The Board of Island County Commissioners met in Special Session on Tuesday, September 23, 1997, at 9:30 a.m., Island County Courthouse Annex, Hearing Room, Coupeville, Wa. Commissioners Mike Shelton, Chairman; Wm. L. McDowell, Member; and Tom Shaughnessy, Member were present. Margaret Rosenkranz, Auditor & Ex-Officio Clerk of the Board, and E. Meyer, Secy to the Board, were also present.

The purpose of the special session was for the Board to meet with the Planning Director and members of the Island County Planning Commission to discuss the timeline for completion of the Comprehensive Plan. The audience consisted of approximately 20 people, with members of the press in present. Planning Commission and Planning Department members presented, included:

Planning Commission	Sheilah Crider	Ann Pringle
	Linda Moore	Rufus Rose
	Tom Olsen	Jo Ann Silvers

Planning Department Vince Moore, Planning Director
Donna Keeler, Manager, Comprehensive Planning

Chairman Shelton opened the meeting and outlined the procedure: not for the purpose of discussing content of the Comprehensive Plan, rather a schedule that ultimately will allow for adoption of the Plan prior to 12/31/97.

Commissioners Shaughnessy wanted to review the process to date and what happened to get off schedule.

Vince Moore commented that the Planning Commission closed the record on the Staff Draft 4/4/97. The Planning Commission provided notice of changes in land use plan designation to every property owner in the County, at a cost of $11,000 representing some 32,000 to 33,000 notices, and received significant comment back from the public, some 300+ letters with general comments. The Commission held special forums with owners of large parcels of agricultural and forest lands, and provided a special mailing to those with designated commercial property in the County. Significant feedback was received from Ag and Fm landowners, concerned they would bear the brunt of cost to protect the County's rural character and open space. At one of the forums, the concept of utilizing single base density to address problems in rural areas was proposed, and the Planning Commission asked staff to go back and dig into that concept and address problems for the TDR program, and work on AG and FM to come up with more equitable pattern to address this issue, which was completed about July 5 and presented to the Planning Commission. At that same time, staff was asked to do more detailed studies of sub-areas in the County in order to define the role of the County with respect to planning and development in the non municipal growth areas. Those studies took some additional time, about mid-August. At that point, the schedule was off by about 3 months. He had expressed concern to the Planning Commission that some directives indicated there would be major problems with the GMA Hearings Board if the Plan continued in that fashion. About the same time, WEAN filed a motion for further invalidation of the ordinance. The upshot of all that was that the Planning Commission stepped back to look again at a proposed land use plan , which staff is completing work on this week, to be presented to the Commission September 30, with October 7 established as the date for public response. The Comp Plan in many aspects is already completed. The Heritage Lands Task Force group have been grappling with the Ag - FM issue and are interested in putting forth a Farm and Forest Protection Ordinance, hoping to complete that work and present same to the Commission on or about 10/15/97. Mr. Moore believed those Ag and FM recommendations could run concurrent with work to prepare the EIS, and that public workshops the Planning Commission would hold could occur during the time the supplemental EIS is out for public review, but he thought it would be difficult to get it all wrapped up by 12/31/97.

Linda Moore last week put together a list of statutory components of the comp plan in order to better understand the schedule [copy provided]. Even with additional resources in the Planning Department, looking at public hearings and the amount of work that needs to be done, she did not see how it could be done by the end of the year.

Chairman Shelton pointed out that if the Plan is not completed by the end of the year, the downside is that Island County will be seriously injured.

Rufus Rose stated that on 7 October when the Commission is to consider the final piece of the Plan, he understood that at the meetings of 30 September and 7 October, the Commission may be re-addressing the TDR program, something which the Planning Commission at least twice stated would not work.

Sheilah Crider advised that Sections 5, 6 and 7, and affordable housing, still need to be completed; with that, the Planning Commission would be finished with the staff draft and she thought by November key policy decisions could be made.

Ann Pringle was concerned that assumptions were being made be that the Planning Commission was not needed in the process and the Commission being perceived as an obstructionist to the process.

Commissioner McDowell assured her that the Board's perception was not that the Planning Commission was an obstructionist, by law or in his own heart, and believed the Commission was doing a very difficult job and absolutely required to be part of the process.

The concern of Chairman Shelton was that some of the public input received by the Planning Commission seemed clearly outside the sideboards of GMA, and did not believe the Commission should be struggling with issues contrary to what is mandated by State law.

Linda Moore outlined three problems she saw that the Board could fix:
1. Address "who is the boss" - Planning Commission or Planning Director?
2. Lack of legal resources given to the Planning Commission.
3. Lack of Resources.

Vince Moore did not believe the process was breaking down, but the extent to which at State level the process is continuing to unwind is part of Island County's problem. He fought hard before the State Land Use Planning Commission to get the 1997 amendments to the GMA in place to reflect the staff draft produced, and had anticipated/hoped to embody that in the final draft of the Plan, the 1997 amendments to the GMA were approved and took effect in July. Mr. Moore did not see rushing see any value in rushing to completion if all issues are not resolved.

Chairman Shelton had asked Commissioners McDowell and Shaughnessy to consider as a way of expediting the process, to have staff prepare a draft for the Planning Commission, and at that point, provide the legal resource to ensure the staff draft and any proposed changes by the Planning Commission fall inside the sideboards of GMA.

Commissioner Shaughnessy observed that the Land Use Study Commission at State level was a plan in process and the rules may change. Commissioner McDowell wanted the Planning Commission to understand that he feels it should not be done in haste, but they do need to recognize the need to get a Plan done as soon as possible.

For completion of sections 5, 6 and 7 and affordable housing, Mr. Moore did not think could be completed in one day. He clarified he was not trying to present an "either, or" to the Planning Commission, but crafting a land use plan and a policy that includes the TDR component as a voluntary program, and beneath that, zones refined from staff draft to reflect the new amendments to GMA. If the TDR program does not stand for one reason or another, then he would propose to replace that with traditional density zoning.