

**For Immediate Release** — February 22, 2006

Contact: Brent Butler  
Long Range Planning, Department of Community Development  
Jefferson County  
(360) 379-4464 or [bbutler@co.jefferson.wa.us](mailto:bbutler@co.jefferson.wa.us)

### **City and County Partner to Develop Housing Needs Assessment**

**Port Townsend, WA**—The City of Port Townsend and Jefferson County have partnered to conduct a Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment, with the City as the lead agency. In December 2005, the Beckwith Consulting Group was hired to develop strategies that may be implemented by the two governments, local housing providers, non-profits and private entities.

“This is a great opportunity for us to get input from various representatives from the community with a concern about affordable housing,” said Brent Butler, Long-Range Planner for Jefferson County’s Department of Community Development and the County’s lead on the project. “Builders, realtors, housing interest groups and mortgage bankers are detailing what they see as constraints to provide affordable housing for our local work force such as teachers, government clerks and administrative employees.”

A Housing Needs Assessment Advisory Group has been formed, pooling representatives from the afore-mentioned stakeholders. The group will assist City and County staff and Beckwith Consulting Group in identifying strategies to retain and promote affordable housing.

Beckwith Consulting Group is leading this effort by assessing existing housing supply conditions through these focus groups. This includes determining housing/employment activity and capacity, conducting surveys with builders, brokers, lenders and sponsor groups, and then reviewing the demand and needs with the Advisory Group.

“We’ll be conducting a public workshop in March to identify apparent problems and opportunities, as well as to brainstorm possible solutions,” said Judy Surber, Long Range Planner for the City of Port Townsend and project manager. “In April, we’ll take our findings to Jefferson County residents with public forums in Quilcene/Brinnon, Port Ludlow, the Tri-Area and Port Townsend to get additional thoughts and comments.”

With input assembled from all aspects of the community concerned with affordable housing needs, the consulting firm and Advisory Group will present an action plan to the Planning Commissions, City Council and Board of County Commissioners for their adoption by mid-summer 2006. Funding for the project was provided through an Affordable Housing Grant.

For more information about the Housing Needs Assessment, contact Judy Surber at 379-5084 or Brent Butler at 379.4464.

###