
Chapter 1: Introduction

OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN AREA

The Gig Harbor Peninsula Community Plan area is located in northwest Pierce County, Washington. The Gig Harbor Peninsula and Fox Island encompass approximately 58 square miles of urban, suburban, and rural lands. The Gig Harbor Peninsula is the southeastern most extremity of the vastly larger Kitsap Peninsula. Puget Sound marine waters surround the Peninsula on three sides (Henderson Bay, Carr Inlet, Hale Passage, the Tacoma Narrows, and Colvos Passage). The plan area is abutting Kitsap County on the north, connected on the west to the Key Peninsula by the Purdy sand spit and bridge, and connected to the remainder of the mainland portion of Pierce County and the City of Tacoma via the Narrows Bridge. The 1996 estimated population of the plan area is 30,500 persons, including 6,350 persons within the Gig Harbor city limits. In addition to the City of Gig Harbor, several small-unincorporated communities exist throughout the plan area.

The Peninsula is essentially bisected from the southeast to the northwest by State Route 16 (SR 16). The highway is the major link between Tacoma, mainland Pierce County, and the rest of the Central Puget Sound region, Bremerton, Port Orchard, the remainder of the Kitsap Peninsula, the Olympic Peninsula, and Hood Canal. State Route 302 (SR 302) connects the plan area with the Key Peninsula area of Pierce County, the south end of the Kitsap Peninsula, Hood Canal, and the Olympic Peninsula.

The community plan provides a framework for consistent land use standards in the UGA for both Pierce County and the City of Gig Harbor. Directing new residential subdivisions as well as commercial and industrial development into areas that are served by urban services (such as sewers) provides efficient economies of scale which promote cost effective public facilities. These public facilities include sidewalks, parks, and open space that the community desires. This growth management planning concept also eliminates urban development patterns from sprawling into the rural area, allowing the rural area to retain the low density, pastoral, and forested characteristics that the community favors.

URBAN GROWTH AREA

CITY OF GIG HARBOR

The City of Gig Harbor is located in the east-central portion of the plan area adjacent to Gig Harbor Bay. The city is surrounded by its 3,417 acre Urban Growth Area (UGA). The City of Gig Harbor is the historic focus of civic and commercial activity in the plan area and is the location of moderate density residential neighborhoods. The City is oriented around Gig Harbor Bay and its commercial fishing and pleasure boat facilities.

PURDY

Purdy is located at the north end of Henderson Bay, adjacent to Burley Lagoon at the intersection of SR 16 and SR 302. Along with residential uses, several gas stations, retail businesses, Peninsula Light Company, and Peninsula High School are located in this area. The Purdy Bridge crosses the southern portion of Burley Lagoon and connects the Gig Harbor Peninsula with the Key Peninsula at the Purdy sand spit.

CANTERWOOD

Canterwood is a planned residential, golf course community located immediately north of the city limits of Gig Harbor and east of SR 16. The Canterwood development is adjacent to the future planned development referred to as Gig Harbor North (Gig Harbor North is located entirely within the city of Gig Harbor). Canterwood is primarily developed with detached single-family residential homes with a few multifamily townhouses.

SWEDE HILL

Swede Hill refers to an area located west of SR 16 in the vicinity of Bujacich Drive NW. The neighborhood is dominated by moderate single-family residential neighborhoods with quite a number of single-family homes on lots that average from one to five acres in size. There are also a significant number of large vacant parcels that have historically been used for agriculture or forestry. Several commercial uses are located along Burnham Drive near SR 16. Fire District Number 5 headquarters and the Washington State Correction Center for women are located in the Swede Hill area.

DONKEY CREEK CORRIDOR

Donkey Creek (also known as North Creek) flows into the northwest corner of Gig Harbor Bay in the vicinity of Harborview Drive and Burnham Drive. The Donkey Creek corridor follows Burnham Drive northwest towards SR 16 at the Swede Hill interchange. The city limits of Gig Harbor and the future development of Gig Harbor North are located northeast of the Donkey Creek corridor. Several business are located in the area, however because the corridor is dominated by the steep slopes and wetlands along the ravine formed by Donkey Creek, the land use pattern is dominated with single-family dwellings and large vacant parcels.

EAST GIG HARBOR

The east shoreline of Gig Harbor Bay is referred to as East Gig Harbor. This residential neighborhood is dominated with large homes with views of the Harbor. Many of the parcels adjacent to the shoreline are one quarter acre or smaller while the upland areas contain several large lots that are undeveloped.

WEST GIG HARBOR

The neighborhood located outside the city limits of Gig Harbor, west of SR 16 and south of Bujacich Drive is referred to as West Gig Harbor. This area of the UGA contains the vacant property that has been designated as an Employment Center.

REID DRIVE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Reid Drive neighborhood is located south and east of the city limits of Gig Harbor, between the marine bluffs of the Tacoma Narrows and SR 16. The neighborhood is predominantly improved with moderate density, detached single-family neighborhoods, several of which contain the greatest density of homes in the plan area with densities near six dwelling units per net acre. The 62-unit Harbor Heights apartments are one of the few multifamily residential developments in the plan area.

RURAL AREA

The rural area of the Gig Harbor Peninsula includes all property located outside of the incorporated city limits of Gig Harbor and outside of the UGA surrounding the city. The rural area currently includes approximately 23,146 acres. The rural area is developed primarily with single-family dwellings at low densities with a number of moderate density single-family subdivisions. There are also a limited number of civic, commercial, and industrial uses located throughout the rural area on the Peninsula. The Tacoma Narrows Airport is located in a rural area near Point Fosdick. A significant amount of vacant and undeveloped land, pasture lands, and forestland remain in the rural area.

CRESCENT VALLEY

Crescent Valley is mostly undeveloped; however, some small farms and residences are located adjacent to Crescent Valley Drive and along the shoreline of Crescent Lake. The Crescent Valley area contains the lowest residential densities in the plan area. The largest undeveloped parcels in the plan area are located directly east of Crescent Valley between Crescent Valley Drive and Hallstrom Drive.

ROSEDALE

A small rural business center with a store, church, and community park is located near the intersection of Rosedale Street and Ray Nash Drive. Large tracts of forest and pastureland dominate the Rosedale area. Several moderate density single-family neighborhoods are found in the area and the shorelines of Lay Inlet and Sylvia Lake are improved with fairly high density single-family dwellings that have mostly been converted from summer cabins to permanent year-round homes. Raft Island is located in Henderson Bay to the west of Rosedale and is developed as a moderate density single-family neighborhood.

RAY NASH VALLEY

Ray Nash Valley is a small rural valley south of Rosedale between the Artondale area and Henderson Bay. Land uses in the area generally include small farms and pasturelands as well as single-family homes on 5 to 10-acre lots. Kopachuck State Park is located directly to the west of Ray Nash Valley and extends to the shoreline of Henderson Bay.

ARTONDALE

Artondale is generally considered the area northwest of Wollochet Bay, south of Rosedale and east of Arletta. There are several large undeveloped lots in the Artondale area ranging from 20 to approximately 100 acres. Some of these large parcels contain mature stands of timber. There are also a number of moderate density single-family neighborhoods, most notably in the vicinity of 40th Street and 70th Avenue. The Gig Harbor Golf and Country Club is located in Artondale.

ARLETTA

Arletta is located north of Hale Passage, directly east of Horsehead Bay. There is a community center and small grocery store at the intersection of 36th Street and Ray Nash Drive. Large lots, single-family homes, pastureland, and forestland characterize land uses at Arletta. Development along the shoreline of Horsehead Bay and Hale Passage consists of smaller lots with detached single-family homes. Similar to the development pattern in the Rosedale neighborhood, many of the waterfront cabins have been demolished or remodeled and are now used all year as permanent homes.

CROMWELL AND WARREN

The Cromwell and Warren neighborhoods extend along Hale Passage from Wollochet Bay to Shaw Cove. Fairly steep marine bluffs characterize the shoreline of Cromwell, while the shoreline in the vicinity of Warren Drive is considered low to medium bank waterfront. Upland from the shoreline, both Cromwell and Warren have large forested tracts and pasturelands. Along Hale Passage, many of the original waterfront cabins have been replaced by permanent homes. The bridge that connects Fox Island to the Gig Harbor Peninsula is located in Warren.

POINT FOSDICK

The Point Fosdick area consists of the southern end of the Gig Harbor Peninsula between Wollochet Bay and the Tacoma Narrows. The shoreline in the Point Fosdick area is primarily high bank, marine bluffs with low bank properties extending toward Wollochet Bay. The largest landholder in the area is the City of Tacoma which owns and operates the Tacoma Narrows Airport. The Tacoma Narrows Airport is classified as a general aviation airport. Several businesses, including a convenience store and a gas station, are located near the intersection of Stone Drive and Point Fosdick Drive. The area has been developed with a number of moderate density single-family neighborhoods, most notably west of the Tacoma Narrows Airport and near the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Pierce County owns a waterfront park along the shoreline of the Tacoma Narrows.

HISTORY OF THE GIG HARBOR PENINSULA AND FOX ISLAND

NATIVE AMERICAN SETTLEMENT

Native Americans settled in and utilized the Gig Harbor Peninsula and Fox Island for thousands of years before Europeans arrived. The tribal groups that inhabited the Gig Harbor Peninsula vicinity were mainly of Puyallup, Nisqually, and Steilacoom groups. Native Americans had permanent settlements in villages along waterways and had seasonal homes in places such as Fox Island for the purposes of fishing and food gathering. Known village sites exist at the north end of present-day Gig Harbor near Donkey or Crescent Creek, Wollochet Bay and Burley Lagoon. Some Native Americans continued to live in the area selling or trading fish and woven baskets to European settlers well into the 1900s. Native Americans continue to enjoy fishing and clamming rights in their usual and accustomed fishing grounds in waters surrounding the Peninsula and Fox Island.

EUROPEAN/AMERICAN EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT

In 1792, British Captain George Vancouver led the first European exploration of the Puget Sound area. In 1841, American Navy Lieutenant Charles Wilkes led the team to explore the entire Puget Sound. It is not known which member of Wilkes' expedition gave the name of Gig Harbor to the small bay they discovered. The name pays homage to the gig, a small boat used to conduct surveys.

The first European and American settlers came to the Gig Harbor Bay area in 1867. These early settlers were involved in fishing. With the arrival of the transcontinental railroad to Tacoma in 1887, more people began to settle in the area. In the early days, homesteaders and others settled along the shoreline for easy access to boats since much of the inland areas did not have adequate roads and most transportation was through the waterways on boats. Later, inland locations came to be valued more for the purposes of cultivating farms, ranches, and orchards. The harbor area was developed with docks and wharves that served the "Mosquito Fleet," a group of steamers that transported freight, mail, and people across the Sound to Tacoma. Logging activity preceded specialty or diversified farming that included fruit orchards in the area. Shipbuilding for commercial fishing, car ferries, and other craft became an important industry in Gig Harbor.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, passengers, horses, wagons, mail, supplies, logs, timber, fish, crops, and bricks were transported in boats and steamers across Puget Sound from the Peninsula to Tacoma. Steamers stopped at major pick-up locations and bays along the shoreline in the Narrows, Wollochet Bay, Hale Passage, Carr Inlet, and Henderson Bay. By the 1930s, the steamer transport declined largely due to the convenience of larger ferries and appearance of automobiles on the Peninsula starting in the 1910s.

The first Purdy Bridge across Henderson Bay was constructed in the early 1890s to enable the farmers from Mason, Kitsap, and Pierce Counties to reach the urban market in Tacoma with their produce, through Gig Harbor. The present bridge was constructed in 1938. The first

Narrows Bridge collapsed in 1940, four months after completion. The second Narrows Bridge was not completed until 1950. After the collapse of the first bridge, ferries again transported people and goods between the Peninsula and Tacoma until the second bridge was completed. With the completion of the second Narrows Bridge, the Peninsula began to evolve into a suburban residential community. This growth accelerated from the 1950s through the mid-1990s, due to the growth in the Tacoma, mainland Pierce County, and Central Puget Sound economy, and the convenient access to Interstate 5 that the bridge and the conversion of State Route 16 into a 4-lane, restricted access freeway provided. In addition, the completion of the Tacoma Industrial Airport in 1963 and the development of the Washington Corrections Center for Women at Purdy spurred further development of the area.

Today, the plan area is a mix of small town and suburban-style urban areas and wooded suburban neighborhoods interspersed with rural forest and pasturelands.

PLAN AREA COMMUNITIES

The following current or historic communities provide the character that currently defines the Gig Harbor Peninsula and Fox Island.

ARLETTA

The first post office was established in 1893 in Arletta. The first postmaster named the community Arletta by combining her daughter's name Arla with her friend's name Lucetta (Castle). The first European-American settlement began in the late 1870s. Most early settlers farmed. Other activities in the area included logging, fishing, and trapping. When a permanent dock was constructed, a business district developed around the waterfront and included a store, fish fertilizer factory, and warehouse. By 1910 the first roads had been constructed between Warren, Arletta, and Horsehead Bay.

ARTONDALE

Artondale extends north and west of the head of Wollochet Bay. Settlement started here in 1877. The community served as a banking and shipping point. The community had two brickyards. Approximately 150 people lived in the community in the 1880s. The early settlers in the area established orchards and farms after clearing the forest.

CROMWELL

The community, along Hale Passage across from Fox Island, was originally called "Little Norway" because of many Norwegian immigrants who settled in the area starting in the 1870s. Farming and ranching were the common early activities in the area. The name of the community was changed in 1902 when local residents petitioned for direct mail delivery and John Cromwell from the federal post office recommended that the community receive such service. The first post office and school in the area were established about 1900.

FOX ISLAND

Native Americans called the island Bu-ta-u. According to the Native American legend, Bu-ta-u was the name of a daughter of a Nisqually Indian chief. The present name of the island was established during the 1841 Wilkes Expedition after an assistant surgeon on the crew named Fox. Native Americans used the island for seasonal gatherings and fishing. Tanglewood Island was used as a Native American burial ground. During the Indian uprisings of the 1850s, Fox Island was designated as a reservation for friendly Indians, and for a few years prior to resettlement to other reservations, there were some 800 Puyallups and Nisquallys living on the island.

European-American settlement began in the 1850s. A number of activities had been established on the island at various times, including fishing, gathering of dogfish and oysters, fish processing, logging, farming, and manufacturing basic items such as bricks and sleds, wheelbarrows, and baby carriages. In the 1860s, the dogfish and oyster industry was developed with Native Americans employed to fish and gather. The local farmers also grew prunes on the island and a prune dryer was employed to process harvested prunes for shipping starting in the 1890s. A flower industry was established on the island in 1904 with bulbs brought from Iowa. The Brick and Clay Works Company started on the south side of the island in the late 1880s. The company utilized the local clay deposits to manufacture pipes, bricks, and tiles and shipped the manufactured products to Tacoma on the steamer, "Susie." The plant closed down by 1910 due to the depletion of the clay deposits. The post office, schools, stores, and churches formed the early centers of community life. Before the Fox Island Bridge opened in 1954, residents relied on ferry service for transportation.

CITY OF GIG HARBOR

Gig Harbor was named during the 1841 Wilkes expedition after a crewmember in small boat, called the captain's gig, sighted a harbor and led other boats exploring in the area to take refuge in the harbor during a storm. When the first European-American settlers came to the harbor in 1867, there was a Native American village, with longhouse, located at the head of the harbor near a small creek. In 1867, two Slovenians, Samuel Jerisich and Peter Goldsmith, and a Portuguese man, John Farragut, rowed a skiff south from British Columbia to fish in the area. They entered Gig Harbor by accident to seek shelter at night. Samuel Jerisich liked the area and decided to stay while the other two men decided to return to British Columbia. Samuel Jerisich married a fifteen-year-old native woman from near Vancouver Island and settled in Gig Harbor. He was the first European-American settler in Gig Harbor. Soon Yugoslavians, Germans, and Scandinavians followed to settle in the harbor. A major boatyard, lumber mills, salmon fishing fleet, and farming provided the early economic base for the town. In 1886, the Indian long house served as the first school. Later, the Indian village became the site of C. O. Austin's mill.

Dr. Alfred Burnham, from Albert Lea, Minnesota, filed a plat for the town site on April 28, 1888. Dr. Burnham was the town's first doctor and opened the first general store near today's business section in North Gig Harbor. Chicken farming prospered in the 1920s and 1930s. Early fishermen used rowboats to fish. Later, motorized boats began to lighten the labor required to

fish and enabled fishermen to go greater distance to fish in places such as Alaska starting around 1905.

The town incorporated as a fourth class city in 1946 because of the need to provide for water and sewer systems. Gig Harbor was home to a fishing fleet of more than 70 vessels in the 1970s that decreased to 30 vessels in the late 1980s.

Early fishermen, including Nick Costello, Andrew Gilich, and the Skansie Brothers, organized a fund drive in 1914 to build the first St. Nicholas Catholic Church in Gig Harbor. The Skansie Brothers founded the Skansie Shipbuilding Company in 1912. The company produced four-to-five boats per season and had 25 to 30 employees during peak periods. The company built a variety of boats including ferries and wooden fishing boats. One of four Skansie brothers operated the Washington Navigation Company, which operated ferries around the Puget Sound in the 1910s until the 1940s when the first Narrows Bridge was constructed. Mitchell Skansie and his son Bill operated the Washington Navigation Company. They operated ferries for the state between the time the first Narrows Bridge collapsed and the second Narrows Bridge was constructed.

Lumber was one of the early industries in the area. The first mill in Gig Harbor started operating in 1887 on the west side of the harbor. A shingle mill was built near the first mill at the head of the bay around the early 1890s. Another mill was constructed by C. O. Austin in 1909.

Many early settlers engaged in diversified farming. Some agricultural operations became profitable businesses including production of apples, pears, or loganberries. Holly growing became another successful agricultural venture in the area. Chicken farming was successful during the 1920s but declined by the 1930s.

MIDWAY

Midway was named due to its midway location between Gig Harbor and Point Fosdick. A Midway School District No. 79 was formed in 1892. Originally it was a part of Artondale District No. 14, but became a separate school district with fifteen children. The school became a center of community-oriented activities.

POINT FOSDICK

Point Fosdick was named during the 1841 Wilkes Expedition. It was a federal military reservation used by the local Native American tribes of Nisqually, Puyallup, Yakima, and Cowlitz in the late 1800s. A long house was constructed which later became Berg's Landing. In the early 1890s, Charles L. Berg established a floating dock that served the "Mosquito Fleet," a fleet of steamers that transported freight and mail. Berg's Landing served as an automobile ferry dock until the second Narrows Bridge was built in 1950. Once forests were cleared, orchards, vegetable and berry production, and later, chicken farming became prevalent in the area.

PURDY

The area was named Purdy in the 1880s when Joseph Purdy, a grocery store owner from Tacoma, offered to provide lumber for a school if the area were named after him. Four men, including Joseph Purdy, constructed a mill in the area in 1885. The mill complex also included a post office, grocery store, and workers' housing. Mr. Ouelette, "the Frenchman," opened the first Oyster Company in the area around 1900 processing and canning the oysters from the land on the spit he owned. In the 1890s, a drawbridge was constructed across Henderson Bay at Purdy. In 1919, another bridge was provided. The present bridge was constructed in 1938. In the early 1900s, most settlers in the area were in diversified farming, including fruit, dairy, and poultry farming. Oysters and clams were also important products from Purdy from the early settlement period.

RAFT ISLAND

The Wilkes Expedition named the island "Allhouse Island" after Private Allhouse. Later, Raft Island was so named because from a distance the island appeared to some sailors be a floating raft. Raft Island was first settled by two men who claimed the entire island in 1889. The island was clearcut and logs were shipped out from the early settlement period of the 1880s. The second-growth timber was used for pilings, saw logs, and mine props in the 1920s. Large rafts of logs were harvested from throughout the Henderson Bay area, including the island, and were gathered to be shipped out through steamer transport. In the late 1920s, a Mr. Noble bought the entire island and used it as a hunting and recreational resort. Later, the portion of the land where Mr. Noble built a residential structure became the Catholic Church camp. Mr. Noble brought electric power to Raft Island. The bridge to Raft Island was built over the narrow, tidal channel on the south side. There are presently 190 families residing on the island. There are a private campground and three community beaches and parks.

ROSEDALE

Rosedale was named because of the wild roses growing in the area. In the early 1880s, the first school district and post office were established in the area. Logging and farming were the most prevalent activities engaged by early settlers. By the early 1910s, a small business district developed in the community which included two stores, two docks, a church, a public library, and schools.

WARREN

The first Euro-American settlement began in the late 1870s. A permanent dock was constructed in the early 1910s. Farming formed the economic base for the community at the beginning. In the late 1920s, local settlers constructed a road that connected Warren to Arletta and Horsehead Bay.

WOLLOCHET BAY

Some believe that the Indian name Wollochet means "cut throat." It was connected to the Native American legend about a young man who was discouraged that he could not marry the

woman of his choice and ended his life by cutting his throat. It is also speculated that it may be connected to another Native American word which means “squirting clams” of which plenty were found on the beach in the area. The Native Americans fished and sold the fish to the European-American settlers. They also traded woven baskets for clothing and other items. Early European-American settlers engaged in logging and farming. Orchards were common among homesteaders. Many chicken farms in the area had thousands of chickens per farm. Dogfish were caught and used as fertilizer.

PLANNING HISTORY

COUNTY PLANNING

1962 PIERCE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING

The first Pierce County Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted on April 2, 1962. The Pierce County Zoning Code, which implemented the Comprehensive Plan, was adopted on October 8, 1962. The 1962 Pierce County Comprehensive Plan designated the Gig Harbor Peninsula as "Suburban Residential." These rules followed very basic planning principles. Zoning districts were established that dictated the appropriate location for commercial business and residential homes. However, the Plan did not offer much protection from incompatible uses and did not recognize the unique individuality of communities. In May 1966, a Comprehensive Plan Study was completed for the Peninsula under Section 701 of the Federal Housing Act. This study served as a platform for planning efforts on the Peninsula in the early 1970s.

1975 GIG HARBOR PENINSULA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

In June 1975, the Gig Harbor Peninsula Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations were adopted by the Pierce County Board of Commissioners. The 1975 Gig Harbor Peninsula Comprehensive Plan included land in the Burley-Minter-Wauna area of northeastern Key Peninsula, in addition to the Gig Harbor Peninsula and Fox Island.

This was a very innovative plan and zoning program. It was based on the physical features of the Peninsula such as topography and aquifer recharge areas. Lands that contained environmental constraints such as steep slopes or wetlands were considered the most sensitive and received a designation of Natural Environment. Areas that were appropriate for residential land uses were designated the Residential Environment. Land that had very few physical impediments to development and was located near SR 16 received an Urban Environment designation. Generally, any land use was permitted in any zone classification provided the proposed development met minimum environmental standards and was compatible with adjacent uses. This zoning scheme was quite successful and remained in effect until January 1, 1995 when the new Pierce County Comprehensive Plan became effective.

BURLEY MINTER DRAINAGE BASIN WATER QUALITY PLAN

In January 1988, the Burley/Minter Drainage Basin Water Quality Plan was adopted. This plan was implemented through amendments to the Gig Harbor Peninsula Development Regulations and established a sensitive watershed environment in the Burley/Minter area. Due to ongoing contamination of shellfish beds, further restrictions were required including larger lot sizes, best management practices, and buffers on streams and waterways. In November 1978, these areas were also designated as environmentally sensitive areas pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

In 1989, the Gig Harbor Peninsula Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations were revised to create a rural-residential environment for Fox Island, which resulted in lower permitted densities of one dwelling unit per acre. In 1992, the rural-special environment was established to provide greater protection through lower densities and restricted uses to several rural valley areas. The 1992 amendments also modified the provisions for the rural environment to encourage greater preservation of natural features.

1994 PIERCE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In April 1990, the Growth Management Act (GMA) was passed by the Washington State Legislature. It required Pierce County to update its existing Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Regulations, including community plans. The GMA required Pierce County to develop and adopt a comprehensive plan which would control residential, commercial, and industrial growth. Thirteen goals are listed in GMA to guide policy development in six required elements. The required elements include land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, rural, and transportation. Pierce County also elected to include four additional elements: environment and critical areas, economic development, community plans, and essential public facilities. Each of the six GMA required elements must conform to specific standards set in the legislation. GMA required cities and counties to plan for growth based on population forecasts. Where growth is allowed, facilities and services must be planned and provided.

The Rural Element requirements in the originally adopted GMA contained very general standards. It stated that Counties shall include a rural element including lands that are not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest, or mineral resources. The Rural Element shall permit land uses that are compatible with the rural character of such lands and provide for a variety of rural densities. Rural areas must also be planned for and include preservation of open space, agricultural opportunities, recreational opportunities, and protection of natural resources.

In April 1991, Interim Growth Management Policies were adopted as a transition between the 1962 Comprehensive Plan and the more complex plan developed under the Growth Management Act. In June 1992, the Pierce County County-Wide Planning Policies were adopted. The policies provided the framework and process by which Pierce County and the cities and towns within the County would establish urban growth areas, provide infrastructure and services, and preserve agricultural and natural resource lands.

In November 1994, Pierce County adopted a new Comprehensive Plan. The 1994 Pierce County Comprehensive Plan replaced the 1962 Pierce County Comprehensive Plan in its entirety. The plan established population projections, urban growth areas, and rural areas. The 1994 Comprehensive Plan identified the portion of the plan area surrounding the City of Gig Harbor as an "urban growth area" and designated the remainder of the Peninsula and Fox Island as "rural." The 1975 Gig Harbor Peninsula Comprehensive Plan remained in effect as a component of the new Comprehensive Plan but many aspects of the 1975 Plan was not consistent with the Growth Management Act and the newly adopted County Comprehensive Plan. Consequently the 1975 plan policies were superseded by the new County-wide plan and implementing zoning regulations that became effective in July 1995.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Pierce County Comprehensive Plan policies located in the Community Plans Element address community autonomy, community character, new community plans, consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, consistency with the Development Regulations-Zoning, transition strategies, and joint planning agreements.

The Community Plans Element of the 1994 Pierce County Comprehensive Plan envisions a local voice in how the Comprehensive Plan and its Development Regulations will be carried out in communities. Community plans exemplify how the objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan play out when applied to detailed and specific conditions. They indicate specific land use designations, appropriate densities, and the design standards that should apply in community planning areas. Preserving and building community character while ensuring an efficient and predictable development approval process is a central theme. Community plans help citizens decide what they want to retain and what they want to change at the local level.

Although the Growth Management Act (GMA) does not require comprehensive plans to provide for community plans, Pierce County Ordinance 90-47S directs County officials to prepare a Community Plans Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The majority of unincorporated County population resides in community plan areas. The Community Plans Element spells out how to coordinate consistency between community plans and the Comprehensive Plan. Community plans must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the GMA. Flexibility exists only in the interpretation of how Comprehensive Plan policies apply in a given community or in areas where the Comprehensive Plan is silent on an issue or does not provide detailed guidance.

GIG HARBOR PENINSULA COMMUNITY PLANNING EFFORTS

The Pierce County Council passed Resolution R97-94 on August 12, 1997, requesting the Department of Planning and Land Services update the 1975 Gig Harbor Peninsula Comprehensive Plan. The resolution called for the Planning Department to combine the requirements of the Growth Management Act with the most successful provisions of the 1975 Gig Harbor Peninsula Comprehensive Plan. The updated community plan focuses on the Gig Harbor Peninsula and Fox Island. The Burley-Minter-Wauna area of the Key Peninsula, which

was under the jurisdiction of the 1975 Community Plan, is not within the jurisdiction of the updated plan.

Information regarding the plan update was distributed to various citizen groups in the spring of 1998 and the planning process started in August 1998. A Community Planning Board and various committees developed plan policies starting in the fall of 1998 through summer of 2000.

SCOPE OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY TO DEVELOP THE PLAN

In the Community Plans Element of the 1994 Pierce County Comprehensive Plan, the Gig Harbor Peninsula was identified as a community with an existing community plan that needs to be updated.

PURPOSE AND USE OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

The Gig Harbor Peninsula Community Plan will give residents, property owners, business people, and Pierce County government a detailed sense of how the community wants to develop in the future and what standards could be utilized to create and maintain the look and feel identified in the community plan. The Gig Harbor Peninsula Community Plan develops a vision for the entire Peninsula and Fox Island. In some circumstances, the plan refines the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan to more closely reflect the needs, concerns, and desires of the Peninsula residents. The plan also identifies actions necessary to implement the community plan, including adopting or revising land use regulations; identifying priorities for use of public funds to develop physical improvements such as sidewalks, street landscaping, street lights, water-related improvements, and park development; social programs; and economic programs.

VISIONS, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, PRINCIPLES, AND STANDARDS

VISIONS

Visioning is the process of defining the expectation of what the community could be in the future. Visioning is typically completed through a series of public meetings or workshops structured to allow the community to articulate hopes for the future. Statements, thoughts, and ideas brought forth in the visioning process become the basis for the visions, goals, objectives, and principles of the community plan.

Vision statements can be either: 1) broad - painting a picture of what the community should strive to be like, physically and socially; or 2) focused - to express how the concerns, values, and hopes of the community should be reflected in various topics.