquisition of lands to provide additional public shoreline and water access.

CWPP 3.5 Encourage the development of parks.

### ***Environment***

GMA strives to protect the environment and enhance the quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

CWPP 3.6 Protect the environment and enhance the quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

CWPP 3.10 In order to protect public health and water quality, septic systems and/or appropriate alternative disposal systems will be encouraged where appropriate in rural areas, according to adopted County health codes. Alternative sewage collection and treatment systems with tight lines should be considered as an option when needed when public health is in jeopardy, and or to correct environmental damage and when consistent with land use designations in the Comprehensive Plan. Development permits and/or franchises for sewage treatment systems should be granted when consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

CWPP 3.11 Mason County and the cities therein shall protect drinking water supplies from contamination, maintain potable water in adequate supply, and identify and reserve future supplies.

CWPP 8.6 Discourage development activities in environmentally sensitive areas which may have a detrimental effect on public health, safety, environment, and fiscal integrity of the area.

***Citizen Participation***

GMA encourages the involvement of citizens in the planning process and coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

CWPP 10.3 Encourages the involvement of citizens in the planning process and coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

CWPP 7.1 Mason County and the cities within will establish joint procedures for review of land development activities within the cities' Growth Areas.

***Facilities/Services***

GMA strives to ensure that public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time of occupancy without decreasing the level of service provided.

CWPP 3.1 Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time of occupancy without decreasing current levels below locally established minimum standards.

CWPP 4.1 Mason County and the cities therein, along with public participation, shall develop a cooperative regional process to site essential public facilities of regional and statewide importance. The objective of the process shall be to ensure that such facilities are located so as to protect the environmental quality, optimize access and usefulness to all jurisdictions, and equitably distribute benefits/burdens through out the region or county.

CWPP 4.2 Major public facilities that generate substantial travel demand should be sited along or near major transportation and public transit corridors.

CWPP 4.3 Sharing of corridors for major utilities, trails and other transportation rights of way is encouraged.

***Historic Preservation***

GMA states that jurisdictions should "identify and encourage the preservation of lands, site, and structures that have historical or archeological significance.

CWPP 3.7 Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archeological significance.

**II-4 PLAN OBJECTIVES and ALTERNATIVES**

**Overview**

GMA emphasizes and SEPA requires, the use of objectives as an important means of formulating and evaluating the proposed Comprehensive Plan. Mason County's Vision Statement and goals, as stated through the Countywide Planning Policies, provided the framework for developing the County's Major Plan Objectives.

Mason County's draft Plan/EIS presents and evaluates four alternatives and a preferred alternative to determine which alternative(s) can feasibly attain the community's objectives. Mason County's integrated approach complies with GMA's requirement to develop a plan based on planning goals, and SEPA's requirement to describe and evaluate plan alternatives through the community's goals and objectives.

**Plan Objectives**

Mason County's Growth Management Advisory Committee used the Vision Statement and Goals to identify objectives that the County's Comprehensive Plan should achieve. Those objectives include preserve air and water quality; support a resource-based economy; maintain rural lifestyle; create flexibility in land management; foster land and housing affordability; and encourage employment and a strong tax base.

*1. Preserve Air and Water Quality*

Appropriate regulation of land use and development throughout the County to maintain air and water quality. This includes coordination with state and regional agencies responsible for protecting of air and water resources.

*2. Support Resource-Based Economy*

Appropriate regulation of land use and development of lands adjacent to Resource Lands to help encourage the long term viability of Mason County's resource-based economy.

*3. Maintain Rural Lifestyle*

Appropriate regulation of land and development throughout the County to maintain the sense of community, safety, peace, and lack of crowding. New development should consider on-

site views of trees and water, and use the natural environment to buffer/screen one home from another.

*4. Flexibility in Land Management*

Use of flexible land use and development regulations and management practices, such as performance zoning, to preserve personal property rights, promote well-designed development, and to protect the natural environment.

*5. Affordability*

Appropriate land use and development regulations throughout the County to maintain affordable land, housing, and public services.

*6. Encourage Employment and Strong Tax Base*

Appropriate regulation of land use and development throughout the County to encourage economic expansion, the creation of high paying jobs, and broadening the County's tax base.

**Plan Alternatives**

Comprehensive Plan alternatives were part of a decision-making process that began with Visioning and progressed through development of Community Goals, and Major Plan Objectives. This process was used because both GMA and SEPA emphasize goals, objectives and alternatives as important means for formulating and evaluating the Comprehensive Plan. Following an extensive evaluation of numerous broad range alternatives, the Growth Management Advisory Committee (GMAC) identified four Comprehensive Plan Alternatives to be advanced for SEPA analysis in the draft Plan/EIS.

Initially, the GMAC considered 10 broad range alternatives for the County's draft Plan/EIS. Those alternatives included No Action as required by SEPA, 5 urban options, and 4 rural concepts. Through an assessment process that evaluated the alternatives based on Mason County's Vision Statement, community goals, and Major Plan Objectives, the GMAC refined the 10 broad range alternatives into four for further consideration. Those alternatives, including "No Action" and three others, contain a range of ideas and growth concepts intended to encourage evaluation of growth management issues facing Mason County. They presented alternative approaches to the designation and location of Urban Growth Areas, Fully Contained Communities, Working Rural Areas, and Rural Lands including Rural Activity Centers, Rural Community Centers, and Rural Areas. They also presented alternative standards for residential and non-residential development.

After a series of public workshops and committee meetings, a preliminary preferred alternative was developed. The county then proceeded to produce the "Draft Mason County Comprehensive Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, November, 1995" and released it for public comment. Taking the public comment received, the draft plan was revised to produce this document.

***Policies***

The GMAC also developed broad policy categories to further describe the four alternatives. Those policies included general policies and alternative-specific policies. The general policies applied to all alternatives. The alternative-specific policies applied to a single alternative. The policies addressed:

<b>TABLE II-4: GMA Policy Categories</b>	
Urban Growth Areas	Rural Lands
Resource Lands	Critical Areas
Open Space	Water Quality and Quantity
Housing	Utilities
Capital Facilities	Transportation

**II-5 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

**Overview**

Growth causes numerous impacts on the environment. Potential impacts on the natural environment include increased storm water runoff and air emissions as well as decreased or altered habitat for fish and wildlife. Potential impacts on the built environment include increased demands for housing, transportation and other capital facilities, and utilities.

**Impact Analyses**

Both GMA and SEPA require that the County analyze impacts associated with the proposed comprehensive plan alternatives and provide information regarding those impacts. GMA requires that the County collect and analyze data for resource lands, the mandatory plan elements, and urban growth areas. It also requires the County to review drainage, flooding, and stormwater runoff through the land use element. SEPA requires that the County analyze impacts to both the natural and built environments. Discussion of this is to be found in the Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Statement.

**Mitigation Measures**

GMA was adopted in large part to reduce a number of growth related impacts on the natural and built environment. SEPA describes these various ways of reducing growth related impacts as mitigation. There are a number of ways in which fulfilling GMA’s requirements will assist Mason County in identifying mitigation measures, and in some cases, serve as

mitigation. Discussion of this is to be found in the Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Statement.

***Public Process***

In preparation for this comprehensive plan, Mason County used a three-step public process to review impacts and mitigation associated with the County's comprehensive plan. The steps included the following:

1. An Ad Hoc Committee to review and guide revisions to preliminary drafts of the County's draft Plan/EIS and preparation of the Final EIS
2. Public comment received in response to issuance of the County's draft Plan/EIS; and
3. Public input received at public meetings and hearings on the draft Plan/EIS.