

For Immediate Release — November 23, 2004

Contact: Josh Peters
Senior Planner, Long-Range Planning
Jefferson County Department of Community Development
(360) 379-4466 or jpeters@co.jefferson.wa.us

Board of Jefferson County Commissioners Holds Public Hearing on the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update

Port Townsend, WA—The Board of County Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket, Monday, December 6, 2004 at 2 p.m. in the Commissioners' Chambers in the basement of the Jefferson County Courthouse.

This includes proposed amendments intended to fulfill the Growth Management Act requirements for reviewing, and updating as necessary, Jefferson County's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations in the year 2004.

Four proposed amendments will include the following: 1) Goals, policies and development regulations associated with the Jefferson County International Airport (file numbers MLA03-232 and MLA03-244); 2) Proposed amendments to the map of Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations to add to the set of designated Agricultural Lands (a subset of Resource Lands) (MLA04-27); 3) County staff response to mandated "2004 Update" (Part A of MLA04-28); 4) Planning Commission five-year assessment and corresponding Comprehensive Plan amendment proposal (Part B of MLA04-28).

"We encourage the public to become familiar with the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations," said Al Scalf, director for the County Department of Community Development. "DCD staff and the Jefferson County Planning Commission have reviewed the proposed amendments and made recommendations based upon public input throughout the fall. DCD staff is available to answer any questions people may have on any aspect of the suggested amendments and people are encouraged to comment."

As part of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), Jefferson County must review and, if needed, revise its comprehensive plan and development regulations to ensure they're in compliance with GMA. This includes review of "Best Available Science" (BAS) for establishing protections for environmentally critical areas. Several components in MLA04-28 address critical areas that the public should be aware of.

The channel migration zone adjustment maps all historical zones of the four major rivers in Jefferson County: the Dosewalips, Duckabush, Big Quilcene and Little Quilcene. This is based upon the rivers' change in flow over time. The zones determine setbacks in conjunction with the Fish and Wildlife buffers. This affects building setbacks near streams and wetlands. Based on water quality protection, vegetated buffers of 50-100 feet would be established to protect shorelines in Jefferson County. Currently those buffers have 30-foot setbacks.

This year's Docket involves the first major update of the Comprehensive Plan since adoption, and since Jefferson County isn't required to do another update for seven years, this is an important opportunity for the public to offer comment.

Applications for the proposed amendments, the Integrated Staff Report and SEPA Addendum, Planning Commission and staff recommendations, as well as the adopted existing environmental documents and other related information are posted on the Jefferson County website. Easy access is provided from the homepage: www.co.jefferson.wa.us. These are also available directly from the DCD office in anticipation of the BOCC public hearing on December 6. There will be review copies of the Staff Report at the DCD office.

The County's Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1998 after eight years of community effort and debate. The Plan is a set of guidelines in the form of goals, policies and strategies to give growth and development both context and direction, aimed at promoting the best environmental, social and economic future for Jefferson County citizens. Although the Plan has been amended each year after its adoption, this is the first time the Plan will be thoroughly updated to reflect where we are now, six years later.

For more information, contact Josh Peters at (360) 379-4466 or via e-mail at jpeters@co.jefferson.wa.us.

###