

Skagit County Planning Commission
Public Hearing: 2010 – 2015 Capital Facilities Plan
Study Session: Guemes Island Subarea Plan
July 20, 2010

Commissioners: **Jason Easton, Chairman**
 Mary McGoffin
 Jerry Jewett
 Carol Ehlers
 Annie Lohman
 Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn
 Dave Hughes
 Matt Mahaffie
 Elinor Nakis

Staff: **Gary Christensen, Planning Director**
 Carly Ruacho, Senior Planner
 Chad Armstrong, Planning Intern

Public Hearing
Speaker: **Stewart Mhyre, Sedro-Woolley School District**

Consultant: **Mark Personius**

Chairman Jason Easton: Good evening and I call this (gavel) session of the Skagit County Planning Commission to order. I'll give an opening statement:

The purpose of this public hearing tonight is updating the Skagit County Capital Facilities Plan for 2010 – 2015 to include new school district CFPs for Sedro-Woolley, Mount Vernon and Conway, as well as an updated County-owned capital facilities inventory and cost/revenue projections. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive testimony and written correspondence on whether or not the County should adopt the 2010 – 2015 Capital Facilities Plan. There is a sign-up sheet at the back of the room for those of you who would like to testify. Before you testify, please clearly state your name, spelling your last name, and your address. A recording system will record your comments. Written comments are being accepted and can be placed in the box located at the staff table near the front of the room. Written comments may also be submitted to the Planning and Development Services Department until 3:30 p.m. on July 23rd. Before we begin taking public comments, staff will give a brief presentation about the proposal. Thank you for taking the time to participate.

I'll turn it over to our Director.

Gary Christensen: I'm just going to be very brief and say hello and welcome. Good to see you again. I hope you've enjoyed your summer. It's finally here, I think. So we just have this evening's public hearing as well as then a – some time saved for later in the evening for a study session on the Guemes Island Subarea Plan.

But with that, let me turn over the public hearing agenda item to Carly Ruacho, who is the Senior Planner/Project Manager on this, and she can provide you with an introduction about the proposal, and then we can proceed to the public comments from those who wish to testify.

So with that, Carly?

Carly Ruacho: Thank you, Gary. Good evening, Commissioners. Nice to see you all; it's been some time. Annie's behind the plant over there – sorry, Annie!

As Jason indicated, we're here tonight to have a public hearing on the County's Capital Facility Plan, which is Chapter 10 of our Comprehensive Plan, and along with our Capital Facilities Element achieves compliance with the Growth Management Act requirement to have such a plan and such an element.

Capital facilities are generally structures that have long and useful lives and do not include mobile apparatus, with the exception of fire equipment. That's the one exception you'll see in the plan is that fire districts do include their mobile equipment, ladder trucks, pumper trucks – those types of things – and those are considered capital facilities.

The focus of the CFP is the planning and provision for needed public facilities for the County's growing population. So this plan, as stated earlier, is for the years 2010 – 2015 and plans for an additional 9,220 people in the county and how we're going to provide services for those folks.

Beginning in the year 2003 through 2008 – that six-year plan – the County began including to the extent possible information from non-County entities. It's an interesting dance that we do, that the County is required to have a capital facilities plan that includes non-County entities; however, it's a voluntary provision of that information. So we do reach out to the non-County entities and we do receive a good amount of participation, but you will notice that there are some entities missing and that is their choice to not participate. They all are contacted and have been contacted for this go-round. What we did is we focused on the County-owned facilities because really the need – kind of an urgent need – that we're trying to meet is for some school districts who have already adopted new capital facilities plans and in those plans have identified different impact fees that they would like collected on behalf of their districts.

And we cannot begin collecting the new impact fees until we adopt their capital facilities plan. So that is this process that we're going through.

And just to be efficient – we don't want to just go through an exercise where we adopt their plans and don't update the rest of ours, so we focused on the County-owned portions because that's what we have the most control over, that's the information that we can get the quickest.

So this go-round you'll notice a lot more attention paid to the County-owned facilities and not a lot paid to the non-County entities. It is our plan that by end of year, and hopefully concurrent with the budget this year, we will adopt the 2011 – 2016 plan, which will include an update of the non-County-owned facilities. And we've already begun that outreach and begun that work. But what we didn't want to do is wait and take an overly long time where the school districts could not be collecting the fees that they wanted. So it's a little more work for us, and you guys will see *two* Capital Facilities Plans likely this year, but it gets the school districts' needs met in a more efficient fashion.

So I think those are all the comments I had. We will – there'll be things coming forward. It is difficult – you've probably noticed the plan you have includes the new school districts' capital facilities plans. The way they do it, they just issue a new plan. So they don't track the changes or issue a revisions narrative, so a person would have to read through page by page to figure out what changed in their plans. So we're doing that on your behalf – reading through the new school districts' plans – and prior to your deliberations we'll be forwarding you kind of a short memo that identifies what was in the old plan; what's in the new plan; what are the major differences. So you'll have that.

You'll also have, likely and unfortunately, but for those of you that have looked through the plan in any detail you'll find that it's just pages and pages of rows and columns of numbers. So even though we've published this and we've put it out for public comment, we've still been looking through it and we have found a few typographical errors which, in the world of numbers, mean a great deal.

So, again, prior to your deliberations you will get an errata list that outlines the discrepancies that we've found and then we will forward you a new plan that has those identified – again – separate. They will be easily identifiable from the plan that you already have. Because if you had notes on it or, you know, had already been familiar with the plan, I wanted you to be able to use that plan but also be able to have the plan that we're officially asking you to adopt. So be looking for that in probably the next week-and-a-half or so.

And I do – Jason, let me run this up to you.

Chairman Easton: Thank you. So at this time we're going to go ahead and take public testimony. The first person to speak is Jeff Miller.

Jeff Miller: I thought that was just the sign-in sheet. _____.

Chairman Easton: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Miller. Thanks for coming. I'm going –

Mary McGoffin: Stewart Mhyre.

Chairman Easton: Mhyre; thank you. Mr. Mhyre?

Stewart Mhyre: Where would you like me to stand?

Chairman Easton: The microphone's right up there.

Mr. Mhyre: My name is Stewart Mhyre. I'm the Executive Director for Business and Operations with the Sedro-Woolley School District. I'm here on behalf of the school district to speak in favor of our section of your Capital Facilities Plan and encourage your adoption.

The School District's plan that's before you is an updated plan that our Board of Directors adopted February 22, 2010. The major change from the prior plan that was approved in 2007 is the School District is actually *decreasing* its impact fees. The 2007 fees for a single family was 5,239; for A multi-family it was 5,254. The new plan – the 2010 plan – single family is now at 2,649 and multi-family is at 1,396.

So the question I'm sure you're all asking is – or asking yourself – is Why the decrease. Two major contributors to that: First of all, the School District between those two years saw a fairly significant decrease in its student generation rates in its multi-family units. We went from a – in 2007 – from a .36 drops down to a .86, which would have an impact in lowering those fees.

But the biggest significance to the difference between the two plans is in the 2007 plan it called for the construction of a brand new middle school within the school district. The School District has changed its plans since 2007 and has now changed that to a major remodel of the current Cascade Middle School. Because of that, in the 2007 plan we were looking at almost a – better than a \$40 million construction project for a brand new middle school and now that project has been significantly scaled back to a major remodel of the current middle school, and therefore lowering the production – construction – costs to in the range of about 20 million. So that's the major difference as to why there was a drop in our impact fees from 2007 to 2010, and I would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have. Yes?

Jerry Jewett: Multi-family units: Is this per building or per living in it?

Mr. Mhyre: Per unit.

Mr. Jewett: Per living in it?

Mr. Mhyre: Yes.

Mr. Jewett: Okay.

Chairman Easton: Thank you, sir. I don't think we have any other questions for you.

Mr. Mhyre: Thank you.

Chairman Easton: Is there anyone else wishing to testify?

(silence)

Chairman Easton: Seeing none, we'll go ahead and close this public hearing (gavel).

The next item on the agenda is a public meeting –

Carol Ehlers: May I ask a question?

Chairman Easton: Oh, sure. Excuse me – go ahead.

Ms. Ehlers: I noticed that the Guemes Fire District 17 was not in here. I called. They said that they faxed the information to the Department on Friday. Did you get it?

Ms. Ruacho: We likely did. I can't say for sure – do you remember, Chad? Yeah, we have received it. Again, it is a little bit confusing in that for this plan – the 2010-2015 plan – we did not reach out to non-County entities in order to expedite the adoption of this plan and enable ourselves to begin collecting the new impact fees this year for a 2010 plan, rather than waiting for a 2011 plan.

At the same time, we began work on the 2011 plan, which included reaching out. So that outreach that we were doing and that they are responding to will be included in the 2011 plan that will come before you later this year. But it will not be included in this plan.

Ms. Ehlers: But you have it?

Ms. Ruacho: We do have it.

Ms. Ehlers: I just didn't want them – I didn't want there to be any prejudice in the minds of the Planning Commission that somehow or other the fire district in this area we're doing the subarea plan for was remiss in what they did.

Ms. Ruacho: No, no. We did not – we purposely did not reach out to any non-County entities. We made minor changes in that section where there were glaring errors that we knew of, that we had personal knowledge of – a fire station that existed that was not listed on an inventory – something to that effect. But we did not reach out and so none of the non-County entities received outreach from us and neglected to respond. We simply did not contact them, with the exception of the school districts. We received proactively capital facilities plans from a couple of districts that went through their own process, adopted the plan, and forwarded the plan on to us at that time of adoption, Sedro-Woolley being one of those districts.

Upon receipt of those, we wanted to act, number one, expeditiously on their behalf, but also efficiently and wanting to include others so as not to have to do this many, many times. So we did reach out to every other school district in the county and say, We have received plans from some; we are going to go forward with an amendment in order to adopt those. If you would like to be included, please provide us with your plan. And we did then receive an additional plan and then we did not receive any correspondence back from the others. So we went forward with the ones we had.

Ms. Ehlers: And that makes sense. I have one other question and this will be then appropriate for the next round. On the very last page you have an interesting map of the drainage districts and that includes several sub-flood control zones which I believe are in the process of being eliminated. So for the next round of this, please contact Jan Flagan or – to find out exactly who in her area is – unless you already know. For example, I think Hansen Creek has been abolished. That's one of the biggest. I mean I had the impression that there was a systemic alteration of that category and it would be helpful to everyone for it to be on the map because you can then see what was versus what is. And that's essentially what this stuff is useful for.

Ms. Ruacho: Yeah, we used the most current information available. Our GIS Department creates these maps. I know there has been the elimination of some sub-flood control zones; they've been abolished altogether. I have the list here for those that are interested. It is, as Carol said, the Hansen Creek sub-flood control zone as well as the South Mount Vernon, the Shangri-La, Dunbar, Warner Prairie and then, as I said, Hansen Creek. So you can make note here on – for those, if you'd like, and then for the next time we do anticipate – it's my understanding GIS is currently working on a revised map. If that map is ready by the time we need to move forward on our next Capital Facilities Plan, we will include that new information.

Ms. Ehlers: That would be practical because this map is dated 2005 so I knew it wasn't likely to be the latest.

Ms. Ruacho: Right. It *is* the latest map that we have, but there likely have been changes – which we now know there have been. But we do need to wait until there's a new map produced and so we do hope that it's done by the time we need it.

Ms. Ehlers: Yes. Thank you.

Chairman Easton: Okay, any other questions on this topic? All right. Well, then just from a matter of housekeeping, what meeting are you aiming towards for this to be – for our deliberations?

Ms. Ruacho: Deliberations we're anticipating your August meeting – the August 10th meeting – following the public hearing on Guemes Subarea Plan, if there's time. You know, when we put deliberations following a public hearing it's kind of tentative because we don't know exactly how many people will be here and if there will be time. But tentatively we are thinking if there is time remaining on August 10th we would like to have you deliberate on that night. If there's not, we probably would like to schedule another meeting in August rather than wait an entire month to September. Because, again, there are three school districts that are waiting.

Chairman Easton: The Chair will probably hold us to finishing the deliberations on the Capital Facilities Plan at that meeting, as opposed to scheduling another meeting just for the Capital Facilities deliberations. But I know that at least one member won't be able to be present, so I'm sorry, Annie, if that's going to be a complication for you. I'd prefer not – I think it'd be our preference not to meet a second time in August for just that short deliberations.

All right, so we'll do our best to try to accomplish that that night.

Ms. Ruacho: That'd be great. Thank you.

Chairman Easton: Just so we're clear, we won't be deliberating on anything else that night. There won't be any deliberations on Guemes.

Ms. Ruacho: No. It'll be strictly a public hearing.

Chairman Easton: Okay.

Annie Lohman: Would the – question, please?

Chairman Easton: Yeah.

Ms. Lohman: Would the deliberations be at the top of the hour or at the end of it?

Chairman Easton: They would be at the end of business.

Ms. Lohman: So I could potentially come in late?

Chairman Easton: Yes.

Ms. Ruacho: Absolutely.

Chairman Easton: Absolutely. Annie has a previous commitment and has to me made me aware.

All right. So, with that, let's move to the public meeting then for the proposed Guemes Island Subarea Plan study session. I'll turn this back over to the Director.

Mr. Christensen: Okay – yes. I didn't earlier introduce myself. You all know who I am but others may not, and of course our viewing public at Skagit 21 or skagitcounty.net. I'm Gary Christensen, Director of Skagit County Planning and Development Services.

What we have also on tonight's agenda is a study session, the purpose of which is to provide you with some background information on the Guemes Island Subarea Plan. As you well know, a couple of years ago the County Commissioners recognized and authorized the Guemes Island Planning Advisory Committee, which we refer to as "GIPAC." And they in turn went about the process of developing a subarea plan for the island. They were able to secure some grants and through a lot of island interest form some planning advisory groups, as well as just engaging the community as a whole, and, as a result developed a plan which was submitted to the County. We've spent the last several months reviewing that. We met with GIPAC a couple months ago and we talked about some revisions to the document – simply wanted to update it from their version to current times. And it will be released – I think it's this Friday, right? – along with a Threshold Determination, so it will be available for public review and comment prior to the public hearing.

The County has hired Mark Personius, whom you all have met through previous subarea planning efforts, most recently the Alger Community Plan or Subarea Plan. And so Mark is kind of familiar with that grassroots, bottoms-up approach in working with communities. And so Mark is here tonight to provide you with more kind of introductory comments about the subarea plan and the process and the like.

One of the other things I'll do before I turn it over to Mark is mention that GIPAC is also – has also suggested – and we are very much interested and believe the Planning Commission will be, as well – to be able to do an island tour prior to the public hearing. And let me just kind of mention what we're thinking about and then after Mark's presentation we can talk about it, but I just wanted you to have some time to think about it.

We have looked at sometime next week as an opportunity to tour the island, and here's the thought. The night that's going to work best for GIPAC, based on other island commitments and availabilities, is July 29th, which will be a week from Thursday. The idea would be to meet at the Anacortes Ferry Terminal at 5, 5:30 – whatever time we think most of you can make; walk on; take the ferry across the channel; on the other side GIPAC will meet us and provide transportation. We'll probably have a couple of sites or places to visit, perhaps get out of the vehicles, have a brief conversation, and then end up back at the community center, which is just up the road from the general store there on the island. And we'll spend an hour or so there and just have – GIPAC will be able to tell and talk to you about that process. (We) thought that you might be interested in that. And then we will plan on coming back either on a 6:30 ferry or a 7-something ferry – so planning on kind of about an hour-and-a-half, two hours over there and then back.

So think about that a little bit and then before we conclude this evening's study session I'd like to measure your interest in having the tour. Okay?

So with that, Mark, if you would? Thank you.

Mark Personius: Good evening, Commissioners. Nice to see you again. I'm just going to give you – hopefully – about a ten-minute overview briefing on the major highlights of the plan that you will see. You will see it this Friday; you'll get a copy of it.

As Gary indicated, we had met with the Board and briefed them. We met with GIPAC and given our staff comments. Those staff comments include comments from the Planning Department, from the Department of Public Works, from the Department of Public Health and from the ferry staff. So all things that were pertinent to the subarea plan, and particularly pertinent to Guemes Island.

So the document you're going to see on Friday and the document that'll be released is a strike-through and underlined version, okay? So it's not going to be a clean, easy-to-read document. It is in strikeout, underline. We wanted to make sure this is as transparent a process as possible so that GIPAC – folks could see what GIPAC wrote originally and then what the County staff has suggested revisions to. So it might be a little bit hard to read but we think it gets all the information across fairly easily.

We think it's a great plan basically. It was well-written, well-put-together, especially written by a citizen committee. So understand that: They weren't professional planners and didn't have staff assistance when they were doing this. So it's a really huge effort on their part and it is a job well done.

Having said that, in the year since it was written and since it's finally gotten on the docket now, some things have changed. So there were lots of references in the original draft to Comp Plan policies that got changed along the way in the 2005 Update, so you'll see lots of those things struck out of the plan because the references just don't make any sense anymore.

But they are very prescriptive policies in the plan that were originally recommended by GIPAC. So there are a lot of "shalls": The County *shall* do this. You will see most of the changes that the County staff has made have been to update sort of the operational standards of things or to update information with more recent information or more recent data. And when it comes to policies, the most significant changes we've made are to change some of those "shalls" to "shoulds," okay? And you will see that when you read the plan and you'll hear about it from GIPAC as well. Basically what it does from the County's perspective is to allow more discretion on the County side. When you do your decision-making, it just opens up that realm.

And also we have to have public comment. There are some very significant proposals in the plan. I'll talk about a land use amendment proposal in just a minute. But the most significant proposals are on the policy side. There's proposals to adopt a mandatory annual building cap that would only allow a certain number of units a year. There are changes – suggested changes – to the seawater intrusion policy that would make it harder to build accessory dwelling units in some cases, based on the level of chlorides in the wells. There are proposed changes to the ferry service, both in terms of level of service and some operational standards. So there's a lot of things that are significant impacts to folks on the island and so that's what we want to have the public hearing for – get some public comment on it – and give you lots of time to deliberate. That's why our changes are the way they are, and we will have changed some of those "shalls" to "shoulds" to allow for that proper discretion at the County level.

There will also be – you'll see recommendations from GIPAC to adopt mandatory water metering for all new units. So there'll be some – some – a lot of meaty issues that we'll have to talk about and that we'll hear from GIPAC about.

One of those is a land use change. There is one proposed land use change in the plan. This was a Comprehensive Plan map amendment that was originally submitted back in '05 as a part of the GMA Update. It was deferred to the subarea planning process at that time and then GIPAC did not address it directly in the plan so the staff has added it back in. This is the southeast corner of the island. This is the area in question is the area bounded by the red. It's about

220 acres of Rural Intermediate-zoned – about fifty-something parcels – and it's just north of the – this is the Holiday Rambler subdivision area down here, so it's just north of that area.

Mr. Jewett: Where's the ferry landing?

Mr. Personius: The ferry landing is over here.

Mr. Jewett: Further over there?

Mr. Personius: About a mile, yeah.

Mr. Jewett: Okay.

Ms. Ehlers: And I think it is pertinent to add that between the ferry landing and Holiday Hideaway the road is disintegrating.

Mr. Personius: Yeah, that's South Shore Road, which has had some bluff failure on it and some sloughing and the road is essentially now a one-lane road. We'll see it on our tour. And there is a long-term solution from – to re-route that road that's being planned for by the Department of Public Works that will – you'll see in the plan and we'll talk about it more.

There are also some water issues up here about – there are issues about water availability.

One of the other things that's in the plan is a proposed prohibition on the Rural Intermediate zone on the island in terms of any new Rural Intermediate. They are LAMIRDs by definition, if you recall that term from the GMA work.

So that area – just to give you – that's the only Comp Plan – the proposed land use map – change that is going to come out of this plan or has come out of this plan so far. So – but it has not gotten – you'll see a discussion of it in the plan, but there has been no public comment on it so far. So this is the first time it's really – will have its –

Chairman Easton: They won't have a separate public hearing. You know, it's – the hearing will be wrapped into the subarea plan?

Mr. Personius: Correct. This is the same area – just showing you that the yellow parcels are the vacant parcels and the green parcels are the parcels that are already developed with a home on them, just to kind of give you a feel for what the pattern is there.

Ms. Ehlers: Do you have a map that shows the build-out in Holiday Hideaway?

Mr. Personius: Do you mean what the current build-out is?

Ms. Ehlers: Yes.

Mr. Personius: I do not, but we can get that probably from Kim. No, I think what – Carol, you're asking about this area?

Ms. Ehlers: Yes, because –

Mr. Personius: What the current –

Ms. Ehlers: There's – the crucial issue has always been, on Guemes, the availability of water.

Mr. Personius: Mm-hmm.

Ms. Ehlers: And I don't know what the status of that water system is now. I know that it used to be – there used to be difficulties, but that doesn't mean that they still exist. But as Gary will remember, the County has a long history of forgetting that Guemes is a sole source aquifer dependent entirely on rain water. And my understanding of what they have done and in the charrette that they ran – which I hope you will tell us about at some point – and the other issues is that water is the crucial issue for a lot of their recommendations. And if the water table is destroyed, that means that you have to pipe in water from the city of Anacortes. A couple of years ago when this issue came up we reckoned it would be a minimum of \$6 million just for the main pipe lines, and I think that was a conservative figure.

So I'm saying all this not to make a decision in any one direction or another, but in an effort to try to balance out the rights of those who are there with the rights of those who have property and want to do something, and the cost that comes with it. Because the great joy of Growth Management – as far as I'm concerned, living on another saltwater island – is that infrastructure was a basic issue and if new infrastructure was required it was the new development that had to pay for it. And so while you're thinking of the things you're thinking of, this is part of what is in the back of my mind, at least.

Mr. Personius: Mm-hmm. Yeah, no question water is the pre-eminent issue on the island. There is lots of discussion on it in the plan. We intend to have staff from Public Health here – hopefully the County hydrogeologist – here for your deliberation meetings so you can ask questions of them. They are the experts on those issues on the seawater intrusion policy and the level of chlorides and the groundwater aquifers and all that stuff, so we want to have those folks here for you because those issues are so important here. So – yeah?

Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn: I just have a quick clarification question. The proposed land use changes to Rural Intermediate?

Mr. Personius: From Rural Intermediate to Rural Reserve.

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: To Rural Reserve. Okay.

Mr. Personius: Yes, it's a proposed downzone.

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: Okay. Thanks.

Chairman Easton: So I have a public policy question, I guess, or a public notification question. With a downzone of that size, how did – did we notify – what do we do for notification?

Mr. Personius: We are going to notify everybody who lives in that zone and the adjacent property owners. Right? Is it –

Ms. Ruacho: Yeah, this is just a study session –

Chairman Easton: Right.

Ms. Ruacho: – as a preview to releasing this. So we haven't officially released yet. We will on Friday. And so concurrent with releasing it to the public in a general manner, we will directly notify all the property owners within the boundary of the map amendment.

Chairman Easton: Okay.

Ms. Ruacho: They'll get a direct mailing.

Chairman Easton: Okay, question?

Ms. McGoffin: Could you just identify or describe Rural Intermediate versus Rural Reserve? What is – what do you –

Mr. Personius: The Rural Intermediate zone is – has a maximum density of one unit per 2-1/2 acres and the Rural Reserve has a density of one unit per 10 acres, unless you can do a CaRD and then you can get two per 10; however, caveat, caveat, caveat: There are no CaRDs allowed on Guemes Island. Because it is a sole source aquifer, there are no density bonuses allowed. So it would go from one unit per 2-1/2 acres to one unit per 10.

Chairman Easton: And the largest piece inside this area?

Mr. Personius: In the plan there's a table that has a complete analysis of all the parcels. The actual potential loss of density is, interestingly, not that significant. It's only like sixteen units, I think. Because most of those parcels –

Chairman Easton: – are too small.

Mr. Personius: – already subdivided.

Chairman Easton: Have already been subdivided.

Mr. Personius: Right.

Chairman Easton: Right.

Ms. Ehlers: I would like to point something else out that is generally not understood. Rural Intermediate at 2-1/2 acres was a recommendation and decision of the Planning Department and Commission with Growth Management. And so everything after the time GMA was passed – 1990, 1992 – is actually 2-1/2 acres. The rest of the Guemes shoreline, which is zoned Rural Intermediate, is simply a cover on top of what had traditionally been quarter-acre or less zone that was built out at quarter-acre. So I don't want anyone to mistake that because the areas around the shoreline of Guemes are zoned 2-1/2 acres that most of those are.

Chairman Easton: Yeah, that's a good point.

Ms. Ehlers: That's a crucial thing because as I have looked at the maps – arguing with Carly over the years about Rural Intermediate – I finally realized that from the Allen Church east Rural Intermediate is pretty consistently 2-1/2 acres. The area around the Allen Church is smaller, but the area around the shore of Guemes, around the shore of Fidalgo, around the shore of Big Lake, and around the shore of Lake Cavanaugh were built out pretty much at the same small density. Big Lake and Cavanaugh were designated as Rural Villages because they already had commercial there. Guemes and Fidalgo were not because there was no commercial there. And I think that's the most crucial thing for you to observe ____.

Chairman Easton: Okay. Mary?

Ms. McGoffin: So is there any organized opposition to your plan?

Dave Hughes: It's not public yet.

Ms. McGoffin: I mean, is there talk of it? Is there something we should know about –

Mr. Personius: Not that I am aware of. So this is a bit unique because this plan was written by a citizens committee on the island. It's been pretty much – it's been a fairly insular process so it's always been on the island. So this process now is kind of the handing off process, so they hand it off to the County and it becomes – first it'll become your plan and then it'll eventually become the Board's plan when the Board adopts. So this is the transition period and so this proposal in particular, this land use amendment proposal on southeast has never before been made public or had opportunity for the public to comment. So we'll look forward to what – you know, to any comments we get on August the 10th. And it'll be well-publicized, of course, on the island.

Chairman Easton: Commissioner Hughes has a question.

Mr. Personius: Yes?

Mr. Hughes: My only comment, and then I'm just going to listen, is I would – and maybe that's included in the plan or in what's going to come public – is a list of the committee and where they – their primary – where they reside.

Mr. Personius: Yeah, that will be on the front page, frontispiece for the plan – all the GIPAC members. My understanding is they're all residents. I'm not sure if they're fulltime residents, but I know they're – they all have property on the island. And I don't know. I mean they had meetings – they held their own meetings. It's a unique situation because they have some of their own operating customs over there about how they do things. So I think it'll be interesting for you to hear from them. I really can't speak for them in this case. I know at the – certainly at the tour you'll get to meet them and to hear from them, and then also at the public hearing I think we want to reserve some time up front for the GIPAC members to talk to you directly. Jerry?

Mr. Jewett: Does the person or the people that own that property, are they aware of this change?

Mr. Personius: We will notify all the property owners individually as a part of this. This proposal was submitted by Joost Businger, who is a member of GIPAC, as I said, back in 2005 originally, and then was deferred off the docket until now. So there were at the time in the written record there were seven people who had written in that they supported this proposal. But, like I said, it never had a formal public hearing process, so we'll get to hear about it this time.

Chairman Easton: So there was never any testimony taken other than just what came in with the application?

Mr. Personius: Right. Right.

Chairman Easton: Were GIPAC appointed? Were they appointed by the Commission? You know, I mean similar to what we –

Mr. Christensen: Carol earlier was testing my memory and so I'm going to try to remember in responding to your question, Jason.

As I recall, GIPAC is certainly, as I mentioned earlier, recognized by the Board of County Commissioners as the planning advisory board for the island. I also recall and think that this – believe this is true is that the actual membership of GIPAC – they're elected, so the residents on the island have actually voted for those that, I believe, serve as GIPAC members, much, much – I think similar to the South Fidalgo Community Council. I think that they are also elected and as well.

Again, that's what I believe is true and what I recall. But it would be a good question, you know, and certainly GIPAC can summarize and talk a bit about who they are and how they came to be and –

Chairman Easton: Right.

Mr. Christensen: – what their charge and mission is when we do the tour or at the public hearing.

Chairman Easton: Sure. And actually it's going to be the Chair's preference that it's done at the public hearing also because I think it's something that needs to be recorded for those that are going to watch via television and such. So let's plan on that. And I'd like early on for GIPAC to be aware that we want them invited to participate in not just the public hearing but in the deliberations. We have a precedent here with Alger and with other subarea plans where the planning body that wrote the document can be here and we can ask clarifying questions of them during deliberations, which is different than a normal public hearing setting where we don't quiz people during our deliberations. So let's make sure that we keep that. I'd like to keep that tradition in place also.

Ms. Ehlers: They may not remember to tell you this, but back when we did the visioning process in '90, '91 we were supposed to have local communal groups that made recommendations. And they did. 1800 people took part in that process.

Guemes produced a plan in 1992 and handed it to us. It did not conform to the County plan because the County didn't have one yet, and that group has managed to keep itself coordinated and thinking and planning since 1992. That's part of what I admire about their process compared to the one on Fidalgo, if you will. They started – ask them how they did the water study because I think that is a crucial part of it, and how they analyzed the water. Because it is in my experience here in Skagit County a unique process. I don't know anyone else

that has done what they have done to the degree of responsibility and intellectual integrity and using U.S.G.S. in all of the processes that they should use. I really admire how they've done that. And I don't know what the conclusions are so I'm not speaking from that standpoint, but the Guemes Subarea Plan fell apart and GIPAC has stuck with it and that's not easy in these days.

Chairman Easton: What can you add to your ten-minute presentation, young man?

Mr. Personius: It's gone on now for fifteen!

Chairman Easton: That's all right. We've asked you questions. I'm just teasing!

Mr. Personius: Nope, I'm good. I just wanted to give you the highlights of the major issues that you're going to see – kind of be prepared for. They're very specific. I mean, GIPAC put together really a tight plan. It covers a lot of issues. They basically said their build-out analysis indicated they could – they had capacity for about another thousand units on the island and I think they felt that that – you know, the reality of a thousand units – was really a threat to their rural character. And I think that's what's driving a lot of their recommendations on the policy side about seawater intrusion, about a building cap. You know, what kind of tools can we use to manage that growth so that we keep our rural character. So keep that in your head. That'll be a conversation we'll have about what tools are appropriate and when and how and where. Those are conversations we'll have at your deliberation meeting definitely.

Chairman Easton: Any other questions for Mr. Personius? All right. Thank you.

Mr. Personius: Great.

Chairman Easton: Let's visit the issue of the field trip.

Mr. Christensen: Yes, yes. So as I indicated, I've been in touch with GIPAC members and we thought it would be best to have the tour before the hearing so that you get a lay of the land and get a sense of landscape and perhaps better understand some of the issues that the community and the plan addresses. And so it's next week was the dates we were trying to zero in on, and the one date that works for them and I hope works for many, if not all, of you would be Thursday, the 29th. There is – now I think the plan would be to all of us just arrive at the Anacortes Ferry Terminal before a departure time and then we all just walk on, we take the ferry across, and then GIPAC will meet us there. They'll shuttle us around to a few spots, I suspect, will want to talk to you about a few things, and then, as I indicated earlier, we'll end up at the community center where we can get around some tables and have some Q & A.

So the departure times for Thursday: There's a 4:30, a 5, and a 5:30 and a 6 o'clock. And I'm thinking that we're probably going to want to spend two hours, perhaps, so if we caught the 5 p.m. ferry we could return at 6:30 if – well, actually it's like 6:40 or 6:45. So the times that are listed here are from Anacortes to Guemes Island, and then they say they load over there some ten minutes later. So we could, you know, meet and depart at 5 and try to get back at 6:30 or we could meet at 5:30 or 6 and come back at 7:45-ish.

Ms. McGoffin: Gary, what's the parking lot situation like? I mean, is it going to be crowded At 5? Would it be better to wait till 6?

Mr. Christensen: That's a good question. I do not know.

Ms. Ehlers: That's a good question. The –

Mr. Christensen: Walking on – if we were trying to get nine vehicles plus ours that would pose a problem, but I think the fact that we're walking on, it's probably more accommodating.

Ms. Ehlers: Well, there's a limit – there's two places to park: one where they're supposed to park and then one that is up on the hill just above where the ferry takes off.

Mr. Christensen: Yeah.

Chairman Easton: And there's about twenty parking spots there.

Mr. Christensen: I think it's mid-week; you know, it's not a Friday or a week-end.

Chairman Easton: I'm not going to be able to go.

Mr. Christensen: Okay.

Chairman Easton: I have a conflict. I'm officiating a wedding.

Ms. McGoffin: Can we just do a hand-raise who could –

Chairman Easton: Yeah, maybe we should just see who's available – who's all available on the 29th – and then we'll come up with a time.

Mr. Hughes: I'm half-way.

Chairman Easton: Dave's half available.

Matt Mahaffie: Maybe.

Chairman Easton: And Matt's half available. Are you – what's that?

Ms. Lohman: Possibly.

Chairman Easton: Possibly.

Mr. Christensen: Okay, so five, maybe six, maybe four members.

Mr. Jewett: I could pick anybody who wanted to – up to four people – who wanted to ride up here forty-five minutes before the ferry left.

Chairman Easton: I'd like to have the GIPAC Chair contact me because I'd like to get an alternate time where I might be able to just go over and spend some time with them on the island because I don't want to chair without having had the experience. I'll find an alternate time to go. I'm not going to put – and I don't mean to put any pressure on anybody else that you all *have* to go to be able to do this. It's just that's how I feel about it for me. So that's the alternative that I'd like to try to work with. If one of them can host me, we'll find a time.

Mr. Christensen: Well, let me ask this question: Do you believe it's preferable to have the tour before the hearing or –

(sounds of assent)

Mr. Christensen: Okay. Because there might have been other options, you know, afterwards, but if we're going to do it next week then Thursday's the only day that's going to work for them.

Chairman Easton: Well, I think Thursday works for the majority of the committee so I think that's what we should do. So a 5:30 departure? Does that sound agreeable to everyone?

(sounds of assent)

Mr. Christensen: Okay, 5:30. So the ferry leaves at 5:30 and it will leave; it won't wait for you. So if you miss that one then you'll have to come across on the 6 o'clock, I believe.

Ms. Ehlers: And walk up the hill to the community center.

Mr. Christensen: And just walk up the hill to the community center.

Mr. Jewett: Does anybody want to ride with me and leave here at 4:30?

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: I would.

Elinor Nakis: Yes, I would.

Chairman Easton: Okay.

Mr. Jewett: All right.

Mr. Christensen: Okay. Agreed to.

Chairman Easton: Any other business?

Ms. Ruacho: And maybe just – you know, there might be some folks from Guemes that are watching this, so just a kind of point of information that we will run a late ferry on the evening of their public hearing, if necessary. We've got a plan with the ferry manager that I'll call her at 8 and see, you know, where we are. Generally our practice has been no matter the order of folks signing up on a speaker sign-in, if we have an issue, you know, of out-of-town travel that we let the folks that are under some sort of a transportation schedule like a ferry go first so that they can meet their schedule. And since it's their plan, hopefully we can accommodate that. So we would allow them to go first. Just it obviously depends on the numbers and how, you know, long. Again, because GIPAC has written this plan, normally we say, you know, one representative per group, but in this case it might be nice to hear from each member and so that might prolong the comments. There's only five or six. It's not a huge group.

Chairman Easton: Oh, okay.

Ms. Ruacho: Yeah, they're not a large group! And then let the Guemes folks talk first. If they happen to be done by 8, there will be no need for a late ferry; if they're not, we will provide that. We'll make sure we provide one at whatever time necessary to get them all home.

Chairman Easton: Will that be included in the public notice?

Ms. Ruacho: It's – no. The public notice went already.

Chairman Easton: Okay.

Ms. Ehlers: Well, there is a thing you could do. The *Anacortes American* is very good about putting public notices in the community calendar and you could put it in that.

Ms. Ruacho: Okay.

Ms. Ehlers: Because I'm not altogether certain that Guemes can get Skagit 21. I know Fidalgo can't.

Chairman Easton: Yeah, they can't.

Ms. Ruacho: If they have – yeah, if they have –

Chairman Easton: Because they're on satellite.

Ms. Ruacho: – satellite. The folks over there mostly have satellite and so they can watch. But, yeah, and then, you know, if you run into anybody and they have that question –

Chairman Easton: Okay.

Ms. Ruacho: – or anything like that, we do have a plan and we've got that arranged with our ferry manager.

Chairman Easton: Okay, great.

Ms. Ruacho: Just so folks, if they are watching this between now and then, they know that.

Mr. Christensen: I just have one miscellaneous item.

Chairman Easton: Yes?

Mr. Christensen: Next Tuesday the Department will be meeting with the County Commissioners during our normal agenda time – that's Tuesday morning at eight o'clock – and we'll be giving a mid-year report on our work program and development trends and activities, timelines for permits. So if you're interested you can watch that presentation – again, Skagit 21 or skagitcounty.net – and thereafter I'll mail to you or we'll e-mail the matrices and the information so you'll have hard copy of that as well.

Ms. Ehlers: Thank you.

Chairman Easton: Great. And I have one –

Mr. Christensen: It kind of tells you a little bit about what we've done, what's – you know, and what's likely on our plate this fall too, as well.

Chairman Easton: Okay. Anything else? I have one miscellaneous item. You may have noticed posted somewhere in our paperwork that my appointment ends the end of the month. The Commissioner has granted me an extension so I will be staying on for an additional four years. So you're not done with me yet, y'all! You've got to deal with me for a little bit longer – sorry! So, anyway, I was glad to be asked and I was willing to stay. So I'll be here for another four years. All right.

With that –

Ms. Lohman: Is this a new staff member?

Chairman Easton: Oh. Did you want to introduce your new staff member?

Ms. Ruacho: Yeah.

Mr. Christensen: Sure. Thank you. Chad can have his two minutes of fame, right?

Chairman Easton: I'll give him two minutes!

(laughter)

Mr. Christensen: Here in attendance is Chad Armstrong. Chad is a Mount Vernon resident, a Mount Vernon High School graduate – a Bull Dog – as well as a Western Washington University recent graduate from the Huxley School. Chad is in between studies. He's this September going to be attending Portland State University where he'll be pursuing graduate work. And we're real fortunate to have Chad here with us this summer as an intern, principally helping with the Capital Facility Plan update.

Chairman Easton: Excellent.

Mr. Christensen: So it's been a great resource and help and assistance, and he's fit right in and making our job a bit easier. We have about another month or so and we're going to be sorry to have him leave, but he's got a career path to pursue as well.

Chairman Easton: Great. Welcome.

Mr. Christensen: So, Chad Armstrong.

Chairman Easton: All right, with that, seeing no other business to come before us we're adjourned (gavel).