The Board of Island County Commissioners met in Special Session on February 22, 1993, from 10:00 a.m. until Noon, in the Island County Courthouse Hearing Room, Coupeville, Wa., with Commissioners Dwain Colby (Chairman), and Mike Shelton and Wm. McDowell, present. Planning Commission members present included William Applegate; Linda Haddon; Richard Wright; Rufus Rose; Hal Booth; Bud Wallgren; Kathi Phillips; Peter Borden and Anne Pringle.

The purpose of the Special Session was to conduct a joint public workshop between the Board of County Commissioners and the Planning Commission, to discuss the 1993 Work Program and the Mandates of Growth Management Act.

The Special Session of the Board was called to conduct a joint meeting of the Planning Commission and Board of Island County Commissioners to review the 1993 work program of the Planning Commission, particularly as it pertained to the requirements of the Growth Management Act.

Larry Kwarsick gave a summary of work in progress. Regarding the housing element of the GMA, he stated that the county planning department has been working with Langley, Coupeville and Oak Harbor to jointly develop housing elements that will be consistent with each other. He noted that the Planning Commission has had two workshop presentations on the housing assessment, and has formed a subcommittee to evaluate that assessment and the existing Comprehensive Plan goals and policies with regard to residential development. The subcommittee will report to the Planning Commission with recommendations.

Mr. Kwarsick stated that the Capital Facilities Plan is the element that matches planning's commitment to infrastructure and facilities, both in regard to planning them and funding them within the framework of land use goals and objectives. There have been two interim Capital Facilities Plans, and now a more comprehensive Plan will be formulated that meets all the requirements of the Growth Management Act. Eight responses from consultants to the Request for Proposal received to date.

In regard to the utility element, which is a new element, Mr. Kwarsick said the focus is primarily private types of utilities rather than infrastructure utilities. A joint utility element for the entire county will be prepared, and will be shared with the three municipalities.

Mr. Rose asked if the providers of utilities are involved in the planning process.

Mr. Kwarsick said they have been talking with the providers for over two years. The transportation element of the GMA is a more sophisticated element than the former circulation element under the old Planning Enabling Act. The County Engineering Department, in conjunction with their consultant, Alpha Engineering, is developing the transportation element.

Mr. Kwarsick said that, in regard to the rural element, the Planning Commission had previously recommended to the Board, and the Board concurred, that the existing Comprehensive Plan meets or exceeds this requirement.

The planning process, in conjunction with the City of Oak Harbor, is ongoing in terms of urban growth areas. Specific recommendations will be made in a joint meeting of the Planning Commissions of the City of Oak Harbor and Island County. Mr. Kwarsick noted that the Town of Coupeville is standing firm in not wanting to designate an urban growth area outside of the current area of Coupeville. Originally, Langley took the same stance, although lately they have indicated a desire to include some area outside the existing incorporated Langley.







Commissioner Shelton stated that Langley is attempting to define some new verbiage that currently is not in the Growth Management Act. They don't want to expand their urban growth area but, at the same time, they are willing to acknowledge that at some point they may grow into those areas. He added that he doesn't know if such latitude is available under the Growth Management Act.

Chairman Colby said that it seems like Langley is admitting that they need to have an urban growth area and need the kind of relationship with the county that would exist in an urban growth area but, politically, it may be hard to sell so, perhaps, if it was called something else they could get away with it.

Mr. Kwarsick said his understanding is that any joint planning considerations for anything outside a designated urban growth area is something that would follow on completion of the growth management objectives. He added that perhaps it isn't necessary to dwell on this grey zone around Langley, and he doesn't think it is Langley's intention to delay completion of growth management planning activity but, rather, to indicate concern about growth and development on the margin of an urban growth area.

Commissioner McDowell said it would seem that you would make an urban growth area large enough to accommodate expansion so it would not be a concern.

Mr. Rose spoke about concerns in South Whidbey where there is increasing need for urbanized services but no place to put them. He wondered if there is a ratio that spells out the number of acres to be set aside for urbanized services in accordance with population numbers.

Mr. Kwarsick said he doesn't have an answer for that, but the Capital Facilities Plan could establish levels of service standards for those types of things.

Mr. Rose said he feels that is something they should be working toward as a group.

Chairman Colby pointed out that the purpose of the urban growth area was to provide an area wherein the city and county would plan for appropriate growth that would obviate that problem, and we need to get to the point of doing it. He added that the cities need to recognize this and, while the elected officials in Langley understand this, they have not been able to sell it to the people who live in the Langley area.

Commissioner Shelton stated that part of the problem is the term "urban growth area". People who move to Langley and Coupeville don't want to move to an urban growth area.

Commissioner McDowell concurred and said that the GMA is designed for Seattle type growth, not Island County growth, but we are stuck with it because of our growth rate, even though we are in no way an urban area.

Chairman Colby said it is too bad the terminology gets in the way of putting together a rational plan for growth, and we need to stop stumbling over terminology.

Commissioner Shelton pointed out that we need to recognize that people who moved to Langley and Coupeville believe they moved to a rural setting, not an urban growth area. He added that it should not be the county's desire, nor is he willing to support, something that would say you are an urban growth area and we are going to force you into that.

Chairman Colby stated that we have to give people the ability to create urban growth areas away from cities because we have areas that desperately need them and it's the only way we will be able to