
Chapter 1: Introduction

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN AREA

The Key Peninsula is located in western Pierce County and surrounded by marine waters on three sides. The northern boundary of the Key Peninsula is adjacent to Kitsap County and the northwestern boundary is adjacent to Mason County. The Gig Harbor Peninsula is located to the east of the plan area across the Purdy Bridge. Herron Island is within the community plan boundary and is located off of the Peninsula’s western shoreline in Case Inlet.

The plan area is approximately 60 square miles and is designated for rural and resource land uses under the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan. The community plan does not contain an urban area as defined by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). There are many small, distinct communities located throughout the Key Peninsula with seven of these areas recognized as rural commercial centers. Most residents of the Key Peninsula identify themselves as coming from one of these small rural commercial locations.



The Key Peninsula is characterized by a variety of rural land uses on large lots. Residential home sites, agricultural lands, and forest lands dominate the land use pattern. Several recreational campgrounds including two state parks are located along the extensive marine shorelines that surround the Peninsula. State Route 302 (SR 302) crosses through the northern portion of the community. Several of the small commercial areas are located along this state highway. Additional commercial areas are located south of SR 302 at Key Center, Home, and Longbranch. The topography of the Peninsula is considered rolling with no prominent hill tops. The small bays and inlets are generally considered low bank waterfront and most are improved with residential homes. Other areas of the Peninsula that are more exposed to the weather and winter storms have high banks and marine bluffs. There are several small lakes, wetlands, and numerous streams. Many of the larger streams support salmon runs.

DEMOGRAPHICS

GROWTH RATE AND POPULATION FORECAST

The population of the Key Peninsula continues to increase. The total population of the Key Peninsula was 11,016 in 1990. The population had increased by 3,952 citizens to a total of 14,968 in the year 2000. This amounts to an annual average growth rate of 3.1%. According to the Puget Sound Regional Council census tract estimates, the population of the Key Peninsula grew to 16,721 in 2006.

Population forecasting is an inexact science. For example, the population allocation of 16,369 for the year 2022 as adopted by the Pierce County Council under Ordinance 2003-104s has

already been surpassed. Many assumptions are used in forecast models in an attempt to predict what the population will be in the future. The population increase of 1,753 on the Key Peninsula between 2000 and 2006 is consistent with new residential construction activity. The following table describes residential building permits issued on the Key Peninsula between 2001 and 2005. If new residential permit trends continue at an average of 200 annually, the population of the Key Peninsula may approach 25,000 by the year 2025.

Residential Building Permits Trends	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Key Peninsula Community Plan Area	140	149	183	229	265

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics for the plan area were compiled from information contained within the year 2000 census survey. Census tracts 725.03, 726.01, 726.02, and 726.03 were used to derive the demographic information. Census tract 726.03 contains Anderson Island as well as the southern Key Peninsula.

Most residents of the Key Peninsula own their homes. Only 15% of Peninsula residents are renters. One interesting housing fact about the Key Peninsula is that it has a much higher (15% of total housing) rate of seasonal occupancy than other parts of Pierce County. This rate is coming down however, as many of the historical vacation homes are turning into permanent residences.

The Key Peninsula’s population is fairly educated with 28% of the citizens having a college degree. The median house hold income was \$49,194 in the year 2000 which was higher than the Pierce County average of \$45,200.

EARLY HISTORY OF KEY PENINSULA

The Key Peninsula was part of the territory Native Americans traditionally used for camping, fishing, hunting, and gathering for many centuries before Europeans came. People of the Squaxin Island and Nisqually Tribes fished in the streams and the Puget Sound, dug shellfish, gathered resources including berry fruits, vegetables, and other local foods, and hunted in the peninsulas forests and valleys. They navigated the local waters using canoes. In addition, a number of trails were used to traverse the area and connect water bodies surrounding the Peninsula with islands and the mainland.

Salmon was the most important food resource. In addition to salmon, oysters, clams, camas roots, berries, nettles and roots provided supplemental food resources. Winter food was prepared through drying, smoking and other preservation methods.

No permanent Native American village sites have been identified on the Key Peninsula. Various shell middens have been unearthed along the shorelines of the Key Peninsula and numerous temporary fishing and habitation sites were located near the streams and bays and were well known among early settlers. These sites were utilized by Native Americans for camping, fishing, and digging shellfish.

In 1792, Lieutenant Peter Puget working for British Captain George Vancouver surveyed the body of water named after him later. An American naval expedition under Captain Charles Wilkes surveyed the south Puget Sound area in 1841. Wilkes' survey included the water bodies, bays, inlets, etc. around the Key Peninsula. Carr Inlet, Case Inlet, and Drayton Passage were named after members of the Wilkes' survey crew.

Some of the early regular interactions between the local Native Americans and Europeans took place at the Hudson's Bay Company's trading post established in the 1830s north of the Nisqually delta near the present-day city of DuPont. Some local Native Americans were hired to work for the Hudson's Bay Company. Some Hudson's Bay Company employees married the local Native American women and started families. Descendants from several of these unions still reside in the area. Even after the Indian War of 1855-56, some remaining Native Americans in the area traded baskets, fish, or dugout canoes for articles of clothing, tobacco and other provisions.

Europeans started to arrive in Key Peninsula in the 1830s. A few former mountain men who had been engaged in fur trapping and trade in Canada came and settled down in the area. They were able to survive in the wilderness through their simple way of life, ability to live off of the land and familiarity with the local Native American dialects and trading languages.

More settlers started to come into the Key Peninsula after the U.S. Congress adopted the Donation Land law in 1850 which encouraged people to emigrate west and establish Homesteads. Charles Taylor, a Scotsman who decided to jump from a British ship due to harsh conditions on board, is considered the first permanent settler on the Peninsula. He started his residency at Taylor Bay in 1852. He married a local Nisqually Indian woman. William D. Vaughn arrived in the Peninsula in the same year.

The Key Peninsula was originally called Longbranch Peninsula based on the maps of the Wilkes Expedition. In the 1930s, Key Peninsula was officially adopted as the name of the Peninsula. A contest was sponsored to select a new official name for the Peninsula in 1931 by the business community. The entry "Key Peninsula" (based on the shape of the Peninsula) was submitted by Ed M. Stone of Lakebay who won the prize.

EARLY COMMUNITIES

MINTER

Minter was settled by George Minter and family in 1882. He established his homestead near the stream bearing his name. A school and post office were established in the mid-1880's. The first postmaster was Mrs. Lucinda Minter. The community was renamed Elgin in 1892. Logging and homesteading of early days were gradually replaced by farming and aquaculture. The fish hatchery on Minter Creek was established in the 1930s.

HOME

Home was a unique community. The settlement in Home started in 1896 on 26 acres of land on Von Geldern Cove purchased by George Allen, O.A. Verity, and L. F. O'Dell. These three men

came from a failed experimental industrial cooperative colony, Glennis, located near Clear Lake in Pierce County. Two years later, these men founded the Mutual Home Association to attract people to live in the Home colony. The Home plat of 217 acres was filed in 1909.

Residents were allowed to explore a variety of lifestyles, political issues, and philosophies.

Home attracted a variety of non-conformists, free thinkers, activists, and writers, including

anarchists and socialists. A school, store, and community building were erected. Special events such as musicals, lectures, and dances were held regularly in the community building called Liberty Hall. Another community building called Harmony Hall was constructed and held dances and other social events. An orchestra and musical band were organized. A baseball team was organized in Home. Baseball games were held regularly on Sunday on the community ball field. A legal dispute arose among the members when some became unhappy about the amendments made to the articles of incorporation of the Mutual Home Association which enabled the association to privatize some lands within the Home colony. In September 1919, the court ordered the Mutual Home Association be dissolved. After dissolution, the residents were able to buy the plot of land they had been leasing and life in Home continued normally. In the 1920s a poultry business prospered in Key Peninsula. Home had a cooperative that exported eggs to urban markets including Seattle. Home was designated to the Pierce County Register of Historic Places in 1990 as a historic district. Dadisman House and Home School are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



HERRON

Herron's first settler was John Jensen. The place was named after Lewis Herron who made barrels for storage of food for the Wilkes Expedition. A post office was established in 1894 for the community with the name of Blanchard. The name Herron was brought back in 1913. The area produced a variety of fruits including prunes, apples, grapes, plums, cherries, pears, crab apples, and quinces. Herron became especially well known for prune production. Fruits were dried in a prune orchard dryer. Fruit production eventually declined due to competition from fruits grown in eastern Washington.

GLEN COVE

Glen Cove started as a logging camp. Several families came and settled in the area then known as Balch's Cove in the late 1880s. A post office was established in 1891. The name of the community was changed from Balch to Glencove by the postal authorities in 1896. A brickyard was established by Nick Petersen and Harry Winchester on the cove in the 1880s. Stores, a school, and post office were located at the bay. Glencove Hotel, a three-story Victorian-style building, was built by Nicholas and Agnes Petersen and opened in 1897. The hotel is still standing and is available as a bed and breakfast facility and to rent for special events such as weddings, parties, etc. The Glencove Hotel is listed in the Pierce County and National Registers

of Historic Places. In the vicinity, YMCA Camp Seymour was established in 1905 on land donated by Mr. Seymour. A wide variety of summer activities continue to be offered there.

LAKEBAY

Lake Bay's earliest settlers were William Creviston and his wife who settled in the area in 1871. Carl Lorenz established a saw mill in 1877. A school opened in 1878. Recognizing the need for steamboat transportation for people, freight, including logs and farm produce, and mail, Carl Lorenz and his sons launched a major steamboat business from Lake Bay in the 1880s. This early establishment of saw mill and steamboat businesses made Lorenz and Lake Bay well known throughout the early communities on Puget Sound.



The Lorenz family operated the steamboat business with a number of steamboats in their fleet for more than four decades. A brick yard was operated in the 1880s. Henry Tiedman established the post office at Lake Bay in 1882. In 1894, postal authorities changed the name of the community into one word, Lakebay. A store and a hotel were also established. In the 1920s when poultry businesses prospered on the Key Peninsula, Lakebay had an agricultural cooperative that exported eggs to urban markets.

LONGBRANCH

Longbranch was named and platted in 1890 as a summer resort by Edward Yeazell. The place was originally called Long Branch and was named after a resort community in New Jersey. The name was changed to one word in 1894. Due to its isolation and inaccessibility, Yeazell's resort venture was never realized. A post office was established in 1891 and Ernest E. Shellgren was its first postmaster. Logging was the main industry in the beginning. Small farms were established on cleared land and businesses developed in the area. Fertilizer plants and a blacksmith shop were among the local businesses. William Sipple and Henry and Franz Mahncke had large land holdings in the area and were prominent early citizens. William Sipple operated a ship building business and constructed a variety of boats as well as houses. He built a lighthouse on Filucy Bay in 1915 which became a familiar landmark. The lighthouse burned in 1971 and was never rebuilt.

PURDY

Purdy was established by Joseph Purdy in the 1880s. Tabor A. Sherman was the first postmaster. A town site was platted and a lumber mill was established on the waterfront. The timbers used in the construction of the wooden dock at the Bremerton Naval Shipyard were from the mill in Purdy. Lumber milling business declined when an economic depression hit in 1893. Starting in the 1900s the community engaged mostly in agriculture. The first Purdy bridge near Wauna was constructed in 1892, the second in 1919, and a third in 1938 connecting Gig Harbor Peninsula with Key Peninsula. The first bridge was a wooden draw bridge. The second turnstile bridge was moved from the Puyallup River. Draw or swing bridges allowed tug

boats tugging boomed logs to mills enter the lagoons. These bridges also shortened the trips for transport of farm produce from Kitsap and Mason Counties to Tacoma. The third bridge was constructed of box girder type.

WAUNA

Wauna, near Purdy, was platted in 1889. A post office was established in 1890. Soon, it became a commercial center owing to its long wharf and deep moorage bringing regular steamboat traffic. The waterfront store and lounge for steamboat customers served as a social gathering place. Logging and brush camps, ranching, and tree farms comprised the economic activities around the 1900s. The community later established a reputation as a summer resort. Due to a wide array of recreational opportunities including swimming, clam digging, boating, and fishing, many families from urban areas came to Wauna during the summer months. The Wauna Post Office and Store located on the sand spit was continually operated by the White and Goldman families for nearly nine decades. When the Wauna Post Office relocated to the Lake Kathryn location, the old Wauna Post Office and Store property was sold to Pierce County and became a park site. It was designated to Pierce County Register of Historic Places in 1990. Deteriorated conditions of the building continued to pose safety and aesthetics problems. The property was de-listed from the historic register and demolished in 2006.

VAUGHN

Vaughn's settlement began with the arrival of William Vaughn in 1852. He engaged in logging and established a homestead. Additional families arrived in the area and established homesteads by the 1880s. A post office was established in 1888 and its first postmaster was Mrs. Alice A. Hunt. Shingle and saw mills were established on the shoreline. Harvested logs were shipped out from the Vaughn Bay. An oyster business was established in Vaughn in the late 1890s by Mr. Rodman and Mr. Fox. First, Eastern oysters were cultivated. Later, Willapa and Japanese oysters were introduced to the area. A few families built the first schoolhouse in 1886. Community events were held in the school building. The Vaughn Bay Public Library Association was formed in 1891 which led to building the Library Hall in 1893 on the land donated by the Van Slyke family. A variety of community activities including dances were held in the Library Hall until it closed in 1958.

KEY CENTER

Key Center's earliest settler was Andrew Olson who arrived in the area in the 1880s and homesteaded. A few additional families including the Palmer, Powell, and Pollack families settled in the area. In the 1930s, A. E. Visell Lumber Company, C. D. Hipp Grocery Store, and Gene Brown's Garage comprised a business center at the intersection of today's Key Peninsula Highway and Olson and Cramer Road KPN. In 1931, the business community on the Key Peninsula led by A. E. Visell sponsored a contest to select an official name for the Peninsula. Ed M. Stone of Lakebay won the \$25 prize with his entry, "Key Peninsula." Stone thought the shape of the Peninsula resembled a key. Soon, the business center became known as "Key Center" because it was located in the center of the Peninsula.

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 Key Peninsula as “Rural 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 NE corner of the Peninsula east of 134th Avenue 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 the northeastern Key Peninsula, as well as 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 302 and 94th Avenue, SR 302 and 118th Avenue, and Key Peninsula Highway and 134th Avenue 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 a new Pierce County Comprehensive Plan was adopted pursuant to the 1990 Washington State Growth Act.

BURLEY MINTER DRAINAGE BASIN WATER QUALITY PLAN

In January 1988, the Burley/Minter Drainage Basin Water Quality Plan was adopted. This plan established a sensitive watershed environment in the Burley Lagoon and Minter Creek areas. Due to contamination of shellfish beds in Burley Lagoon and Minter Bay, development restrictions including larger lot sizes, best management practices, and buffers on streams and waterways were established. In November 1978, these areas were also designated as environmentally sensitive areas pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

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 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 Countywide 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 Key Peninsula as a “rural” area.

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 the 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.

SCOPE OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY TO DEVELOP THE PLAN

In the Community Plans Element of the 1994 Pierce County Comprehensive Plan, the Key Peninsula was identified as a community in need of a community plan. The Pierce County Council passed Resolution R2003-42s on May 27, 2003 requesting the Department of Planning and Land Services begin the development of a community plan for the Key Peninsula.

PURPOSE AND USE OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

The Key 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. 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 roads and sidewalks, landscaping and streetlighting, park and recreation development; 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.