

ISLAND COUNTY

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2024-2028

Updated as of
June 21, 2024



Questions or comments?

Email: ceds@edcislандcounty.org



City of
Langley Washington



This project was generously funded by Island County, the Town of Coupeville, and the Cities of Langley and Oak Harbor.



City of
Langley Washington



The development of the Island County CEDS 2024-2028 was generously funded by Island County, the Town of Coupeville, and the Cities of Langley and Oak Harbor. The Economic Development Council (EDC) for Island County was selected to oversee the project and manage the contracted consultant. The project was managed and the report was written and prepared by Jennifer Noveck, Ph.D. **Questions or comments? Email ceds@edcislandcounty.org**

The entire process overseen by the CEDS Review Committee, and informed by broad stakeholder engagement within the community throughout the process.

Island County CEDS Review Committee 2024-2028

Karen Bishop, Former Conservation District Manager and Ebey Road Farm

Kelli Bragg, Camano Island Library Manager, Sno-Isle Libraries

Bristol Carter, Project Manager, EDC for Island County

Michael Clyburn, Clinton Community Council

Joshua Engelbrecht, Associate Planner, Town of Coupeville

Darren Greeno, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Skagit Valley College

Patricia Griffin, Project Manager, EDC for Island County

Jackie Henderson, Councilmember, Town of Coupeville + Tourism Committee Chair

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A CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development and is the result of a locally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide economic prosperity and resiliency in the region.

1. Introduction

In April 2023, the Island County Board of Commissioners (BOCC) voted to cost-share the development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Island County with the Town of Coupeville, and the Cities of Langley and Oak Harbor. The Economic Development Council (EDC) for Island County was selected to oversee the project and manage the contracted consultant. The EDC was chosen as it is the only countywide economic development organization in Island County and the EDC is also the associate development organization (ADO), a Washington State Department of Commerce designation, for Island County. This is the first time that Island County has developed a CEDS document or undertaken a countywide economic development strategy. The purpose in completing this process is to promote a more efficient, stable, programmatic approach to development in Island County and to fulfill Economic Development Administration (EDA) requirements in order to access funding opportunities.

2. CEDS Purpose, Process, and Review Committee

According to the EDA (2023), a CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development and is the result of a locally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide economic prosperity and resiliency in the region. The purpose of a CEDS document is threefold. First, having an active and up to date CEDS provides Island County, and all of the public agencies within it, with the opportunity to access EDA funding opportunities for infrastructure, workforce development, and resiliency. These are relatively large pools of funding for critically needed projects. Second, having a strategy allows development in Island County to be more programmatic and less ad hoc. Finally, the CEDS leverages existing strategies and plans, while also increasing alignment between them.

The CEDS cycle begins with the EDA, which issues guidance. The EDA engages with federal stakeholders and identifies strategic investment priorities. Each region has a local representative that public agencies, such as the County, work with on an array of programs and funding opportunities, including CEDS planning.

The EDA provides content guidelines for preparing a CEDS but also allows the flexibility for a CEDS to emphasize strategies or issues important to a region as long as the process and outcomes do not conflict with the guidelines. As neither Island County nor any other jurisdiction within the county received EDA funding to

prepare the CEDS, nor is Island County part of an EDA-designated economic development district (EDD), this CEDS document is considered an “alternative CEDS” and a “non-EDA funded CEDS.”

One requirement of the EDA for all CEDS is that a Review Committee be developed in order to advise and inform the process and the document. Island County CEDS Review Committee was created in May 2023 and held eight meetings over the 14-month planning period (April 2023 – June 2024), in which they provided extensive input and feedback to every aspect of CEDS report. This included but was not limited to review committee composition, SWOT survey questions, SWOT results and identified priorities and opportunities, sectors of focus, key stakeholders for targeted outreach. The Review Committee was also provided input and feedback to the vision, goals, sub-goals, action plan, evaluation framework, resiliency planning, public comments and resulting edits, as well as multiple drafts of the full document.

The 2024-2028 report development was led by the EDC. The project was managed and report was written by Jennifer Noveck, Ph.D. The entire process overseen by the CEDS Review Committee, and informed by broad stakeholder engagement within the community throughout the process. The Review Committee included representatives from Island County, the Town of Coupeville, the Cities of Langley and Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI), Clinton Community Council, Washington State University (WSU) Extension Island County, Skagit Valley College (SVC), Sno-Isle Libraries (Camano Island Branch), Island Transit, Camano Chamber of Commerce, Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce, and the EDC.

3. SWOT Analysis

Broad stakeholder engagement is another requirement of the CEDS process and as such extensive stakeholder engagement was conducted among Island County residents, businesses, and nonprofits via a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) survey and in-depth one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders.

SWOT analyses are often used as a strategic planning assessment tool, by private, public and nonprofit actors. According to the [EDA \(2024\)](#), a SWOT analysis is “a strategic planning tool used by organizations to ensure that there is a clear objective informed by a comprehensive understanding of a region’s capabilities and capacity.”

4. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement ran from May 1, 2023 through May 17, 2024 and involved:

- A public SWOT survey that was open from May 1 – October 23, 2023, resulting in 181 responses
- Targeted stakeholder outreach to over 300 businesses and nonprofits that occurred from August – November 2023, resulting in 81 interviews (30 to 60 minutes each)

- Soliciting input and feedback from public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders on sector and jurisdictional SWOT analyses, vision, goals, sub-goals, strategic priorities, and the action plan
- A 30-day public comment period running from April to May 2024

Additional information on the stakeholder process, including SWOT results, interviews, and the public comment period can be found in **Section 2: SWOT Analysis and Asset Mapping** and the **Appendices**.

5. Priorities and Opportunities Identified

Drawing on the regional SWOT results, the industry-level SWOTs, and extensive stakeholder engagement, including over 80 key stakeholder interviews, several high priority issues currently affecting business and economic development Island County were identified:

A lack of social and economic infrastructure including

- Available, affordable, quality housing
- Available, affordable, quality childcare
- Wages inconsistent with the cost of living and inflation
- Labor shortages in multiple sectors

A lack of physical infrastructure including

- All utilities, but in particular sewer, water, and internet
- Lack of redundancies for critical infrastructure
- Lack of industry-specific infrastructure (e.g. food processing, licensed available slaughter)
- Unreliable and inconsistent ferry service

In addition to identifying economic, physical, and social infrastructure needs, stakeholders consistently expressed their desire to protect the environment and natural beauty of Island County. These concerns ranged from shorelines and sea level rise to the broader impacts of climate change and tourism on the islands to everyday conservation of Whidbey and Camano Island's natural environment. The SWOT clearly demonstrates that the public believes that Island County's biggest asset is its geographic location and natural beauty. It is important to note this key consensus, as climate resilience is directly related to economic resilience.

6. Vision

The CEDS External Review Committee envisions a robust and diverse economy that leverages existing community assets; establishes, upgrades, and maintains resilient critical infrastructure; supports business and workforce vitality; sustainably manages natural resources; promotes equity and inclusivity; and increases resident quality of life.

7. Island County CEDS Goals 2024-2028



1. Improve and develop resilient critical infrastructure.



2. Support existing local businesses and community assets, increase diversification, and promote Island County as an attractive business environment.



3. Align quality education and skills training programs with employer needs and create living wage job opportunities in Island County.



4. Sustainably manage the natural beauty and resources of Island County.



5. Deepen collaboration and coordination between Island County and regional partners.

For every CEDS goal, there are multiple sub-goals and an associated action items. For details, see **Section 3: Action Plan**.

Evaluation Plan

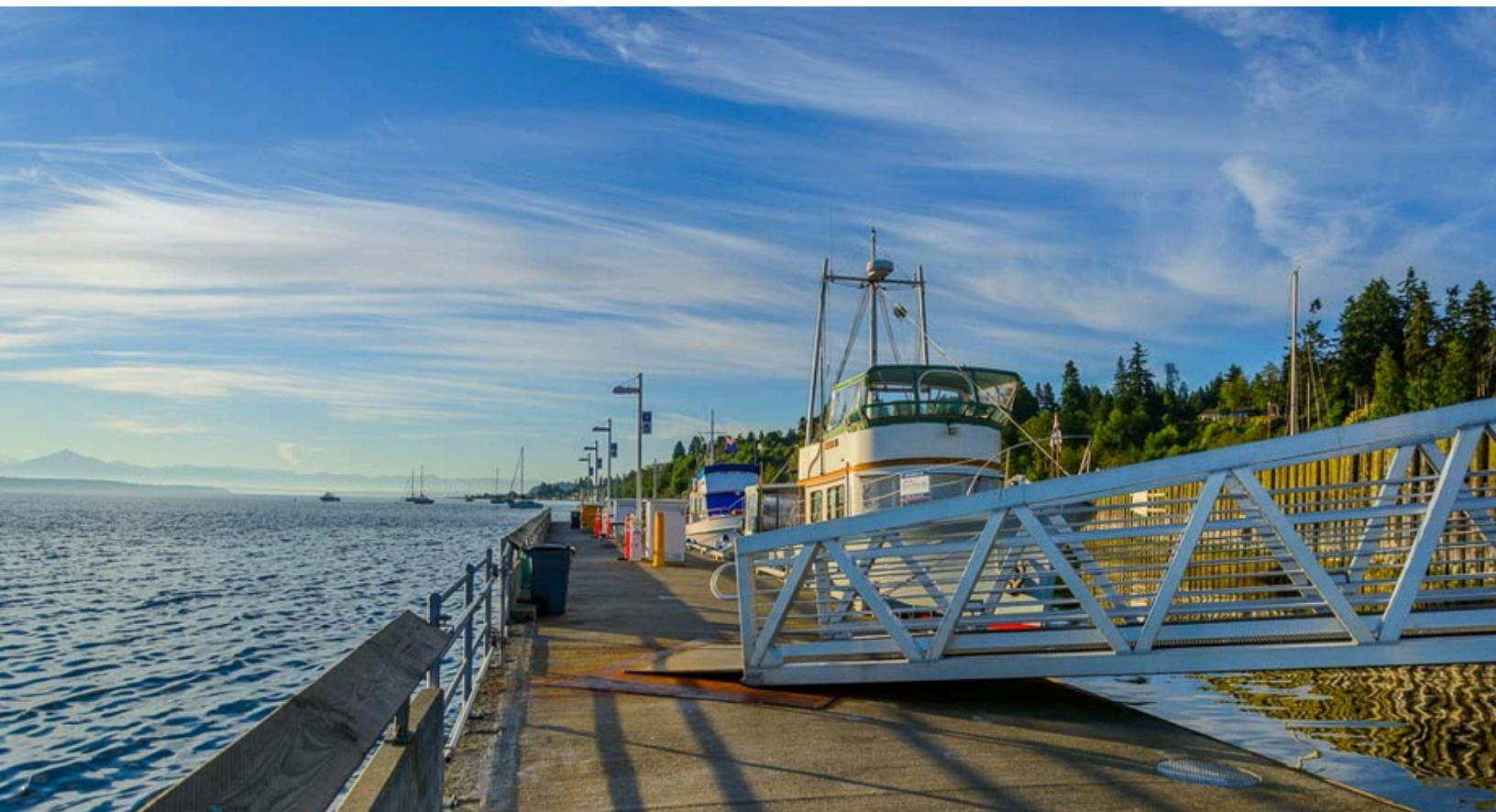
Island County intends to fund a third party responsible for evaluation monitoring and generating an annual progress report for all partners using Rural County Economic Development (RCED) funds. The third party will be responsible for coordinating an annual Review Committee meeting as well as maintaining a quarterly review schedule to meet with responsible partners and collaborators regularly.

On a quarterly basis, the evaluator will meet with relevant partners to discuss progress on the goals they are responsible for. Quarterly meetings can also be used to identify ongoing gaps, additional partners, funding, and so on, related to the specific goal or sub-goal. The evaluator will also coordinate with relevant established committees (e.g. Transportation, Tourism, Broadband, etc.) and will be responsible for updating the CEDS Project List annually and on an as needed emergency basis.

For additional detail on every section, please see the full plan below.



Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve. Photo courtesy of [Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands](#).



South Whidbey Harbor at Langley. Photo courtesy of [Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands](#).

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1. Introduction

In April 2023, the Island County Board of Commissioners (BOCC) voted to cost-share the development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Island County with the Town of Coupeville, and the Cities of Langley and Oak Harbor. The Economic Development Council (EDC) for Island County was selected to oversee the project and manage the contracted consultant. The EDC was chosen as it is the only countywide economic development organization in Island County and the EDC is also the associate development organization (ADO), a Washington State Department of Commerce designation, for Island County. This is the first time that Island County has developed a CEDS document or undertaken a countywide economic development strategy. The purpose in completing this process is to promote a more efficient, stable, programmatic approach to development in Island County and to fulfill Economic Development Administration (EDA) requirements in order to access funding opportunities.

2. CEDS Purpose, Process, and Review Committee

According to the EDA (2023), a CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development and is the result of a locally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide economic prosperity and resiliency in the region. The purpose of a CEDS document is threefold. First, having an active and up to date CEDS provides Island County, and all of the public agencies within it, with the opportunity to access EDA funding opportunities for infrastructure, workforce development, and resiliency. These are relatively large pools of funding for critically needed projects. Second, having a strategy allows development in Island County to be more programmatic and less ad hoc. Finally, the CEDS leverages existing strategies and plans, while also increasing alignment between them.

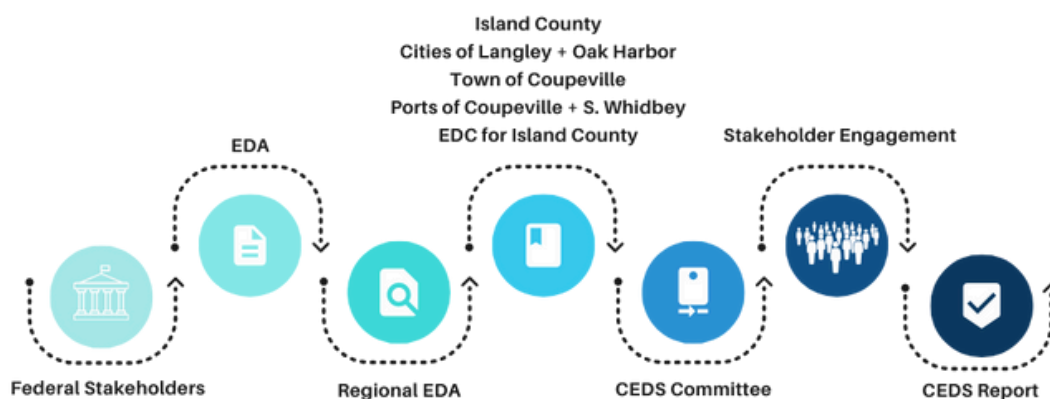


Figure 1: The CEDS Cycle and Stakeholder Engagement Process.

Figure 1 above illustrates the CEDS cycle and stakeholder engagement process. The CEDS cycle begins with the EDA, which issues guidance. The EDA engages with federal stakeholders and identifies strategic investment priorities. Each region has a local representative that public agencies, such as the County, work with on an array of programs and funding opportunities, including CEDS planning.

The EDA provides content guidelines for preparing a CEDS but also allows the flexibility for a CEDS to emphasize strategies or issues important to a region as long as the process and outcomes do not conflict with the guidelines. As neither Island County nor any other jurisdiction within the county received EDA funding to prepare the CEDS, nor is Island County part of an EDA-designated economic development district (EDD), this CEDS document is considered an “alternative CEDS” and a “non-EDA funded CEDS.”

While a CEDS report must be updated every five years to remain eligible to compete for EDA funding, a county is not mandated to do so if it does not plan to seek funds in any given year, or if it does not wish to have an overall economic development strategy. However, many states, including Washington, require counties to have an approved strategy in order to be eligible for certain funding programs that support local economic development. Island County could also eventually require that projects be linked to the CEDS goals and priorities for its own Rural County Economic Development (RCED) fund applications. There are also many other federal funders who either require projects be part of a regional strategy or who award more points to project applications that are a part of a regional strategy. Having a CEDS, therefore, provides Island County with many potential financial benefits and economic development opportunities.

One requirement of the EDA for all CEDS is that a Review Committee be developed in order to advise and inform the process and the document. Island County CEDS Review Committee was created in May 2023 and held eight meetings over the 14-month planning period (April 2023 – June 2024), in which they provided extensive input and feedback to the every aspect of CEDS report. Broad stakeholder engagement is another requirement of the CEDS process and as such extensive stakeholder engagement was conducted among Island County residents, businesses, and nonprofits via a SWOT survey and in-depth one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders.

The development of the 2024-2028 report was led by the EDC. The project was managed and report drafted by Jennifer Noveck, Ph.D. The entire process was overseen by the CEDS External Review Committee, and informed by broad stakeholder engagement within the community throughout the process. The Review Committee included representatives from Island County, Town of Coupeville, Cities of Langley and Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI), Clinton Community Council, Washington State University (WSU) Extension Island County, Skagit Valley College (SVC), Sno-Isle Libraries (Camano Island Branch), Island Transit, Camano Chamber of Commerce, Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce, and the EDC for Island County.

Recognizing the vital importance of Island County's economic and geographic connections to Skagit and Snohomish Counties, the Review Committee also included leadership from the Economic Alliance for Snohomish County (EASC) and the Economic Development Alliance for Skagit County (EDASC). Review committee members are listed below.

Island County CEDS 2024-2028 Review Committee

Karen Bishop, Former Conservation District Manager and Ebey Road Farm

Kelli Bragg, Camano Island Library Manager, Sno-Isle Libraries

Bristol Carter, Project Manager, EDC for Island County

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Brian Tyhuis, Community Planning and Liaison Officer, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island

Former Island County CEDS 2024-2028 Review Committee Members

Magi Aguilar, Former Executive Director, Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce³

Garry Clark, Former Executive Director, Economic Alliance of Snohomish County⁴

Donna Keeler, Former Planning Director, Town of Coupeville⁵

Steve McCaslin, Economic Development Coordinator, City of Oak Harbor⁶

Todd Morrow, Former Executive Director, Island Transit⁷

Mark Rentfrow, Former City Administrator, City of Langley⁸

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1+2 Alternate when Executive Director cannot attend.

3 A member of the Review Committee from May 1, 2023 - May 31, 2024.

4 A member of the Review Committee from June 1 - December 31, 2023.

5 A member of the Review Committee from May 1 - October 21, 2023.

6 A member of the Review Committee from May 1, 2023 - March 1, 2024.

7 A member of the Review Committee from May 1, 2023 - May 31, 2024.

8 A member of the Review Committee from September 1 - December 31, 2023.

The CEDS Review Committee met eight times June 2023 – May 2024. The Review Committee reviewed and provided detail feedback and input on all parts of the CEDS planning process, including but not limited to: committee composition, SWOT survey, SWOT results and identified opportunities, sectors of focus, stakeholder outreach. They also provided input and feedback on the vision, goals, sub-goals, action plan, evaluation framework, resiliency planning, public comments and resulting edits, and reviewed multiple drafts of the full document.

Broad stakeholder engagement ran from May 1, 2023 through May 17, 2024 and involved:

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- A 30-day public comment period running from April to May 2024

Additional information on the stakeholder process, including SWOT results, interviews, and the public comment period can be found in **Appendices 6.2-5** and **6.7**.

As part of the planning process, the consultant met with the EDA's Seattle Regional Office (SRO) representative, reviewed CEDS best practices, and identified multiple relevant examples of CEDS in other communities in Washington and the United States. Local reports, strategies, plans, and other relevant documents that were consulted for this report can be found in **Appendix 6.6**.

### 3. Geography

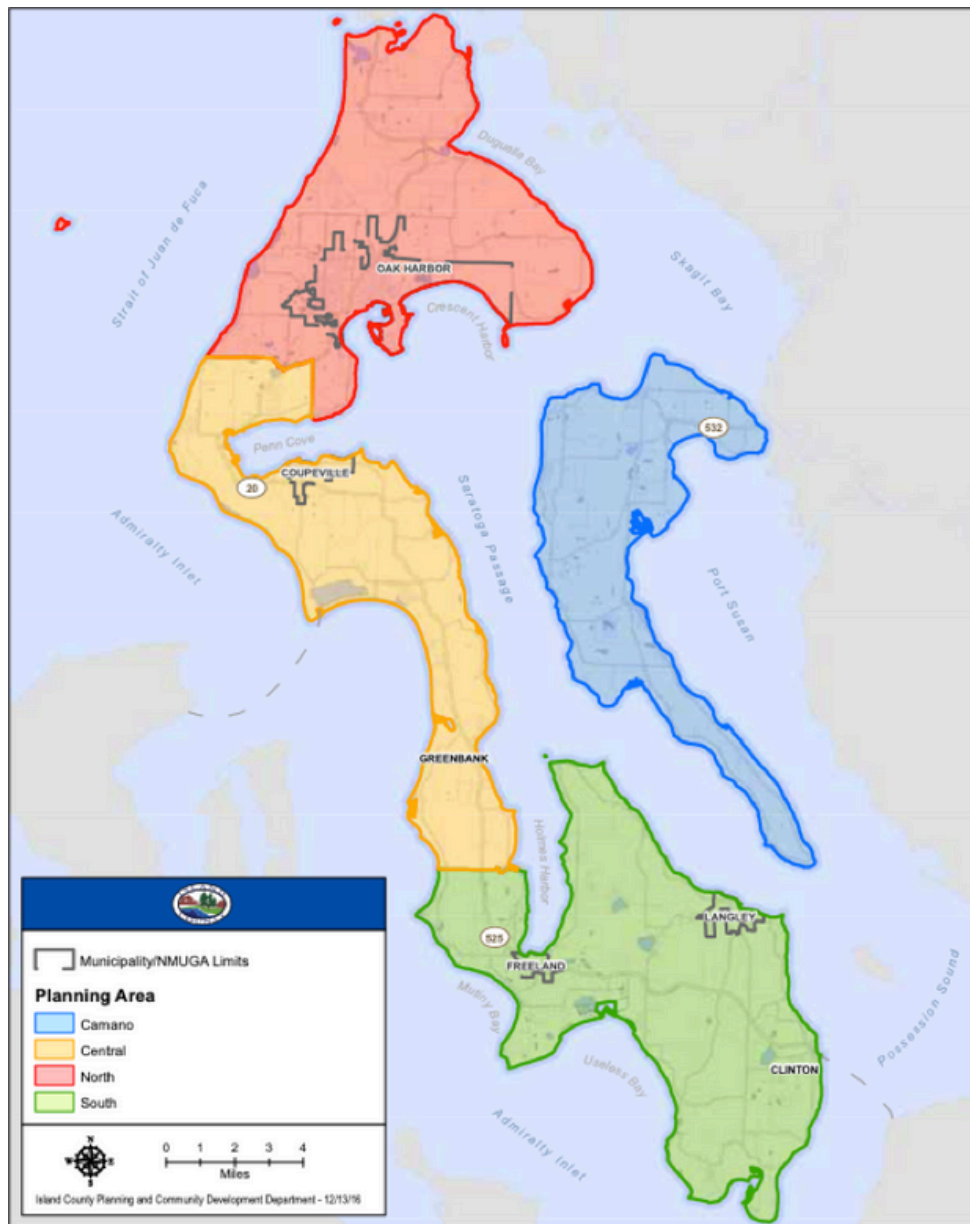
Island County is on the land of the Upper Skagit, Tulalip, dxws"qw"bš (Suquamish), and sduhubš (Snohomish) tribes and people past and present.<sup>9</sup> The county is entirely comprised of islands. The settled islands of Island County include Camano and Whidbey Islands. County jurisdiction also includes the small islands of Ben Ure, Smith, Deception, Strawberry, Baby, Minor, and Kalamut. Island County shares borders with Skagit and Snohomish Counties to north and east and the San Juan Islands and the Olympic Peninsula are to the west. Island County has a total land area of 208 square miles, making it the second smallest county in the state of Washington.

According to the Island County's Comprehensive Plan (2016), which will be updated by June 30, 2025, rural zoning is the largest zoning classification in Island County and 33% of rurally zoned land is undeveloped. As shown in **Figure 2**, there are four planning areas in Island County, which is also useful when considering regional economic, demographic, and environmental characteristics: Camano Island, North Whidbey, Central Whidbey, and South Whidbey.

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<sup>9</sup> Drawn from Native Land Digital, a mapping tool. The tool notes in its disclaimer that it does not represent or intend to represent official or legal boundaries of any Indigenous nations. To learn about definitive boundaries, contact the nations in question.





**Figure 2:** This map shows the four county planning areas, which are also Census Sub- Divisions. Camano Island is shown in blue, North Whidbey in red, Central Whidbey in yellow, and South Whidbey in green (Island County Planning and Community Development 2016).

There are two incorporated cities and one incorporated town (or urban growth areas) (UGAs) in Island County: the cities of Langley and Oak Harbor and the Town of Coupeville. There is one designated Non-Municipal Urban Growth Areas (NMUGAs), Freeland, as well as multiple Rural Areas of More Intense Development (RAIDs).

NMUGAs are areas where urban growth “will be encouraged and supported with urban levels of service, but are not incorporated.” RAIDs “permit the infill, development or redevelopment of preexisting rural communities outside of UGAs at a greater density than typical rural development” (Comprehensive Plan 2016, p. 6).

### 4. Infrastructure

Decaying or insufficient infrastructure is Island County's biggest challenge and Island County's biggest opportunity, according to public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders at the local, county, state, and federal level.

In particular, ensuring access to potable water, addressing aging septic systems, expanding sewage services, improving access to high-speed internet, reducing car traffic, and increasing the reliability of the ferry would greatly enhance economic resiliency and opportunities for development in Island County. The utilities and transportation sectors create living wage jobs in Island County, so investments have the added benefit of spurring job growth.

#### **Water**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designates Island County as a sole source aquifer system. This means that the majority of Island County, including Camano Island and unincorporated Whidbey Island, is reliant upon groundwater as a potable water source. The entire county is part of the Island County Watershed or Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 6.

The majority of the potable water infrastructure in Island County is privately owned property. The notable exceptions are the municipal systems owned and operated by the Cities of Langley and Oak Harbor and the Town of Coupeville. The City of Oak Harbor operates the largest municipal water system in the county. The water is primarily sourced from Anacortes (via the Skagit River) through two pipelines. The City of Oak Harbor owns the pipelines and uses this source to supply the city and NASWI.

Accordingly, there are two options to acquire water in Island County. Users can connect to an existing water system (only available within Coupeville, Langley, and Oak Harbor UGAs) or use a permit-exempt well if the project meets the limits under Washington State law. In addition to the fact it is a sole source aquifer, Washington State Department of Ecology (2023, p. 2) notes that surface water closures, precipitation levels, and seawater intrusion may impact availability of water in Island County.

Developed shorelines and peninsular regions of Island County have been experiencing seawater intrusion (and thus potentially salinization of the water supply) for many years (Comprehensive Plan 2016, p.17-23). Island County has therefore proactively managed its water resources, including its groundwater resources, for which it has developed resource evaluation and management policies. This includes agency review of any project in Island County that involves Island County groundwater resources. The GMA also has a water adequacy requirement for building permits and subdivisions.

Additionally, much of South Whidbey and Camano Island populations are supplied potable water by local water districts, systems, or wells. According to Camano Water Association (2023), they are one of more than 300 water systems on Camano Island. In addition to associations, according to the Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts (WASWD) (2023) there are 19 official Sewer and Water Districts in Island County, which serve an estimated 13.8% of population water, and 2.2% with sewer services. Well construction and permitting is monitored and governed by the

Washington State Department of Ecology's Well Construction and Licensing Office. Ecology also maintains a mapping database, which logs water wells, resource protection wells, decommissioned wells, as well as multiple other well types.

Island County's Drinking Water program oversees and coordinates well and water systems review and approval for individual and public water systems, which includes wells serving only one single family residence, or two residences on the same property, as well as Group B (<15 connections, <25 people per day) public water systems. Group A (>=15 connections, >=25 per day for 60 or more days per year) systems are regulated by Washington State Department of Health.

In terms of protecting water as natural resource, the county collects, monitors, and analyzes multiple sources of water quality data, which is available for the public to access at the Island County Hydrogeology Dashboard. This is where data related to water quality and level are housed in order to monitor trends in groundwater quality, availability, as well as to estimate future groundwater capacity. Expanding efforts to survey water systems infrastructure is another opportunity for sustainable groundwater management. The Island County Public Health Board has a Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC), which can be activated at the Board's discretion and as their expertise is needed.

### ***Sewer and Septic Systems***

While most new development within UGAs is required to be served by public sewer and water, approximately 72% of Island County residents use an onsite sewage (septic) system (Island County On-Site Sewage Program 2023). Exceptions occur in NMUGAS where constraints can support granting waivers to allow private wells and septic systems (Comprehensive Plan 2016, p. 55). Island County has an Onsite Sewage System program, which provides education, advisory, and permitting services for owners of septic systems and septic professionals.

There is concern that many homes in Island County have aging or decaying septic systems. In 2007, Island County implemented the Homeowner Septic Training (HOST) program, which allows those who are not adjacent to a marine shoreline with simply gravity systems to become certified to inspect their own septic. The State Health Code requires annual inspection of all systems with a pump, and every three-years inspection of gravity only systems. Island County Public Health is currently developing a plan to push educational materials and videos out to property owners to further the understanding of the serious risks involved with septic systems that have aged beyond their designed lifespan.

Three potential opportunities to allay reliance upon private septic came up in SWOT results and stakeholder interviews. One opportunity is to plan for a sewer installation in Freeland, which is the County's only NMUGA and currently has a Public Water and Sewer District, which has the authority to annex and create Utility Local Improvement Districts (ULIDs). The second option is a sewer installation in Clinton. Clinton is quite similar to Freeland in terms of land use and has potential as a gateway, but also lacks a sewer installation and has been experiencing problems with aging septic systems, stormwater management, and slope stability (Comprehensive Plan 2016, p. 34). Although Clinton is a RAID, the County has previously identified it as being a location to potentially designate

as a NMUGA, which would set the stage for sewer system development. This option is controversial and lacks support in South Whidbey. It also does not have the full approval of the current Clinton Community Council.

Finally, there is also opportunity to incentivize alternatives to single family systems, include LOSS and Step Systems that support density and reduce risk of pollution in unincorporated Island County. The comprehensive wastewater study, which is currently underway, will outline opportunities to expand sustainable solutions. Overall, expanding access to potable water and sewage facilities are major opportunities and challenges for Island County moving forward.

### ***Energy***

Washington State's Energy Strategy (2020) was enacted into law in 2020 and was designed to provide a roadmap for meeting the state's greenhouse gas emission limits. The law commits the state to limits of 45% below 1990 levels by 2030, 70% below 1990 levels by 2040, and 95% below 1990 levels with net zero emissions by 2050 (p.15). The 2020 Strategy and 2023 Biennial Report outline strategies and metrics for transportation, buildings, electricity, and industry. For electricity, which accounts for 16% of the state's emissions, the law requires electricity to be 100% clean by 2030 and by 2050 providers are required to roughly double reliable output.

Whidbey and Camano Island residents and businesses get their power from two sources: Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and Snohomish County Public Utility District (SNOPUD). Whidbey Island gets electrical service from PSE, whereas Camano Island is served by SNOPUD. PSE serves approximately 37,000 commercial and residential locations on Whidbey Island and operates and maintains approximately 600 miles of overhead facilities and 500 miles of underground cables. SNOPUD operates and maintains 203.5 miles of overhead and 99.89 miles of underground cables on Camano Island.

Washington's Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) was passed in May 2019 and committed Washington State to have an electricity supply free of greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. In response, PSE (2021) and the SNOPUD (2021) have developed Clean Energy Implementation Plans (CEIP), which provide a four-year roadmap to guide their investments and clean energy priorities for 2022-2025. For PSE, the plan includes a goal to have coal-free electricity by 2025, with 63% of electric supply being sourced from renewable or non-emitting resources, to be carbon neutral by 2030, and by 2045 to have 100% clean electricity. PSE also has updated its clean energy milestones in its Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) and 10-year Clean Energy Action Plan (CEAP).

Because SNOPUD's current portfolio does not include any carbon emitting sources, they have already met the requirement to have clean electricity. Their CEIP (2022) sets an energy efficiency target and is focused on acquiring conservation, demand response, and energy storage. The SNOPUD's IRP (2021) similarly outlines these goals.

In terms of the fuel mix that is used to generate electricity, PSE and SNOPUD have a different mix of fuel sources, found in **Table 1** below.



| Fuel Type      | PSE | SNOPUD |
|----------------|-----|--------|
| Coal           | 23% | 0%     |
| Hydroelectric  | 27% | 74.6%  |
| Natural gas    | 23% | 0%     |
| Nuclear        | <1% | 9.4%*  |
| Other**        | <1% | 0%     |
| Solar          | <1% | 3.3%   |
| Unspecified*** | 10% | 3.5%   |
| Wind           | 16% | 8.2%   |

**Table 1:** Electricity Fuel Mix for PSE (2022) and SNOPUD (2022).

\*Provided by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

\*\*Other includes biomass non-biogenic, and petroleum.

\*\*\*According to the Fuel Mix Disclosure, "If the utility does not know the source of some electricity, it must label that portion as 'unspecified source.'"

The details of this energy transition are important to pay attention for many reasons, but especially as Island Transit transitions to zero emissions and many residents and businesses acquire electric vehicles. Island County will require additional charging station infrastructure to accommodate these changes, which will also ultimately put additional pressure on PSE and SNOPUD's existing electrical grids.

Both utility providers have completed several projects in recent years to improve service to Island County customers. For example, in 2016 PSE completed its Maxwellton substation to provide backup power to its Langley substation. This project also included installing additional distribution lines and rebuilding an existing transmission line (PSE 2015). Between 2007-2019, PSE's vegetation management crews trimmed and removed trees along 129 miles of transmission lines across Whidbey Island, as fallen trees and tree limbs were historically the main cause of power outages on the island (PSE 2023).

To increase reliability in Stanwood and Camano Island, the SNOPUD built a new double bank substation. Twin City Substation, which was completed in 2022, replaced the now decommissioned North Stanwood Substation. They also plan to rebuild the North Camano Substation by 2025 (SNOPUD 2023).

Continued improved reliability and reduction of outage hours, as well as reducing the number of consumers impacted by each outage, are goals of both utility providers and critical to economic development in Island County.

### **Internet**

The Washington State Broadband Office (WSBO) was established by the Washington State Legislature in 2022 and was tasked with promoting access, achieving minimum download/upload speeds for businesses, residents, and communities. It is the goal of the state of Washington that:

- By 2024: 25/3 megabits per second (Mbps) scalable to all residences and businesses
- By 2026: 1/1 gigabit per second (Gbps) for all anchor institutions
- By 2028: 150/150 Mbps for all residents and businesses

Additionally, WSBO is currently leading a state planning process to develop a Five-Year Action

Plan and State Digital Equity Plan. The [Internet for All Initiative \(2023\)](#) is intended to create reliable, high-speed internet across the state, ensuring that people not only have internet access, but the tools and skills required to take advantage of the benefits of connectivity and inclusion.

Island County's Broadband Action Team, coordinated by the Island County Commissioners and led by Island County Commissioner Janet St. Clair (District No. 3), have identified and outlined under and unserved areas of the county in Island County's Broadband and Digital Equity Local Action Plan (2023).

According to the Local Action Plan (2023, p. 6) there are 8,829 unserved entities in Island County, mostly in rural, unincorporated areas. About 50% of Camano Island is served at 100/20 Mbps or above. Whidbey Island is 93% served (Local Action Plan 2023 p.9-10). Unserved areas in Island County typically fall along the coastline. Unserved areas include central Whidbey in rural areas outside of Coupeville to Fort Ebey State Park, parts of north Whidbey, north Camano (Gateway), and south Camano. The middle of Whidbey Island struggles with service and while only three percent are completely unserved, 33% are underserved. The Plan (2023, p.10) also notes that some data sets suggest there are more significant underserved areas in south Camano Island than previously assessed. Hard-to-serve underserved areas are usually neighborhoods of 20-plus homes served by aging copper or coax or end-of-street outages due to the limitations of the infrastructure and the capacity of the network architecture.

NASWI is only ten percent served through commercial carriers and remaining on-base infrastructure is owned and managed by the Department of Defense. This technology is separate from, and not accessible to, local civilian infrastructure.

The plan also notes constraints to future broadband development in Island County, which include the combination of difficult topography, isolated locations, and prohibitive costs. Many areas are heavily treed, making terrestrial and wireless service difficult. In more rural areas with lower population densities, these geographic challenges make most service delivery cost prohibitive (Local Action Plan 2023, p. 10).

Internet connectivity and improved reliability and speed are major challenges that limit growth, particularly on some parts of Camano and South Whidbey. Therefore, increasing the reliability and resiliency of internet infrastructure is a major opportunity and priority for Island County. This is especially true given the increase of remote and hybrid work options, as well as the increasing needs of businesses, residents, schools, hospitals, and emergency services, all of which rely upon the internet to conduct large portions of their business and activities.

### ***Transportation***

Island County can be accessed via State Route 20 over Deception Pass, State Route 532 to Camano or the Washington State Ferries (WSF) system via the [Mukilteo-Clinton](#) and the [Port Townsend-Coupeville](#) ferry routes. State Route 525 highway serves Mukilteo and becomes the terminus of SR 526 before taking its ferry route to Clinton on Whidbey Island. SR 525 traverses

Whidbey Island's interior.

Island County has unique transportation challenges. This is in part due to being environmentally fragile islands, and in part due to being two disconnected islands. For example, in order to travel between Whidbey and Camano Islands, without personal water or aircraft, the options are to take the Clinton-Mukilteo Ferry from Whidbey and travel through Snohomish County to get to Camano or drive north and cross the Deception Pass Bridge, then travel through Skagit and Snohomish Counties to get to Camano. It takes a minimum of 90 minutes to travel less than five miles.

Currently the Mukilteo-Clinton ferry has two boats (Suquamish and Tokitae; both vehicle and passenger ferries that allow a maximum of 144 vehicles). The Port Townsend-Coupeville route has just one boat (Salish; a vehicle and passenger ferry that allows a maximum of 64 vehicles). All three are propelled by diesel. Both routes have experienced decreased reliability since 2020. In 2020, 96.1% of Mukilteo-Clinton ferries and 96.4% of Port Townsend-Coupeville ferries were on time. In 2022 that dropped to 92.7% and 90.6% on time (WSDOT 2023). Combined with a general reduction in the numbers of ferries per day, decreased reliability is presenting a major challenge to businesses and residents in Island County, especially those located in South Whidbey Island.

Island County founded the Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO) in 2016, which carries out joint transportation efforts by Island County, municipalities, ports, Island Transit, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and major employers. Additional transportation related issues identified by the IRTPO and in Island Access 2045 are issues with off ferry speeds, bridge speeds, and traffic flow at every ingress and egress point.

Island Transit serves Whidbey and Camano Islands. Island Transit is the business name for the Island County Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA), and it is a municipal corporation. The PTBA is authorized by RCW 36.57A and is a separate governmental entity from Island County. Island Transit's Transit Development Plan (TDP) identifies how the agency has and will meet local and state long range priorities for public transportation through capital improvements, operating changes, and other programs. The plan also addresses how to fund such programs. The TDP aligns with Washington's transportation system goals (RCW 47.04.280), and supports regional and local comprehensive planning and economic objectives within Island County.

Recent federal and state funding allocations and bills provide tremendous opportunities for Island County's transportation infrastructure. At the federal level, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), provides unprecedented levels funding for infrastructure. The Move Ahead Washington State investment package also provides historic levels of state funding. Both provide funding for local transit agencies, such as Island Transit. Developing transportation infrastructure capacity is therefore a major opportunity in Island County.

### ***Blue Economy Infrastructure***

Given its island geography, Island County has both rural and marine characteristics. The county has two port districts: The Port of Coupeville (POC) and the Port of South Whidbey (POSW). In Washington State, port commissions establish long-term strategies for a port district, including creating policies to guide development, growth, and operations of the port. A port district's primary goal is economic development and family wage jobs that encourage prosperity throughout the port's district (WPPA About Our Ports 2023). Therefore, port districts are unique and special economic actors in the Washington State economy.

The Port of Coupeville's district boundaries range from the north side of Penn Cove, wraps around the west side of Penn Cove, encompasses all of Coupeville, and extends south through Greenbank South past Classic Road, just north of Freeland. The POC manages and maintains the Greenbank Farm and the Coupeville Wharf, which is currently undergoing a rehabilitation project. It is currently in the planning and permitting phase of a broadband project, which is projected to bring broadband to 1043 homes in Central Whidbey. Details of these and other POC projects can be found in their updated Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements and Strategic Plan for 2010-2026.

The Port of South Whidbey's district covers from south of Classic Road, including Freeland, Clinton, and Langley. The POSW owns and maintains several facilities, including the South Whidbey Harbor in Langley (a marina), the Whidbey Island Fairgrounds and Events Center, the associated Fairgrounds Campground, the Humphrey Road Ferry Parking Lot, the Bush Point Boat Ramp, Possession Beach Waterfront Park, and Clinton Beach Park, Pier and Dock. They are also considering an affordable workforce housing project as part of its plan for improvements to the Whidbey Island Fairgrounds and Events Center. More details can be found at their recently updated Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements for 2023.

Additionally, there are several marinas in Island County. Near Deception Pass, there are two marinas in Cornet Bay, Deception Pass Marina, which is privately owned, and Cornet Bay Marina, which is operated by Deception Pass State Park.

Oak Harbor Marina is the largest marina in Island County. 77% of the tenants are from Island County, including 49% percent from Oak Harbor. The City of Oak Harbor currently has a marina improvement project to redevelop a boat repair and storage facility and to dredge the marina, which they believe will increase revenue and jobs via increased dry boat storage and improved repair and maintenance services. This will ultimately make Oak Harbor Marina a full service marina. The City of Oak Harbor was awarded a \$675,000 RCED grant and is in the process of purchasing the Mariner's Haven property and full service boatyard. The city contributed an additional \$75,000 to the project. The last time the marina was dredged was 2010-2011, when 20,000 cubic yards of material were removed for \$2,750,000 (City of Oak Harbor RCED Grant Presentation 2023).



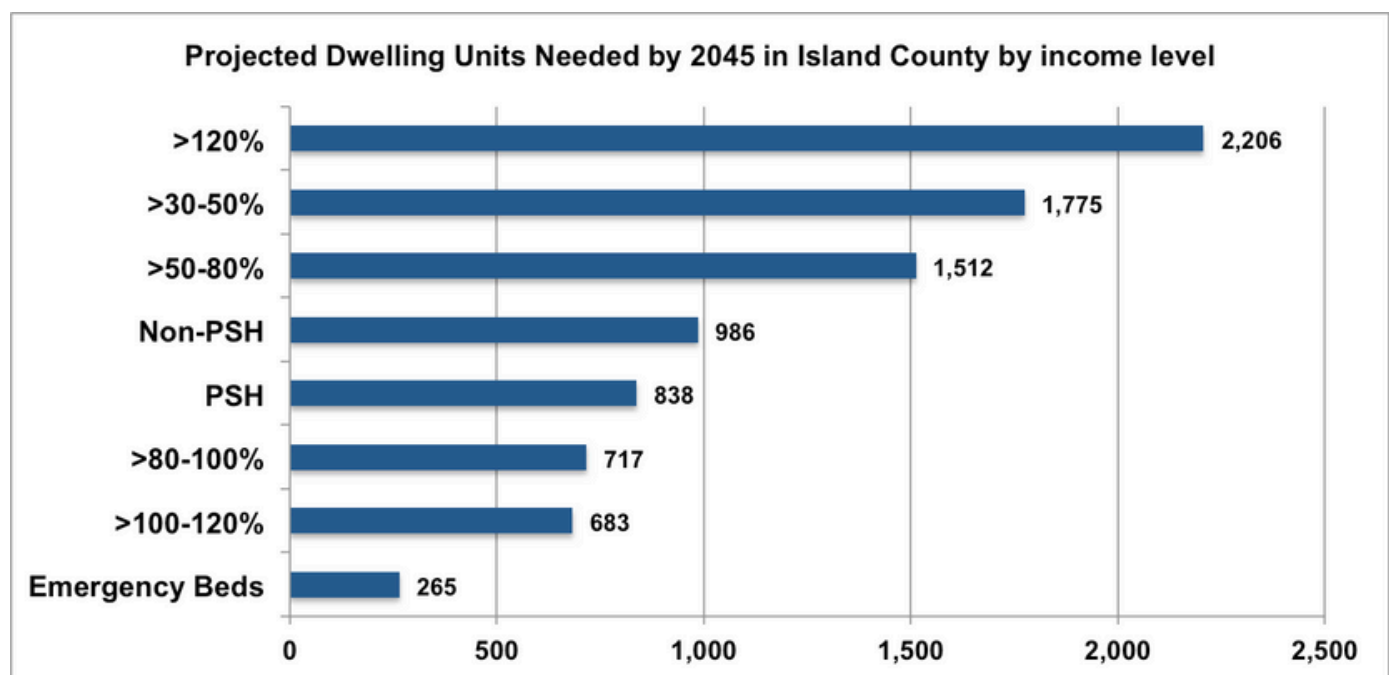
### Housing

Washington State estimates that 1.1 million new homes need to be built in the next 20 years ([WA Department of Commerce 2023](#)). [House Bill 1220 \(HB 1220\)](#) amends the GMA housing goal to “plan and accommodate” housing affordable to all income levels. HB 1220 directs the Department of Commerce to provide existing and future housing needs for communities in Washington, including units for moderate, low, very low and extremely low-income households, and for emergency housing, emergency shelters and permanent supportive housing (PSH).

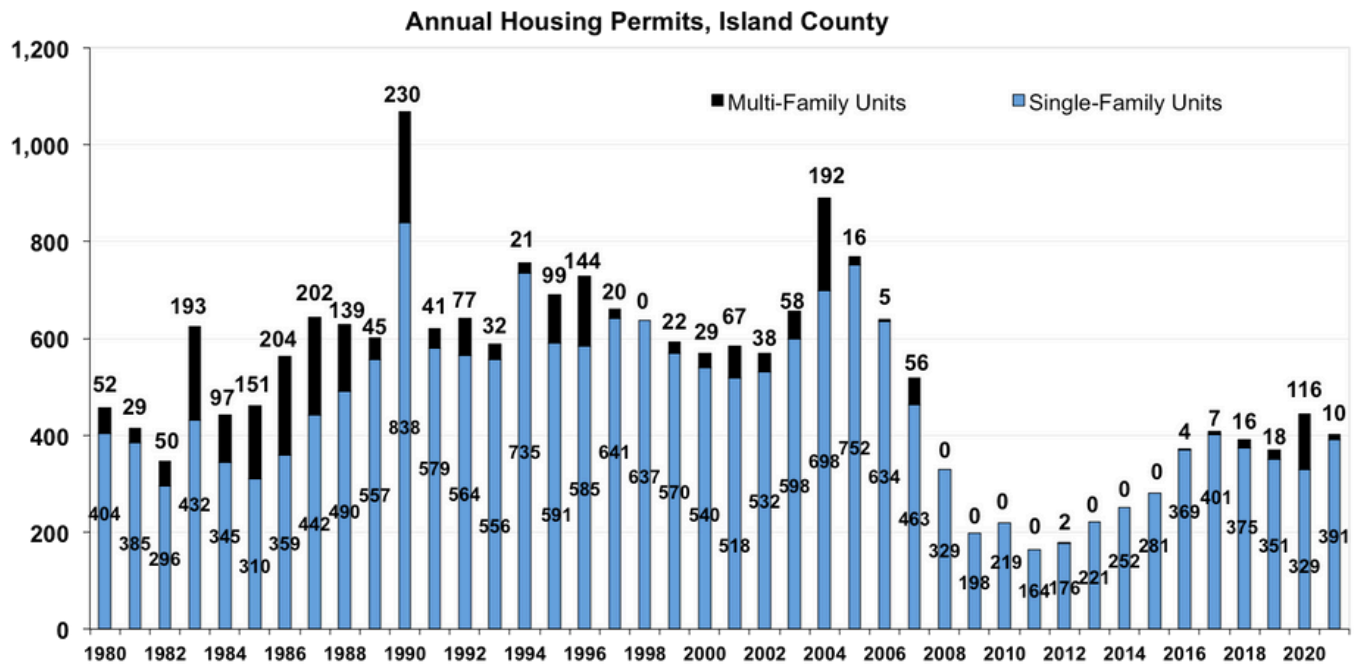
The housing availability crisis in Island County is acute. In terms of availability, according to the [2020 Census](#), 41,922 housing units were counted in Island County. The Census Bureau (2018–2022) estimated that 73.2% of housing units were owner occupied, which is higher than 63.6% owner occupation in Washington State.

The Washington State Department of Commerce’s [Housing All Planning Tool \(HAPT\)](#) indicates that a total of 8,717 housing units will need to be built within the 2025 – 2045 planning period in Island County. This is based on 2045 population projection adopted by the [Island County Board of County Commissioners in Resolution C-85-23, PLG-011-23](#). This requires building an average of 435 housing units per year, distributed across the four Island County jurisdictions.

Additionally, homes must be built to accommodate all income levels and thus must be affordable to various income levels. **Figure 3** below breaks down the distribution of homes needed in the next 20 years based on income bracket, according to the HAPT tool.



**Figure 3:** The breakdown of total housing needed by 2045 in Island County. PSH stands for permanently supportive housing units. Emergency beds is a count of the emergency beds needed to fulfill emergency shelter demand, whereas all other categories is a count of the dwelling units (Washington State Department of Commerce, March 2023).



**Figure 4:** This bar chart shows Annual Housing permits in Island County from 1980 – 2021, broken down by single family units permitted and multifamily units permitted (Census Bureau 2022).

According to **Figure 4**, which illustrates Census Bureau (2022) data on the number of units permitted 1980–2021, the year with the most permits issued in Island County was 1990, with 838 single family units permitted, and 230 multifamily units permitted. The next highest number of permits per year was 2004, which saw 698 single-family units permitted, and 192 multifamily units permitted.

Starting in 2005 the number of permits issued annually declines to its lowest point in 2011, when only 164 single-family units were permitted and zero multifamily units. In fact, between 2008–2015, only two multifamily units were permitted in all of Island County. Since 2016, 181 multifamily units have been permitted, however 116, or 64%, of those permits were issued in 2020 alone.

Affordability is also an issue. The real estate market in Island County, like the rest of Northwest Washington, has experienced significant increases in prices coupled with low vacancy rates and product availability. For example, in September 2023 88 homes were sold. This is down from 141 homes in September 2022, a decrease of 37.6% ([Redfin Market Insights 2023](#)). In September 2018, the median sale price for a home in Island County was \$364,500. In January 2020, right before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the price had dropped to \$340,000. However, the price has grown tremendously each year since 2020. By January 2021, the median sale price was up to \$442,000. The highest price in the last five years occurred in August 2023, when the price hit \$660,000 (16.8% year-over-year growth). The median sale price current stands at just below this high at \$652,500, which is still a 16.9% increase year-over-year.

As cost has increased, the number of days on the market for many homes has decreased. This was particularly acute during the COVID-19 pandemic. From August 2020 to July 2022, the median number of days a house was on the market in Island County did not exceed 10 days in any month.

As of September 2023, the median days on the market was up to 23, which is five more days than September 2022 ([Redfin Market Insights 2023](#)).

### **Childcare**

As with housing, the childcare crisis is a national issue that is impacted by affordability, availability, as well as worker and funding shortages. On September 30, 2023, one third or 70,000 of America's childcare programs that were supported by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, lost ARPA funding. [The Century Foundation \(2023\)](#) issued a report titled "Childcare Cliff: 3.2 Million Children Likely to Lose Spots with End of Federal Funds." This report predicts that many programs will close and more than three million children will lose their childcare spots. The childcare workforce was deeply impacted by the pandemic and is also expected to lose another 232,000 jobs if the Century Foundation's predictions are true.

According to their findings, if this happens and more parents are forced to leave their jobs, the loss in tax and business revenue will cost states an additional \$10.6 billion in lost economic activity. Additionally, parents will lose \$9 billion in earnings annually across the United States.

In 2021, Island County's Child Care Partnership Task Force came together to assess the state of childcare in Island County and to make recommendations that would improve access, affordability, and quality. The key findings of the [needs assessment](#) included that 4,299 children under the age of six have working parents with no access to childcare but would likely use it if available. Of the 4,299 children without childcare, 1,460 were infants and toddlers. In 2021 there were only 124 childcare slots available for that age group in all of Island County. Additionally 88% of the children eligible for Head Start do not have slots available to them. In order to meet childcare demand in Island County, the report estimated that 460 additional educators would need to be hired, not including administrative or support staff (June 2021 Recommendations, p. 2).

## **5. Economic Conditions and Statistical Description**

### **Population demographics**

As of July 1, 2023, Island County's population was estimated to be 86,267. In 2010, the population was 78,506, meaning that there was approximately a 9.88% increase in population ([Census 2023](#)). Of that population 10,943 are veterans ([EDC Island County Demographics Report 2023](#)). Island County therefore has the highest number of veterans per capita of any county in Washington State at 17.3%, which is more than double the national average of 6.9%.

Twenty-eight percent or 24,403 of Island County's population reside in Oak Harbor and approximately 68% (59,280) of the population lives in unincorporated areas. Camano Island, which is unincorporated, is home to an estimated 17,073 people (Census 2023). **Figure 5**, below, shows population density by census tract in Island County.



**Figure 5:** This map shows Island County’s population density by census tract. Darker blue indicates higher population density. Lighter green to yellow indicates lower population density ([Census Bureau 2020](#)).

### ***Race and ethnicity demographics***

84.8% of Island County’s population self-identified as “white - alone” ([Census 2020](#)). This is higher than Washington state, which is 76.8% white.

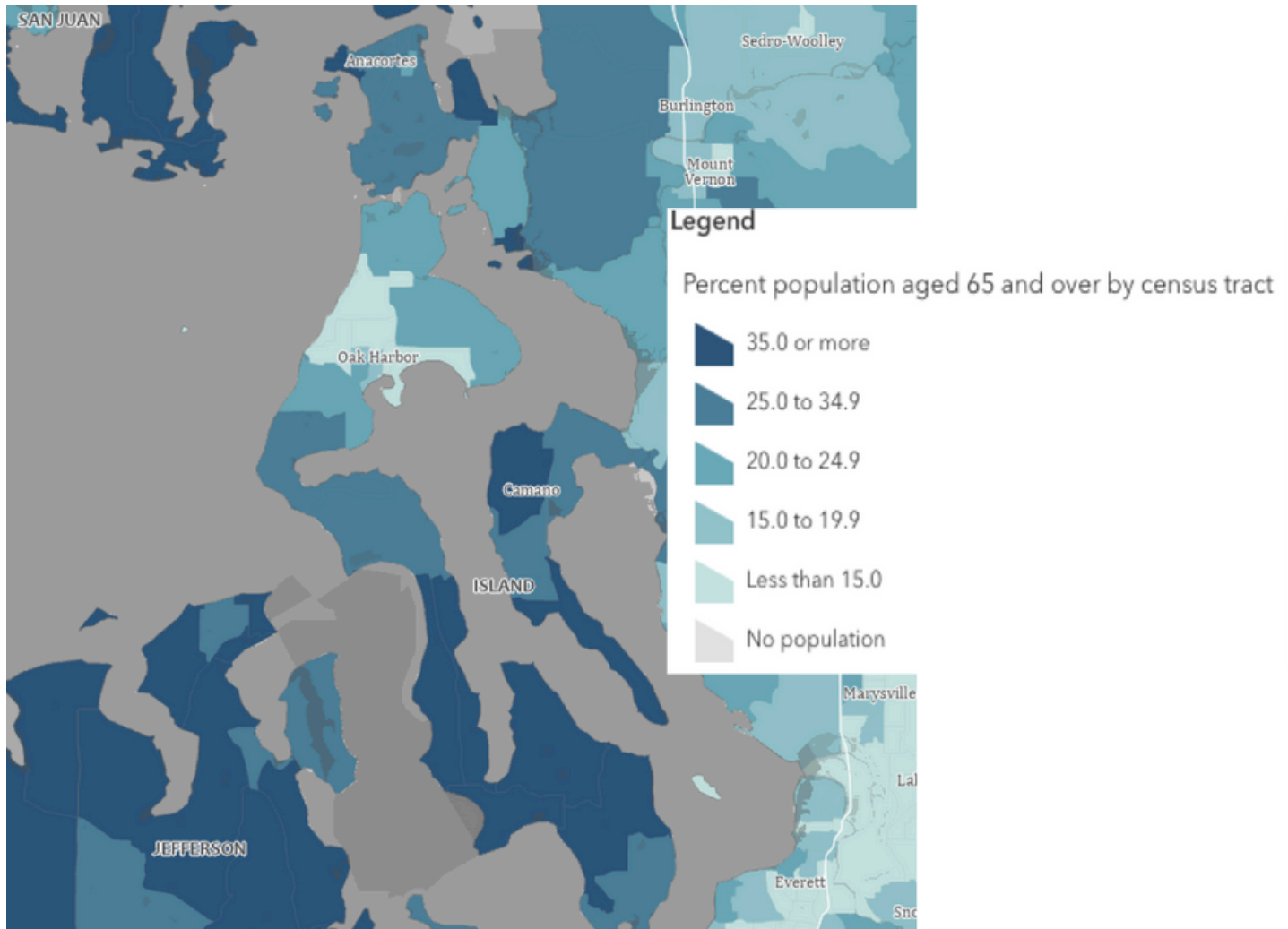
However, Island County is more diverse than its closest neighbors according to the Census (2020), including Skagit County ([89.8% white](#)), Whatcom County ([85.5% white](#)) and San Juan County ([93.4% white](#)). 8.7% of the Island County population identified as Hispanic or Latino, 5.3% identified as Asian, 5.2% identified as being two or more races, 3.3% identified as Black or African American, and 1.5% identified as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

Island County is also linguistically diverse. The [American Community Survey \(ACS\) \(2022\)](#) also found that in 21.1% of Island County homes speak a language other than English at home.



### Age demographics

When examined at the county level, Island County's population is aging. As of 2020, 27% of Island County's population was over 65 years of age, in comparison to 16.8% in Washington State ([Census 2023](#)). In comparison to Washington State, Island County has fewer people under 18 and more people over 65.



**Figure 6:** This map shows the percentage of population over 65 years of age by census tract. Darker blue indicate a higher percentage of people over 65, lighter blue indicates fewer ([Census Bureau 2020](#)).

However, it is important to note that not everywhere in Island County is aging. In Oak Harbor, 10.8% of the population was under 5, 28.6% was under 18, and only 12.4% were over 65 years of age. This means that Oak Harbor has more people under 18 and less people under 65 than the rest of Washington. This is the reverse of the countywide trend and can at least be partially explained by the influence of NASWI, which brings many young families onto Whidbey Island.

This means that the aging population in Island County is actually concentrated in particular areas – with 35% of the population in central and south Whidbey Island and north and south Camano Island being 65 or over.

Given this mixture of age groups, the median age in Island County is 45 years old ([Census 2023](#)). The age of Island County's population is an important consideration for workforce development efforts as well as business succession planning. [Project Equity \(2023\)](#) reports that approximately 68,700 businesses with 682,000 employees in Washington State owned by people who plan to retire in the near future.

### ***Local education infrastructure and attainment***

Island County is well educated. 36.7% of the population over 25 years of age holds a bachelor's degree or higher. 27.5% have some college, 20% have a high school diploma or equivalent, and 12.9% have an associate's degree ([Census Bureau 2020](#)).

Island County has four school districts: [Coupeville School District](#), [Oak Harbor School District](#), and [South Whidbey School District](#). Camano Island students attend the [Stanwood-Camano School District](#). The four districts combined have a total of 12,824 students enrolled for the 2023-2024 school year ([OSPI 2023](#)). There are currently 14 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Skills Centers in Washington State. CTE Skills Centers provide instruction in preparatory programs that are either too expensive or too specialized for school districts to operate individually. Sno-Isle TECH Skills Center, located in Everett, currently offers technical training for Island County high school students. Neither Whidbey nor Camano Island currently has its own Skills Center.

There is a broad range of options for adult and post-secondary education programs in Island County, ranging from technical training and certificates to graduate programs. There are five institutions that currently work within Island County: [Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University \(ERAU\)](#), [Skagit Valley College \(SVC\)](#), [Washington State University \(WSU\) Extension](#), [Grand Canyon University \(GCU\)](#), and [Columbia College-Whidbey Island](#). Island County residents also regularly access [Bellingham Technical College \(BTC\)](#) and [Western Washington University](#), for needs that cannot be fulfilled SVC, WSU Extension, or online.

### ***Employment and wages***

As of April 2024, Island County's civilian labor force count was at approximately 36,808, of which 35,088 are currently employed (not seasonally adjusted), for an unemployment rate of 4.7% ([ESD Labor Area Summaries 2024](#)).

The highest unemployment rate on record for Island County was 15.8%, which occurred in April 2020. By the end of 2020, it had returned to 7%. In 2023, the unemployment rate hovered between a high of 6.2% in February to a low of 3% in June ([ESD Labor Area Summaries 2024](#)). While this may be evidence of recovery from impacts of COVID-19, stakeholder outreach indicated that businesses in all industries continue to suffer from serious ongoing labor shortages, many even having to curtail business hours due to a lack of staff.

As shown in **Table 2**, below, the largest sub-sectors in terms of number of employment in Island County are in the service producing industries. As of 2023 Q2, there was an average of 15,912 jobs, the largest of which includes government (4,619), trade, transportation, and utilities (2,778) leisure and hospitality (2,633), education and health services (2,462), and professional and business services (1,705) (BLS QCEW 2023). Government comprises the largest of all service providing sub-sectors, with state and local governments employing on average 4,619 people. It is estimated that approximately 1,550 of those are employed at state and local education institutions. The largest of the educational institutions in Island County is Oak Harbor School District, which employs approximately 1,226 people, including substitute teachers (EDC 2023).

| 2-digit NAICS        | Industry subsectors                              | Firms | Total quarterly wages paid | Average employment | Average quarterly wage | Average weekly wage |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 54                   | Professional, scientific, and technical services | 306   | \$24,880,850               | 942                | \$26,413               | \$2,032             |
| 52                   | Finance and insurance                            | 67    | \$8,056,453                | 323                | \$24,943               | \$1,919             |
| 42                   | Wholesale trade                                  | 75    | \$4,643,311                | 215                | \$21,597               | \$1,661             |
| NEC                  | Not Elsewhere Classified                         | 16    | \$1,706,209                | 79                 | \$21,598               | \$1,661             |
| 55                   | Management of companies and enterprises          | 3     | \$1,465,562                | 83                 | \$17,657               | \$1,358             |
| GOV                  | Government                                       | 63    | \$76,917,483               | 4,619              | \$16,652               | \$1,281             |
| 51                   | Information                                      | 56    | \$4,353,999                | 267                | \$16,307               | \$1,254             |
| 48-49                | Transportation and warehousing                   | 19    | \$2,329,234                | 148                | \$15,738               | \$1,211             |
| 31-33                | Manufacturing                                    | 73    | \$10,439,656               | 707                | \$14,766               | \$1,136             |
| 23                   | Construction                                     | 361   | \$19,106,681               | 1,325              | \$14,420               | \$1,109             |
| 56                   | Administrative and waste services                | 170   | \$9,908,341                | 740                | \$13,390               | \$1,030             |
| 62                   | Healthcare and social assistance                 | 156   | \$21,670,920               | 2,006              | \$10,803               | \$831               |
| 81                   | Other services, except public administration     | 208   | \$8,728,977                | 845                | \$10,330               | \$795               |
| 11                   | Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting       | 41    | \$2,192,524                | 218                | \$10,057               | \$774               |
| 53                   | Real estate and rental and leasing               | 80    | \$3,134,602                | 320                | \$9,796                | \$754               |
| 44-45                | Retail trade                                     | 183   | \$20,744,504               | 2,315              | \$8,961                | \$689               |
| 61                   | Educational services                             | 54    | \$3,810,293                | 456                | \$8,356                | \$643               |
| 72                   | Accommodation and food services                  | 167   | \$15,365,811               | 2,234              | \$6,878                | \$529               |
| 71                   | Arts, entertainment, and recreation              | 47    | \$2,494,355                | 399                | \$6,252                | \$481               |
| 21                   | Mining                                           | *     | *                          | *                  | *                      | *                   |
| 22                   | Utilities                                        | *     | *                          | *                  | *                      | *                   |
| TOTAL ALL SUBSECTORS |                                                  | 2,145 | \$241,949,765              | 18,242             | \$13,263               | \$1,020             |

**Table 2:** Industry sub-sectors in Island County organized by average weekly wage using data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) (2023, Q2, revised). (BLS 2023; ESD Covered Employment 2024).

For goods producing sectors, there are 707 manufacturing jobs and 1,325 jobs in construction. Manufacturing jobs have not fully rebounded to pre-pandemic numbers for manufacturing, which in December 2019 was at 810 jobs. According to (ESD 2022), this “delayed drop in manufacturing employment was consistent with the statewide pattern,” which was caused by a decline in employment in the aerospace sector.

In terms of total quarterly wages paid in Island County, in 2023 Q2, the top five largest contributions come from government (\$76.9 million), professional, scientific, and technical services (\$24.8 million), healthcare and social assistance (\$21.6 million), retail trade (\$20.7 million), and construction (\$19.1 million). It is also important to note that while there were only 707 manufacturing jobs in Island County during 2023 Q2, the payroll contribution was over \$10.4 million for the quarter, meaning that the industry generates over \$40 million in wages annually.

Finally, when looking at the top ten sub-sectors by total quarterly wages, the top ten sub-sectors by employment count, and top ten sub-sectors by weekly wages, only seven industries fall on all three

lists: government, professional, scientific, and technical services, finance and insurance, manufacturing, construction, administrative and waste services, and healthcare and social assistance.

As for average annual wages, according to ESD (2023)'s profile for Island County, the 2020 average annual wage was \$46,301, which is below the state average annual wage of \$50,834. Similarly, the median hourly wage is less than the state median wage (\$23.32 versus \$29.28, adjusted for inflation). The median household income was \$72,066 in 2019, which is also below the state median of \$78,687 but above the national median of \$65,712.

Personal income, which includes earned income, investments, and government payments, is below the state and national trend. In 2020, Island County's per capita personal income was \$59,200. Washington State's per capita income was \$67,126 and the national per capita income was \$59,510. Regardless, Island County's per capita personal income is the sixth highest (of 39) in the state.

It is important to note that while wages are lower than the state average, wages in and of themselves are not the problem, but rather the mismatch between wages and the rapidly rising cost of living due to inflation, increased housing costs, increased childcare costs, and increased cost of other essential goods such as food and gas.

There are three important features of Island County's economy that are not captured by this data. First, there is a great deal of commuting off/on Island for work. This includes approximately 800 Island County residents who commute to Snohomish County to work at Boeing (EDC 2023). Second, there has also been an increase in remote work since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Finally, ESD's data on nonfarm and covered employment estimates do not include military or agriculture employment figures. Given the importance of NASWI and agriculture to Island County's economy, both will be covered separately in the following sections.

### ***Naval Air Station Whidbey Island***

The largest employer in Island County is Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI). Construction on NASWI started in 1941, which generated an influx of construction jobs, Navy personnel, and highly skilled workers.<sup>10</sup> The NASWI installation is located in North Whidbey and is approximately 8,030 acres. NASWI currently employs approximately 11,100 employees, of which 9,000 are considered active duty military and 2,100 are either civilians or federal contractors (EDC 2023). NASWI is the only naval aviation support installation in the Pacific Northwest and provides facilities, services, and products to the naval aviation community and all organizations using the air station.

According to the NASWI Economic Impact Assessment (2018), the installation's contribution to the regional economy in 2017 alone totaled \$1.04 billion and generated 12,925 jobs in Island and Skagit

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<sup>10</sup> For more on the history of NASWI see: <https://cnrnw.cnmc.navy.mil/Installations/NAS-Whidbey-Island/About/History/>



Counties, of which 9,078 were military and civilian personnel.<sup>11</sup> An estimated additional 3,847 jobs were stimulated by base operations and maintenance, personal and visitor spending.

NASWI's industry output, which totaled \$488 million in 2017 includes: \$246 million in payroll, \$235 million in operations and contracts, and \$7 million in visitor spending. Additionally, NASWI's economic activity in 2017 is estimated to have generated \$35 million in state and local tax revenue (\$21 million payroll taxes, \$13 million in taxes associated with operations and maintenance, and \$787,000 from visitor spending).

According to the Washington State Department of Commerce, NASWI has the third biggest economic impact of any installation in Washington, with an estimated economic impact of \$5.92 billion. Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Naval Base Kitsap are tied for first at \$6.1 billion each (Choose Washington: Military & Defense 2023). Needless to say, NASWI is a critical part of Island County and Washington State's economy.

As with many American military bases around the world, the presence of NASWI in Island County is controversial among some community members. While most support the base, particularly in North Whidbey, some community members believe that the base has negative impacts to the environment and public health.

### **Agriculture**

Agriculture on Whidbey and Camano Islands is a vital part of Island County's economy and culture. Local food system resiliency, and food systems that are ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable and equitable, are key to food security.

According to the USDA's (2022, p. 1-2) profile for Island County, in 2022 there were 377 farms in Island County, totaling 17,038 acres, with an average farm being 45 acres. This indicates that there was a decrease in the number of farms (-3%) but an increase in the total acres farmed (+7%) over the five year period. 98% of all farms in Island County were considered family farms, 27% hired farm labor, and 29% sold directly to consumers (the most in Washington State).

Of the 17,083 acres of agriculture land in Island County in 2022, 55.9% was being used as cropland, 16.7% as pastureland, 16.3% as woodland, and 11% was other uses. In terms of land use practices, 15% (2,520) acres were irrigated, which is a slight increase since 2017. 12% of Island County farms were no till, 8% reduced till, 13% used cover crops, and 6% were intensive till.

Given that there over 10,715 cattle and calves, 3,705 layers, and thousands of other livestock in

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<sup>11</sup> Data used for this assessment is for the Region of Interest (ROI), which is Island and Skagit Counties. Disaggregated data for just Island County is not available. Washington State will be completing an updated economic impact assessment of the state's defense industry in 2024-5.

Island County, the lack of easily accessible, affordable, humane slaughter services causes a lot of problems for Island County's farmers (USDA 2022, p. 2). In order to take advantage of the myriad opportunities within agriculture, Island County's agriculture sector requires additional humane animal slaughter and food processing infrastructure.

**Table 3** below shows the breakdown of farms by size. The vast majority of Island County farms are small.<sup>12</sup> As of 2022, 82% of all farms in Island County are 49 acres or less, which is a slight decrease from 84% in 2017. Interestingly, the smallest farms (1 to 9 acres) saw the largest increase since 2017, growing from 113 farms to 140. Given that 10 to 49 acre farms decreased from 213 to 169, some of those many not have fully closed but instead downsized to a smaller farm. Four farms also moved into the 50 to 179 acre size, increasing from 42 in 2017 to 46 in 2022.

|                  | 2017       | 2017          | 2022       | 2022          |
|------------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
| Farm size        | # of Farms | Percent Total | # of Farms | Percent Total |
| 1 to 9 acres     | 113        | 29%           | 140        | 37%           |
| 10 to 49 acres   | 213        | 55%           | 169        | 45%           |
| 50 to 179 acres  | 42         | 11%           | 46         | 12%           |
| 180 to 499 acres | 19         | 5%            | 16         | 4%            |
| 500 to 999 acres | 3          | 1%            | 5          | 1%            |
| 1,000+ acres     | 0          | 0%            | 1          | <1%           |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>390</b> |               | <b>377</b> |               |

**Table 3:** Number of farms by farm size. USDA County Profiles: Island County, WA (2017, 2022).

According to ESD's most recent Agricultural Workforce Statistics (2023), which uses the 2017 data, of the 390 farms in Island County, only 34 establishments and 153 jobs are considered "covered employment," meaning that workers are covered by state unemployment insurance. The number of covered jobs supported by the sector has not only recovered since jobs hit a low of 93 in 2020 (lower than 2012 numbers), but 60 new jobs have been added. This is important to note, both because covered jobs are growing and because it highlights the fact that many of Island County's farmers are not covered by unemployment insurance. Interviews within the sector also confirmed that many farmers may also be unable to maintain decent healthcare insurance, and those that do have insurance often do not have the time to access care. The USDA (2022, p.2) also found that only 87% of the 377 farms had internet access.

The Whidbey Island Grown Cooperative's Food Hub currently sells products for 50 direct-to-consumer farmers and total sales in 2022 was \$433,099. In 2023, the Food Hub's gross sales had

12 The USDA does not measure farm size by acreage. To be considered a 'small family farm' a farm has to have a gross cash farm income (GCFI) of \$350,000 or less (USDA Family Farms 2017). In Island County in 2017, only 12 out of 390 farms had sales valuing over \$100,000. This increased to 23 farms in 2022. Therefore, at least 94% of all farms in Island County are small family farms.

increased to \$572,499, an outstanding 32% year-over-year increase. Similarly, Bayview Farmer's Market's year to date total sales was \$536,236 in July 2022 and \$631,236 in July 2023, an 18% increase in sales.

### ***Tourism: Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands***

Tourism is a key sector in Island County, integrally related to agriculture and the natural beauty and marine landscape of Whidbey and Camano Islands. Visitors come to Whidbey and Camano for its great four season recreation opportunities, beautiful views and shorelines, amazing and myriad events, abundant options for agritourism and local farm stand trails, and importantly, to visit family, friends, and NASWI. Tourism has guaranteed economic impacts to multiple sectors, including but not limited to agriculture, the creative economy, lodging, retail, restaurants, and transportation.

Island County is a part of the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area, which is a non-regulatory, regional partnership program designed to share and connect the state's maritime communities and resources. In 2022, the Management Plan for the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area was approved by the Secretary of the Interior, which may bring additional grant resources to the region.

According to data provided by Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands (2023), trips to Whidbey and Camano Islands have increased by 48.6% and visitor days have increased by 39.6% when comparing pre-pandemic (February 2018 - March 2020) to present (April 2020 - August 2023) trends.<sup>13</sup>

The average length of stay has slightly decreased to 1.3 days and the number of unique visitors decreased by 19% to Island County during the same time period. This is likely due to the fact that Island County has many repeat visitors as well as local visitors who do not necessarily stay overnight. The largest market for both islands are Snohomish, Skagit, and King Counties, followed by Island County (within Island trips), and Whatcom County. Since February 2018, when data first becomes available, Island County saw anywhere from 511,800 to 1.2 million visitors monthly.

When examining the demographics of visitors, 33.4% of all visitors are 45-64 years of age, 28.6% are 25-44, 28.1% are 65 or over, and 9.9% are 16-24. Of these visitors, 42.5% have an income of over \$100,000, 25.7% have an income up to \$50,000. These trends reflect the fact that many retirees are traveling to Whidbey and Camano Islands, some for day trips, some to visit their second homes. However, there are also many young families who are visiting Island County, which could be an impact of NASWI or adult children visiting parents who are aging place.

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<sup>13</sup> This data comes from Datafy, which many Washington State tourism agencies currently use to try to better understand the economic impact of tourism in their area. Datafy collects data on traffic using cellphone data (location services and application data) and transaction data (credit cards). These are all linked to a unique identifier on an individual smartphone, which allows Datafy to track individual locations and spending while in those locations.

In 2021 the locations within Island County that were most traveled to were: Whidbey Island, Oak Harbor, Camano Island, the Clinton Ferry, Clinton, Coupeville, and [Deception Pass State Park](#). Deception Pass is also the most visited state park in Washington State ([Seattle Times 2024](#)).

Given the large number of visitors and the huge economic impact of the tourism industry in Island County, the County Tourism Board undertook the process of created a tourism strategy, the [Destination Regeneration Plan](#), which is focused upon transformational travel and regenerative tourism. The Island County BOCC has also directed Island County Public Health to evaluate land conservation programs alongside recreation and tourism needs. This will allow Island County to be more strategic about acquisition of conservation lands and ensure that there is combined benefit to tourism and conservation.

### ***Creative Economy***

The creative economy in Washington is vast and growing. The creative economy includes creative technology, music and performing arts, visual arts, as well as many other sectors and professional occupations. Whidbey and Camano Islands are home to artists of every sort (filmmakers, writers, painters, potters, woodworkers, sculptors, actors, musicians, etc.). Therefore, investing in and supporting the creative economies on both islands is a major economic opportunity.

As with tourism, gauging the economic impact of the creative economy is difficult as it touches many sectors of the economy. According to Washington State's [Creative Economy Strategic Plan \(2022\)](#) that the state's creative economy brought in \$71 billion in 2021, growing by 17% from 2020 to 2021. That means that Washington's creative economy is 10.3% of the state's GDP, which makes it the large creative economy in the United States in terms of contributions to GDP ([Choose Washington: Creative Economy 2023](#)). Washington State Department of Commerce recognizes this opportunity and thus the creative economy is considered a key sector and high-growth industry with many associated programs and funding opportunities. [ArtsWA](#) provides Creative Districts with specialized resources, grant opportunities, technical assistance, training, and networking with other Creative Districts, as well as data analyses to track the progress of creative economies.

Some jurisdictions of Island County have already moved forward with supporting this vital industry by establishing [Creative District](#). Langley has an its own Creative District, branded as [Langley Creates](#). The [Langley Chamber of Commerce](#) and the Chamber's 501c3 Advance Langley serve as Langley Creates fiscal administrator. In February 2024, the Town of Coupeville voted to support the creation of the Coupeville Creative District. If the application is approved, [the Pacific Northwest Art School](#) will serve as its fiscal administrator.

It is also important to mention [Whidbey Island Center for the Arts \(WICA\)](#), which is the largest arts organization on Whidbey Island and is located in the center of the Langley Creative District. Its mission is to support homegrown economic opportunities by supporting and growing the local creative economy.



### ***Oak Harbor Opportunity Zone***

Opportunity Zones are federal census tracts that are eligible for certain types of investment. Investors can defer paying taxes on capital gains that are invested in Qualified Opportunity Funds, which are then invested in distressed communities.

In Island County, the only Opportunity Zone is in Oak Harbor. The governor of each state is allowed to designate up to 25% of the total eligible census tracts as Opportunity Zones. In Washington, the Governor designated a total of 139 Opportunity Zones (Department of Commerce 2023).



**Deception Pass Bridge.** This bridge connects Island and Skagit Counties. In January 2023 Deception Pass State Park was ranked the fifth most beautiful state park in the United States by Travel Lens magazine (Seattle Times 2023). Photo by Taisia Karaseva on Unsplash.



## 1. Regional SWOT Analyses

To meet EDA requirements, a SWOT analysis was conducted using multiple forms of stakeholder engagement. SWOT analyses are often used as a strategic planning assessment tool, by private, public and nonprofit actors. According to the [EDA \(2024\)](#), a SWOT is “a strategic planning tool used by organizations to ensure that there is a clear objective informed by a comprehensive understanding of a region’s capabilities and capacity” that should identify competitive advantages as well as obstacles preventing the region from reaching its fullest potential.

Inputs for the Island County SWOT analysis were gathered in three ways. First, there was a public SWOT analysis survey open May 1 to October 23, 2023, that resulted in 181 responses. Second, SWOT analysis inputs were gathered from every partner with jurisdictional authority, including the governments of Island County, the Town of Coupeville, the Cities of Langley and Oak Harbor, as well as the Port of Coupeville and Port South of Whidbey. Third, other entities such as the Camano Chamber of Commerce, Langley Chamber of Commerce, and Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce, Island Transit, Sno-Isle Libraries (Camano Branch), as well as other private, public, and nonprofit stakeholders provided direct inputs into the SWOT regional analysis. The consolidated regional SWOT analysis results are listed below.

### Strengths

#### Natural Environment

- Four seasons outdoor recreation
- Beautiful natural landscape
- Clean air, fresh water, temperate climate
- Forests, farms, shorelines with vistas
- Rich animal habitats

#### Creative Economy and Tourism

- Thriving artist communities
- Unique, diverse, plentiful events
- Home to world-renowned arts organizations
- Two Creative Districts (Langley, Coupeville)
- Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands
- Strong brand potential (Whidbey + Camano Grown/Made)
- Transformational tourism options
- Large amount of public land, forests, parks

#### Community

- High quality of life
- Strong sense of commitment to community
- High rate of volunteerism, engagement
- Regional diversity in race, age, income, culture
- Many social services, nonprofits
- Strong entrepreneurial spirit
- Safe with low crime rates

#### Infrastructure

- Military installation (NASWI)
- Multimodal transportation options
- Accessible public transportation
- Some walkable cities, towns
- Two Port districts
- Island County Fairgrounds & Event Center
- Two WSDOT ferry terminals (Clinton, Coupeville)
- Multiple full-service marinas and boatyards

#### Business Resources

- Active Chambers and EDC
- Active local industry associations
- EDC reports, market research
- Leadership Whidbey

#### Workforce

- Multiple training and post-secondary programs
- Educated workforce
- High levels of high school completion
- Skilled labor from NASWI spouses, veterans, retirees
- Retiree mentoring capacity

#### Geographic Location

- Proximity to Seattle, Skagit and Snohomish Counties, Canada, the Salish Sea, and the I-5 Corridor

### **Weaknesses**

#### **Infrastructure**

- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of affordable childcare
- Inadequate supply of commercial, industrial buildings
- Freight challenges
- No shovel ready business parks
- Inadequate potable water supply
- Inadequate sewage treatment options
- Aging septs
- Aging marinas
- Decreased number of ferries
- Decreased ferry reliability
- High reliance on ferry, bridge access
- Areas of county without internet or cellular service
- Unreliable, slow, expensive internet in some places
- Limited medical facilities, providers
- EV charging gaps
- Off ferry traffic flows, speeds
- Lack of accessible sidewalks in Freeland

#### **Community**

- Limited nightlife
- Small youth population in S. Whidbey
- Perceptions of differences between regions
- Lack of mental health resources

### **Opportunities**

#### **Infrastructure**

- Build affordable housing
- Support expansion of affordable childcare
- Develop commercial, industrial buildings
- Identify parcels to create shovel ready business parks
- Sewer installation in Freeland +/- or Clinton
- Address aging septs
- Redevelop marinas
- Passenger ferries linked to public transit options
- Expand access, reliability and speed of internet, cell service
- Crawford Road redevelopment
- DeLaurentis Airport commercialization
- State and federal infrastructure funding

#### **Regulatory**

- Stabilization of Planning Departments
- Educate public on regulatory policies
- Review events code
- Review code to encourage affordable housing
- Develop workforce housing policies
- Explore options to limit commercial vacancies/closures

#### **Natural Environment**

- Fragile marine and shoreline environments
- Many critical areas (steep slopes, shorelines, habitats)
- Increases cost of building
- Increases difficulty of building

#### **Regulatory**

- Lack of consistency in regulatory interpretations
- Permitting times can be long
- Increases cost of building
- Increases difficulty of building

#### **Workforce**

- Low unemployment rate
- Labor shortages across sectors
- High rates of turnover in many sectors
- Limited trade workers (construction, plumbers, electrician, HVAC)
- Some commute off-island for work
- Lack of opportunities for NASWI spouses
- Lack of opportunities for veterans
- Cost of living increases outpacing wages

#### **Business Resources**

- Increased DEI programming
- Increased disaster resiliency
- Marketing campaigns highlighting agritourism, Whidbey + Camano Island Grown / Made brand
- Educate public on business resources already available

#### **Industry**

- Diversify employers
- Support expansion of existing businesses
- Creative Economy
- Transformational Tourism, Agritourism
- Value-added agriculture, food processing
- Nonprofit mergers
- Expansion of healthcare facilities + providers

### ***Opportunities Continued***

#### **Workforce**

- NASWI spouses, veteran skills
- Incorporating retirees
- Certification of veteran skills
- Employee ownership
- Engaging the youth population
- Increasing vocational skills
- Increasing vocational trades participation
- Telework, Telehealth
- Expand post-secondary education access

#### **Climate Resilience**

- Become a leader in climate resilience
- Encourage rideshare, car share programs
- Support updated heat pump installations
- Improve bike lanes and trail systems
- Create more incentives for landowners to keep forest + farm land
- Encourage use of passenger ferries
- Expanded community solar
- Wetlands restoration
- State and federal climate resilience funding

### ***Threats***

#### **Climate Resilience**

- Sea level rise, shoreline erosion
- Floods, earthquake, tsunami, king tides
- Wildfires, smoke from wildfires
- Lack of emergency coordination
- Lack of insurance coverage
- Lack of grid redundancies
- Salinization and contamination of water
- Salinization and contamination of soil
- Loss of trees, shade
- Unreliable or fewer ferries
- Potable water and sewage access not guaranteed
- Limited number of gateways

#### **Regulatory**

- Federal reallocation of defense funding
- Closure or reduction of funding to NASWI or Boeing
- Increased interest rates

#### **Inflation and Rising Costs**

- Increasing labor costs
- Increasing input costs
- Increasing cost of living
- Increasing housing and childcare costs



**Tokitae, one of two Mukilteo-Clinton ferries.** Photo by Daniel Schwen on [Wikimedia Commons](#).

Industry SWOTs for fourteen industries were developed for Island County via stakeholder engagement with local business owners. Those industries were chosen with several factors in mind, which are detailed in **Appendix 6.4**, and were commented and added to by the Review Committee. The final list of industries for SWOTs and targeted stakeholder engagement included: Agriculture, Construction, the Creative Economy, Education, Infrastructure (includes Energy, Transit, Utilities), Healthcare, Manufacturing, Maritime, Military and Defense (includes Aerospace), Retail, Tourism (includes Events, Recreation and Leisure), and Nonprofits.

Business owners participated either by emailing in written responses to the SWOT survey or by scheduling 30-60 minute interviews with the consultant. Results can be found in **Appendix 6.4**.

### 2. Priorities

Drawing on the regional SWOT results, the industry-level SWOTs, and extensive stakeholder engagement, including over 80 key stakeholder interviews, several high priority issues currently affecting business and economic development Island County were identified:

A lack of social and economic infrastructure including

- Available, affordable, quality housing
- Available, affordable, quality childcare
- Wages inconsistent with the cost of living and inflation
- Labor shortages in multiple sectors

A lack of physical infrastructure including

- All utilities, but in particular sewer, water, and internet
- Lack of redundancies for critical infrastructure
- Lack of industry-specific infrastructure (e.g. food processing, licensed available slaughter)
- Unreliable and inconsistent ferry service

In addition to identifying economic, physical, and social infrastructure needs, stakeholders consistently expressed their desire to protect the environment and natural beauty of Island County. These concerns ranged from shoreline degradation and sea level rise to the broader impacts of climate change and tourism on the islands to everyday conservation of Whidbey and Camano Island's natural environment. The SWOT clearly demonstrates that the public believes that Island County's biggest asset is its natural environment and beauty. It is important to note this key consensus, as climate resilience is directly related to economic resilience.

The Action Plan that follows reflects the priorities identified during stakeholder engagement.



**The CEDS Review Committee envisions “a robust and diverse economy that leverages existing community assets; establishes, upgrades, and maintains resilient critical infrastructure; supports business and workforce vitality; sustainably manages natural resources; promotes equity and inclusivity; and increases resident quality of life” in Island County.**

## **1. Vision**

The CEDS Review Committee envisions “a robust and diverse economy that leverages existing community assets; establishes, upgrades, and maintains resilient critical infrastructure; supports business and workforce vitality; sustainably manages natural resources; promotes equity and inclusivity; and increases resident quality of life.”

## **2. Goals and Sub-goals**

Drawing on the SWOT analyses, regional priorities outlined in other Island County or regional strategies, plans and reports, immense stakeholder engagement, as well as a thorough review of CEDS and economic development best practices, below are the goals and sub-goals.

Please note that the numbering of the goal or sub-goal is not an indication of priority. All of these goals are critically important to Island County’s economy and priorities will vary based on partner or stakeholder. The intention of numbering is simply to make discussion of the goals and sub-goals easier.

### **Goal 1: Improve and develop critical resilient infrastructure.**

- 1.Improve and expand water and wastewater infrastructure.
- 2.Improve and expand cellular and internet services to unserved and underserved areas and populations.
- 3.Improve and expand local emergency services to all areas of Island County.
- 4.Advocate for consistent and reliable ferry services.
- 5.Promote the use of Public Transportation (Island Transit) and Active Transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, other).
- 6.Improve roads throughout Island County for all users.
- 7.Explore and support options to increase energy resiliency.
- 8.Explore programs and expansion opportunities for solid waste, recycling, and composting services.
- 9.Maintain existing healthcare services and facilities and explore opportunities for generating additional and varied healthcare services and facilities, including mental health services, with a focus on unserved and underserved communities.
- 10.Work with public, private, and nonprofit partners to inform, assist, and invest in the development of affordable housing choices for all income levels.
- 11.Promote and support affordable and accessible quality childcare options for all income levels.

## **Goal 2: Support existing local businesses and community assets, increase diversification, and promote Island County as an attractive business environment.**

1. Support local governments and economic development service providers in creating responsive, helpful, and expedient services and resources.
2. Promote Island County as a great place to do business.
3. Continue to support existing businesses.
4. Explore options to recruit employers that complement and leverage the existing industry mix and aligns with local values.
5. Promote and support innovation and value-added upgrading in key economic sectors of agriculture, construction, military / defense, marine trades, tourism, and advanced manufacturing.
6. Strengthen, better define, and build entrepreneurial resources in order to create opportunities for mentoring, financing, exporting, legal and tax services, and networking.
7. Support the creation of shovel-ready commercial, residential, and industrial sites in locations that are not in critical areas or habitats.
8. Continue to support Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands (county-wide Tourism).
9. Explore options to conduct or participate in economic impact studies for key sectors of Island County's economy.
10. Promote and support the development of local financial resources and financial literacy for businesses.

## **Goal 3: Align quality education and skills training programs with employer needs and create living wage job opportunities in Island County.**

1. Continue to participate in regional workforce partnerships and organizations.
2. Address ongoing labor shortages in several industries by focusing on unserved and underserved worker groups.
3. Improve educational attainment outcomes and create opportunities for all to prosper.

## **Goal 4: Sustainably manage the natural beauty and resources of Island County.**

1. Prioritize actions for climate resilience.
2. Support, promote, and educate the public on required adaptations to sea level rise.
3. Develop additional local incentives for forest, wetland, and farmland conservation.
4. Support and promote the development of the Green and Blue economies.
5. Support opportunities for salmon habitat restoration and rehabilitation.
6. Support and promote improvements to Island County's public lands, reserves, and parks.
7. Prepare for population growth and in-migration.
8. Increase disaster preparedness among small business owners and entrepreneurs.

### Goal 5: Deepen collaboration and coordination between Island County and regional partners.

1. Further develop relationships with regional economic development agencies and strategic associate development organization (ADO) partners.
2. Explore opportunities for collaboration and business support in Stanwood and Anacortes.
3. Explore opportunities for developing the creative economy across Snohomish, Skagit, and Island Counties.
4. Explore opportunities to enhance disaster preparedness and resiliency between Island, Skagit, and Snohomish Counties.
5. Explore additional opportunities for equipment and technology sharing between Island, Skagit, and Snohomish Counties.



**An aerial photo of the Coupeville Wharf with Whidbey Island in the background.** Photo gifted to the Port of Coupeville.



**Goal 1: Improve and develop critical resilient infrastructure.**

| <b>Sub-Goal</b>                                                                                                | <b>Action Items</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Partners</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Timeline</b>                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Improve and expand water and wastewater infrastructure.</b>                                              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete a comprehensive study of wastewater infrastructure to determine where alternative systems, such as Large Onsite Sewage Systems (LOSS) and Step Systems, to single family onsite systems can benefit and support housing and climate resiliency.</li> <li>2. Request funding from the Legislature to conduct a comprehensive study of existing water system infrastructure and hydrogeological monitoring system upgrades.</li> <li>3. Strengthen adaptive management approaches to addressing aging single-family septic infrastructure.</li> <li>4. Adopt best available science for quality improvement and water quality monitoring.</li> <li>5. Take regulatory action on failing systems impacting sensitive ecosystems, shorelines, and aquifer recharge zones.</li> <li>6. Update groundwater protection, drinking water, and wastewater codes to improve stewardship of water resources.</li> </ol> | <p>1.1.1-1.1.6: Island County, Washington State Department of Commerce Defense Community Compatibility Account (DCCA), Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) under the Department of Defense Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation</p> <p>Support: Port of South Whidbey</p> | 1.1.1-1.1.6: Ongoing + long-term                                                    |
| <b>2. Improve and expand cellular and internet services to unserved and underserved areas and populations.</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to work with local partners to implement the Washington Statewide Broadband Act goals locally.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By 2024: 25/3 Mbps scalable to all residences and businesses.</li> <li>2. By 2026: 1/1 Gbps speed for all anchor institutions.</li> <li>3. By 2028: 150/150 Mbps</li> </ol> </li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>1.2.1: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of South Whidbey, Port of Coupeville, Island County Broadband Action Team, Whidbey Telecom</p>                                                                                                          | <p>1.2.1.1: End of 2024</p> <p>1.2.1.2: End of 2026</p> <p>1.2.1.3: End of 2028</p> |

**Goal 1: Improve and develop critical resilient infrastructure.**

| <b>Sub-Goal</b>                                                                                                | <b>Action Items</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Partners</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Timeline</b>                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>2. Improve and expand cellular and internet services to unserved and underserved areas and populations.</b> | <p>2. Advocate for improved 5G cellular coverage throughout Whidbey and Camano Islands.</p> <p>3. Support Whidbey Telecom’s route expansion through Whidbey Island.</p> <p>1. Partner with Whidbey Telecom to expand fiber from Green Bank Farm to Admiral’s Cove.</p> <p>2. Partner with Port of Coupeville and Ebey’s Reserve for the route segment that runs from Admirals’ Cove to Ebey’s Reserve (passing 1400 residents).</p> <p>3. Implement the middle mile grant, which includes fiber facilities from Admiral’s Cove drop off point through Oak Harbor, Keystone Ferry, and wraps around NASWI.</p> <p>4. Support expansion and improved reliability.</p> <p>1. Support connection to key commercial areas of Camano Island, including the airport business park.</p> <p>2. Submit Community Connect Grant for South Camano, if successful implement South Camano expansion project.</p> <p>3. Continue to file relevant challenges to FCC where local data and experience do not match.</p> <p>5. Advocate for affordable, quality internet connections throughout Island County.</p> | <p>1.2.2 Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of South Whidbey, Port of Coupeville, Island County Broadband Action Team, Whidbey Telecom</p> <p>1.2.3: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey, Ebey’s Landing National Historic Reserve, Island County Broadband Action Team, Whidbey Telecom, conservation districts</p> <p>1.2.4: Island County, Island County Broadband Action Team</p> <p>1.2.4.2: FiberCloudNW (Whidbey Telecom subsidiary)</p> <p>1.2.5: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey, Island County Broadband Action Team</p> | 1.2.2-1.2.5: Ongoing + long- term |



**Goal 1: Improve and develop critical resilient infrastructure.**

| <b>Sub-Goal</b>                                                                                                             | <b>Action Items</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Partners</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Timeline</b>                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>3. Improve and expand local emergency services to all areas.</b>                                                         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase resiliency by updating communications, the network, power, and water supply.</li> <li>2. Update and expand the critical infrastructure GIS inventory database for Island County.</li> <li>3. Collaborate with County Planning during the Comprehensive Plan updates to ensure alignment between elements and County Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) and County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (NHMP).</li> <li>4. Explore options for solar powered micro grid as a backup source for the Langley area.</li> </ol> | <p>1.3.1-1.3.2: Island County Emergency Management</p> <p>1.3.3: Island County (Emergency Management, Planning)</p> <p>1.3.4: City of Langley, Port of South Whidbey</p>                                                     | 1.3.1-1.3.4: Ongoing + long- term                                                                               |
| <b>4. Advocate for consistent reliable ferry services to all areas.</b>                                                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaborate with all available partners to work with WSDOT to re-establish reliable ferry schedules, particularly the Port Townsend- Coupeville, and Mukilteo-Clinton routes.</li> <li>2. Implement a trial, proof-of-concept passenger only ferry service for tourist season.</li> <li>3. Provide long-term passenger only ferry service and supporting facilities.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                               | 1.4.1-1.4.3: Island County, Island Transit, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey, Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Ferry System | 1.4.1-1.4.3: Ongoing + long- term                                                                               |
| <b>5. Promote the use of Public Transportation (Island Transit) and Active Transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, other).</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop an Active Transportation Plan.</li> <li>2. Incentivize public transportation options through community planning approaches.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>1.5.1: City of Oak Harbor, Town of Coupeville</p> <p>1.5.2: Island County, Island Transit, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor</p>                                                                    | <p>1.5.1: 2024-2025 (City of Oak Harbor); 2025-2028 (Town of Coupeville)</p> <p>1.5.2: Ongoing + long- term</p> |

**Goal 1: Improve and develop critical resilient infrastructure.**

| <b>Sub-Goal</b>                                                                                                             | <b>Action Items</b>                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Partners</b>                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Timeline</b>                   |
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| <b>5. Promote the use of Public Transportation (Island Transit) and Active Transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, other).</b> | 3. Support the implementation of the <u>Island Regional Transportation Plan Update 2024-2028</u> .                                                                                       | 1.5.3: Island County, Island Transit, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey, EDC for Island County | 1.5.3: 2024-2028                  |
|                                                                                                                             | 4. Improve, expand, and promote multimodal transportation facilities and infrastructure.<br>1. Improve walkability and accessibility of sidewalks, including installation of curb ramps. | 1.5.4: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor                                                                                   | 1.5.4: Ongoing + long- term       |
| <b>6. Improve roads throughout Island County for all users.</b>                                                             | 1. Improve Crawford Road.                                                                                                                                                                | 1.6.1: Island County                                                                                                                                            | 1.6.1-1.6.6: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                                                             | 2. Identify roads for improvement in Clinton and Freeland that improve safety, improve traffic flows, create business opportunities, and enhance resiliency.                             | 1.6.2: Island County, Clinton Community Council                                                                                                                 |                                   |
|                                                                                                                             | 3. Develop a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan for Island County.                                                                                                                         | 1.6.3: IRTPO                                                                                                                                                    |                                   |
|                                                                                                                             | 4. Identify projects for Safe Streets for All grant program.                                                                                                                             | 1.6.4: City of Oak Harbor                                                                                                                                       |                                   |
|                                                                                                                             | 5. Identify improvements to the State routes to improve safety, mobility, resilience and business opportunities.                                                                         | 1.6.5: WSDOT, Island County                                                                                                                                     |                                   |
|                                                                                                                             | 6. Adopting a level of service criteria that includes pedestrian multi-modal transportation.                                                                                             | 1.6.6: City of Langley                                                                                                                                          |                                   |
| <b>7. Support options to increase energy resiliency.</b>                                                                    | 1. Continue to work with PSE and SNOPUD to identify options to improve energy reliability and reduce outage times.                                                                       | 1.7.1: Island County, Island Transit, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey                        | 1.7.1: Ongoing + long- term       |

**Goal 1: Improve and develop critical resilient infrastructure.**

| <b>Sub-Goal</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Action Items</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Partners</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Timeline</b>                   |
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| <b>7. Support options to increase energy resiliency.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2. Replace fuel tanks at the Port of Coupeville.<br>3. Support the development of level 3 and 4 electric vehicle charging stations throughout Island County.<br>4. Support Island Transit's transition to Zero Emissions.<br>5. Support local efforts to establish distributed energy systems such as micro grids.<br>6. Support organizations that assist local residents and businesses transition from fossil fuel sources for heating, cooling, cooking, and electricity. | 1.7.2: Port of Coupeville, Town of Coupeville, Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Department of Ecology<br><br>1.7.3-4: Island County, Island Transit, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey<br><br>1.7.5-6: City of Langley | 1.7.2-1.7.6: Ongoing + long- term |
| <b>8. Explore programs and expansion opportunities for solid waste, recycling, and composting services.</b>                                                                                                                                               | 1. Expand and modernize the Coupeville Solid Waste Transfer Center.<br>1. Seek grant and legislative funding for expansion.<br>2. Plan for expansion of Camano Solid Waste Transfer Center, including acquisition of new site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 1.8.1-1.8.2: Island County                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 1.8.1-1.8.2: Ongoing + long- term |
| <b>9. Maintain existing healthcare services and facilities and explore opportunities for generating additional and varied healthcare services and facilities, including mental health services, with a focus on unserved and underserved communities.</b> | 1. Support the expansion of behavioral health services and increase the number of beds at the Ithua Stabilization Center.<br>2. Continue to support the Opportunity Council's related work.<br>3. Continue to support the STEPS program related work.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 1.9.1: Island County<br><br>1.9.2: Island County, Opportunity Council<br><br>1.9.3: Island County, STEPS                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 1.9.1-1.9.3: Ongoing + long- term |

**Goal 1: Improve and develop critical resilient infrastructure.**

| <b>Sub-Goal</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Action Items</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Partners</b>                                                                                                     | <b>Timeline</b>                   |
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| <b>9. Maintain existing healthcare services and facilities and explore opportunities for generating additional and varied healthcare services and facilities, including mental health services, with a focus on unserved and underserved communities.</b> | 4. Expand integrated physical and behavioral health services and care linkages through coordinate mobile outreach, which includes community- based mental health providers, public health nurses, and outreach workers.                    | 1.9.4: Island County, Help Me Grow, Partners for Young Children, North South Accountable Community of Health Action | 1.9.4-1.9.7: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 5. Strengthen behavioral health services available at school districts by advocating for increased staffing by the Northwest Education Services District (NWESD) and the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). | 1.9.5: Island County, NWESD, OSPI<br><br>1.9.6: Island County, WhidbeyHealth                                        |                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 6. Support continued growth of WhidbeyHealth Behavioral Health programs and Rural Health Clinic (RHC) services.                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                     |                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 7. Continue to provide Community Health Worker training to existing staff and partners to grow the network in Island County.                                                                                                               | 1.9.7: Island County                                                                                                |                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                     |                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                     |                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                     |                                   |
| <b>10. Work with public, private, and nonprofit partners to inform, assist, and invest in the development of affordable housing choices for all income levels.</b>                                                                                        | 1. Fully utilize all available tools, resources, and funding streams available for affordable housing at the local, state, and federal level.                                                                                              | 1.10.1: All public, private, and housing-focused nonprofit stakeholders                                             | 1.10.1: Ongoing + long- term      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 1. Explore options to direct .09 funds towards infrastructure and programs that support affordable housing development.                                                                                                                    | 1.10.1.1-2: Island County                                                                                           |                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2. Explore utilizing REET 2 funds for affordable housing.                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                     |                                   |

**Goal 1: Improve and develop critical resilient infrastructure.**

| <b>Sub-Goal</b>                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Action Items</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Partners</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Timeline</b>               |
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| <b>10. Work with public, private, and nonprofit partners to inform, assist, and invest in the development of affordable housing choices for all income levels.</b> | <p>2. Continue to support the active affordable housing projects (Swanton Road, Camas Flats, LIHI, and Generations Place (2nd &amp; DeBruyn)).</p> <p>3. Work to incentivize and mandate affordable housing.</p> <p>4. Support inclusive and mixed-use zoning changes.</p> <p>5. Explore and support options for employer-assisted workforce housing.</p> <p>6. Explore options to identify housing for seasonal workers.</p> <p>7. Evaluate options to encourage the development of long-term ADU and DADUs.</p> <p>8. Continue to develop stronger relationships with contractors and builders through events such as the Builders Listening Session.</p> <p>9. Pursue development of workforce housing at the Fairgrounds.</p> | <p>1.10.2: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey, Island Roots Housing / Goosefoot Community Fund</p> <p>1.10.3-1.10.4: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor</p> <p>1.10.5-1.10.8: Island County</p> <p>1.10.7: Town of Coupeville</p> <p>1.10.9: Port of South Whidbey</p> | 1.10.2-9: Ongoing + long-term |
| <b>11. Promote and support affordable and accessible quality childcare options for all income levels in Island County.</b>                                         | <p>1. Fully utilize all available tools, resources, and funding available for childcare at the local, state, and federal level.</p> <p>2. Support the Opportunity Council's coordinated entry work, including support for childcare providers.</p> <p>3. Increase opportunities and technical assistance for Whidbey Island childcare program expansion.</p> <p>4. Expand training options and support for those interested in starting a childcare business.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>1.11.1: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor</p> <p>1.11.2: Island County, Opportunity Council</p> <p>1.11.3-1.11.4: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor</p>                                                                                                                                                      | 1.11.1-4: Ongoing + long-term |



## Goal 2: Support existing local businesses and community assets, increase diversification, and promote Island County as an attractive business environment.

| Sub-Goal                                                                                                                                              | Action Items                                                                                                                                                  | Partners                                                                             | Timeline                          |
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| <b>1. Support local governments and economic development service providers in creating responsive, helpful, and expedient services and resources.</b> | 1. Explore options and create a plan for the stabilization of planning departments throughout Island County, which includes a strategy for reducing turnover. | 2.1.1: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor        | 2.1.1-2.1.7: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 2. Create a plan to increase the consistency in interpretation of policies.                                                                                   | 2.1.2: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor        |                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 3. Explore options for a public information campaign to educate the public and business owners on regulatory policies.                                        | 2.1.3: Island County, City of Oak Harbor                                             |                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 4. Explore options for expedited, transparent permitting process for green, sustainable projects, especially those related to affordable or worker housing.   | 2.1.4: Island County, City of Oak Harbor, Town of Coupeville                         |                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 5. Review the County events code with a goal of simplifying and modifying to account for small businesses.                                                    | 2.1.5-2.1.6: Island County, Agriculture Resources Committee of Island County (ARCIC) |                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 6. Review and streamline County codes around food processing and farm stand permitting.                                                                       | 2.1.7: EDC for Island County, City of Oak Harbor                                     |                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 7. Collaborate with Island County by sharing information and expertise on projects and topics related to economic and business development.                   |                                                                                      |                                   |
| <b>2. Promote Island County as a great place to do business.</b>                                                                                      | 1. Continue to maintain and update County and regional economic information and data, such as the County profile and industry data, on the EDC's website.     | 2.2.1: EDC for Island County                                                         | 2.2.1: Ongoing + long- term       |

## Goal 2: Support existing local businesses and community assets, increase diversification, and promote Island County as an attractive business environment.

| Sub-Goal                                                         | Action Items                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Partners                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Timeline                          |
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| <b>2. Promote Island County as a great place to do business.</b> | 2. Continue to collaborate with San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom County ADOs to market Northwest Washington as an attractive location for businesses.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2.2.2: EDC for Island County                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 2.2.2: Ongoing + long- term       |
| <b>3. Continue to support existing businesses.</b>               | 1. Conduct business outreach and monitoring efforts to identify and address challenges and opportunities faced by businesses.<br>2. Provide information to businesses on such resources as access to funds, business growth, and educational programs and opportunities.<br>3. Provide referrals to partner agencies as appropriate.<br>4. Advocate for existing major employers and strengthen public understanding of their value to the local economy.<br>5. Continue to support Port tenants and businesses.<br>6. Develop business-specific workshops on an as needed basis.<br>7. Continue to host Business Builder Seminars.<br>8. Support workforce skill development throughout incumbent working training (existing workforce), on-the-job training (new workers), and support creating a talent pipeline for future workforce needs. | 2.3.1-2.3.5: EDC for Island County<br><br>2.3.5: Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey<br><br>2.3.6: Goosefoot Community Fund<br><br>2.3.7: Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce, Oak Harbor Main Street Association, City of Oak Harbor<br><br>2.3.8: Northwest Workforce Council | 2.3.1-2.3.8: Ongoing + long- term |

## Goal 2: Support existing local businesses and community assets, increase diversification, and promote Island County as an attractive business environment.

| Sub-Goal                                                                                                                                                                                         | Action Items                                                                                                               | Partners                                                                                             | Timeline                     |
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| <b>4. Explore options for recruitment of employers that complements and leverages the existing industry mix and aligns with local values.</b>                                                    | 1. Provide interested businesses from outside the county with site location and other pertinent information.               | 2.4.1-2.4.4: EDC for Island County, City of Oak Harbor                                               | 2.4.1-5: Ongoing + long-term |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2. Proactively market Island County to potential businesses and industries utilizing website and networking opportunities. | 2.4.5: Island County, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey |                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 3. Follow up on discovered opportunities including lead generation from the state.                                         |                                                                                                      |                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 4. Provide expertise and input in specific projects such as the designated Opportunity Zone in Oak Harbor.                 |                                                                                                      |                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 5. Create shovel ready sites and a diverse building supply for businesses that align with local needs and values.          |                                                                                                      |                              |
| <b>5. Promote and support innovation and value-added upgrading in key economic sectors of agriculture, construction, military / defense, marine trades, tourism, and advanced manufacturing.</b> | 1. Support leveraging local funds to increase food-processing infrastructure.                                              | 2.5.1: ARCIC, NABC, USDA                                                                             | 2.5.1-4: Ongoing + long-term |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2. Complete feasibility study for meat and poultry processing facilities in Island County.                                 | 2.5.2: ARCIC                                                                                         |                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 3. Support the development and improvement of commercial kitchens for value-added food processing and food truck usage.    | 2.5.3: Goosefoot Community Fund, Port of South Whidbey                                               |                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 4. Support the development of an Island County food systems study and plan.                                                | 2.5.4: Island County, Town of Coupeville, ARCIC                                                      |                              |

## Goal 2: Support existing local businesses and community assets, increase diversification, and promote Island County as an attractive business environment.

| Sub-Goal                                                                                                                                                                                         | Action Items                                                                                                          | Partners                                                                                                                 | Timeline                      |
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| <b>5. Promote and support innovation and value-added upgrading in key economic sectors of agriculture, construction, military / defense, marine trades, tourism, and advanced manufacturing.</b> | 5. Continue to support food recovery programs.                                                                        | 2.5.5: City of Langley, Langley Zero Waste                                                                               | 2.5.5-8: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 6. Continue to work with NABC to promote agriculture business resources and funding opportunities.                    | 2.5.6: EDC for Island County, Goosefoot Community Fund, NABC                                                             |                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 7. Provide space for distribution of agricultural products, the marine trades, and tourist lodging.                   | 2.5.7: Port of South Whidbey                                                                                             |                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 8. Improve infrastructure for advanced manufacturing.                                                                 | 2.5.8: Island County, City of Oak Harbor, Port of South Whidbey                                                          |                               |
| <b>6. Strengthen and better define and build entrepreneurial resources in order to create opportunities for mentoring, financing, exporting, legal and tax services, and networking.</b>         | 1. Build out the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Initiative.                                                               | 2.6.1-2.6.2: EDC for Island County                                                                                       | 2.6.1-2: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 1.Explore and take advantage of future entrepreneurship funding opportunities.                                        |                                                                                                                          |                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2.Continue to expand entrepreneurship work on Camano Island.                                                          |                                                                                                                          |                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 3.Explore options for expanding local entrepreneurship lending programs.                                              |                                                                                                                          |                               |
| <b>7. Support the creation of shovel-ready commercial, residential, and industrial sites in locations that are not in critical areas or habitats.</b>                                            | 2. Continue to host entrepreneurship programs and workshops.                                                          |                                                                                                                          |                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 1. Identify remaining buildable lands that are already appropriately zoned for industrial and commercial development. | 2.7.1: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey | 2.7.1: Ongoing + long- term   |

## Goal 2: Support existing local businesses and community assets, increase diversification, and promote Island County as an attractive business environment.

| Sub-Goal                                                                                                                                              | Action Items                                                                                                                         | Partners                                                                                                                                                            | Timeline                      |
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| <b>7. Support the creation of shovel-ready commercial, residential, and industrial sites in locations that are not in critical areas or habitats.</b> | 2. Identify remaining building lands that are already appropriately zoned for residential and RAID and identify infrastructure gaps. | 2.7.2: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, conservation districts                                                               | 2.7.2-5: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 3. Explore options for expanding DeLaurentis Airport business sites.                                                                 | 2.7.3: Island County, Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve                                                                                                      |                               |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 4. Promote and advertise the retail space openings at the Greenbank Farm and Port of Coupeville Wharf.                               | 2.7.4: Port of Coupeville                                                                                                                                           |                               |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 5. Support development of Industrial North.                                                                                          | 2.7.5: Island County, City of Oak Harbor, Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce, NASWI                                                                                     |                               |
|                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                     |                               |
| <b>8. Continue to support Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands (county-wide Tourism).</b>                                                               | 1. Participate, support, and promote Washington State's <u>Eat Local First</u> campaign.                                             | 2.8.1-2.8.3: Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands                                                                                                                     | 2.8.1-5: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 2. Support and promote farm and sea-to-table marketing.                                                                              | 2.8.4-2.8.5: Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands, Island County, Town of Coupeville, Port of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Arts Districts, ArtsWA |                               |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 3. Explore options to support and create marketing campaigns for Whidbey and Camano Island grown and made products.                  |                                                                                                                                                                     |                               |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 4. Support and promote environmentally responsible, sustainable, economically impactful events throughout Island County.             | 2.8.4.1: Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands                                                                                                                         |                               |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 1. Explore options to identify key events, impacts, and return on investments.                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                     |                               |
|                                                                                                                                                       | 5. Explore options to support the creative economy, with a particular emphasis on Langley Creates and Coupeville Arts District.      |                                                                                                                                                                     |                               |



**Goal 2: Support existing local businesses and community assets, increase diversification, and promote Island County as an attractive business environment.**

| <b>Sub-Goal</b>                                                                                                            | <b>Action Items</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Partners</b>                                                                                                | <b>Timeline</b>                |
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| <b>8. Continue to support Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands (county-wide Tourism).</b>                                    | 6. Provide support to County Tourism Committee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 2.8.6: EDC for Island County                                                                                   | 2.8.6: Ongoing + long- term    |
| <b>9. Explore options to conduct or participate in economic impact studies for key sectors of Island County's economy.</b> | 1. Explore options to conduct an economic impact study for the agriculture sector.<br>2. Collaborate with the South Sound Military Community Partnership (SSMCP) and the Lt Governor's Office on the statewide defense / military sector economic impact assessment.<br>3. Explore options to conduct economic impact studies related to Port business. | 2.9.1: ARCIC<br><br>2.9.2: Island County, City of Oak Harbor, NASWI, SSMCP<br><br>2.9.3: Port of South Whidbey | 2.9.1-3: Ongoing + long- term  |
| <b>10. Promote and support the development of local financial resources and financial literacy for businesses.</b>         | 1. Continue to market and advertise opportunities for Whidbey Island Local Lending (WILL).<br>2. Continue to offer financial literacy workshops for businesses on Whidbey and Camano Island.<br>3. Design and offer business specific workshops and trainings.                                                                                          | 2.10.1: EDC for Island County<br><br>2.10.2: EDC for Island County<br><br>2.10.3: Goosefoot Community Fund     | 2.10.1-3: Ongoing + long- term |

### Goal 3: Align quality education and skills training programs with employer needs and create living wage job opportunities in Island County.

| Sub-Goal                                                                                     | Action Items                                                                                                                                      | Partners                                                                 | Timeline                      |
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| 1. Continue to participate in regional workforce partnerships and organizations.             | 1.Continue to serve on the board of the Northwest Workforce Council.                                                                              | 3.1.1-3.1.3: EDC for Island County                                       | 3.1.1-3: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                              | 2.Continue to serve on the Skagit Valley College worker retraining committee.                                                                     |                                                                          |                               |
|                                                                                              | 3.Continue to have an EDC Board member who represents post-secondary education.                                                                   |                                                                          |                               |
| 2. Address the ongoing labor shortage by focusing on unserved and underserved worker groups. | 1.Support veterans re-entering the civilian workforce.                                                                                            | 3.2.1: Island County, City of Oak Harbor, Department of Veterans Affairs | 3.2.1-7: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                              | 2.Support and promote employment opportunities for Military Spouses.                                                                              | 3.2.2: SSMCP, NASWI                                                      |                               |
|                                                                                              | 3.Support partnership between NASWI and credentialing programs for active duty personnel and veterans to become certified in their myriad skills. | 3.2.3: NASWI, SVC, City of Oak Harbor                                    |                               |
|                                                                                              | 4.Support youth training and job opportunities.                                                                                                   | 3.2.1-3.2.7: Northwest Workforce Council                                 |                               |
|                                                                                              | 5.Support apprenticeship and work-based training opportunities.                                                                                   |                                                                          |                               |
|                                                                                              | 6.Explore options for retiree employment and volunteer opportunities.                                                                             |                                                                          |                               |
|                                                                                              | 7.Explore employment options for formerly incarcerated people.                                                                                    |                                                                          |                               |

### Goal 3: Align quality education and skills training programs with employer needs and create living wage job opportunities in Island County.

| Sub-Goal                                                                                     | Action Items                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Partners                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Timeline                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>3. Improve education attainment outcomes and create opportunities for all to prosper.</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Align skills and training options with living wage opportunities.</li> <li>2. Increase access and public awareness about trades and vocational opportunities.</li> <li>3. Increase access to early childhood education and services.</li> <li>4. Increase educational attainment rates.</li> <li>5. Expand access to STEAM programming.</li> <li>6. Explore options for a local Skills Center.</li> </ol> | <p>3.3.1: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, School Districts, Northwest Workforce Council, Skagit Valley College (Worker Retraining Advisory Committee)</p> <p>3.3.2: School Districts, Northwest Workforce Council, NWESD</p> <p>3.3.3-6: School Districts, NWESD, OSPI</p> <p>3.3.5: School Districts, Career Connect</p> | 3.1.1-3: Ongoing + long-term |



**Whidbey and Camano Islands are home to over 300 small family farms.** Photo courtesy of [Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands](#).

## Goal 4: Sustainably manage the natural beauty and resources of Island County.

| Sub-Goal                                      | Action Items                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Partners                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Timeline                      |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Prioritize actions for climate resilience. | 1. Support shorelines and sensitive environment through evidence-based approaches.                                                                                                                           | 4.1.1.1-4.1.1.3: Island County (Public Works, Planning and Community Development, Public Health, Marine Resources Committee), Whidbey Island Conservation District, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor | 4.1.1-6: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                               | 1. Incentivize Low Impact Design (LID), green infrastructure for stormwater management.                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                               |
|                                               | 2. Improve adaptive management approaches to tracking and mitigating nonpoint source pollution.                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                               |
|                                               | 3. Restrict development and septic infrastructure in flood prone and critical areas.                                                                                                                         | 4.1.2-4.1.4: Island County (Public Works, Planning and Community Development, Public Health, GIS Manager, Marine Resources Committee), Whidbey Island Conservation District, Town of Coupeville                             |                               |
|                                               | 2. Use sea level rise and rainfall project modeling and historical data to inform short and long term decisions, policymaking in order to guide planning and development near shorelines and critical areas. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                               |
|                                               | 3. Develop county modeling and data to identify vulnerable shoreline structures.                                                                                                                             | 4.1.5: Island County (Planning, Public Health,) Whidbey Conservation District                                                                                                                                               |                               |
|                                               | 4. Support the development of green infrastructure and environmentally friendly building practices through zoning and health regulations.                                                                    | 4.1.6: Island County (Public Health, Water Districts), Washington State Department of Health                                                                                                                                |                               |
|                                               | 5. Plan for warmer temperatures, wildfires, wildfire smoke, and rising sea levels through community planning and design guidelines.                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                               |
|                                               | 6. Strengthen hydrogeological monitoring of seawater intrusion and drinking water systems in Island County.                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                               |

## Goal 4: Sustainably manage the natural beauty and resources of Island County.

| Sub-Goal                                                                                      | Action Items                                                                                                                                                       | Partners                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Timeline                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>1. Prioritize actions for climate resilience.</b>                                          | 7. Explore options to apply for grants for additional electric vehicle charging stations.                                                                          | 4.1.7: Port of Coupeville, Town of Coupeville                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 4.1.7-10: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                               | 8. Explore options and identify funding to raise the Coupeville Wharf.                                                                                             | 4.1.8: Port of Coupeville                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                |
|                                                                                               | 9. Incorporate Climate Change and Resilience element into Comprehensive Plan Updates per GMA requirements.                                                         | 4.1.9: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                |
|                                                                                               | 10. Prioritize climate strategies that have the lowest possible long-term costs to the public, whenever possible.                                                  | 4.1.10: Island County                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                |
| <b>2. Support, promote, and educate the public on required adaptations to sea level rise.</b> | 1. Expand outreach and engagement campaigns through in-person events and social media, strengthening existing resiliency programs and working with local partners. | 4.2.1: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Sno-Isle Libraries, Coupeville School District, Langley School District, Oak Harbor School District, Stanwood Camano Island School District, Sound Water Stewards, Whidbey Island Conservation District, Marine Resources Committee | 4.2.1: Ongoing + long- term    |
| <b>3. Develop additional local incentives for forest, wetland, and farmland conservation.</b> | 1. Reexamine the Public Benefit Rating System using results and feedback from recent years and refine as needed.                                                   | 4.3.1: Island County (Planning and Natural Resources), Whidbey Island Conservation District, Town of Coupeville                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 4.3.1: Ongoing + long- term    |



## Goal 4: Sustainably manage the natural beauty and resources of Island County.

| Sub-Goal                                                                                      | Action Items                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Partners                                                                                                                                                                    | Timeline                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>3. Develop additional local incentives for forest, wetland, and farmland conservation.</b> | 2. Reexamine the Conservation Futures Fund program to provide more equitable access as well as climate resilience elements such as the additional use of conserved land for stormwater parks; refine as needed.                                                             | 4.3.2-4.3.5: Island County (Planning and Natural Resources), Whidbey Island Conservation District, Town of Coupeville                                                       | 4.3.2-5: Ongoing + long- term     |
|                                                                                               | 3. Explore options to develop watershed plans.<br>4. Explore options to develop a local wetland mitigation bank.<br>5. For all actions, consider impacts on affordable housing, with a focus on urban growth, preserving rural lands for forest, wetlands, and agriculture. | 4.3.1-4.3.2: Whidbey Camano Land Trust                                                                                                                                      |                                   |
| <b>4. Support and promote the development of the Green and Blue economies.</b>                | 1. Develop resilient public infrastructure to support Green and Blue zones.                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 4.4.1-4.4.2: Island County (Public Works, Planning, Public Health), Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Embrace Whidbey Camano Islands, private sector | 4.4.1-4.4.3: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                               | 2. Share the evidence-based benefits of Green and Blue infrastructure through community outreach and education.<br>3. Provide facilities and infrastructure for commercial fishing and crabbing, charter boats, and boat rentals.                                           | 4.4.3: Port of South Whidbey                                                                                                                                                |                                   |

## Goal 4: Sustainably manage the natural beauty and resources of Island County.

| Sub-Goal                                                                                         | Action Items                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Partners                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Timeline                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>5. Support opportunities for salmon habitat restoration and rehabilitation.</b>               | 1. Strengthen salmon recovery efforts through Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen's Advisory Committee (SRTCC) and the Lead Entity coordinator by integrating an environmental justice and climate lens.                      | 4.5.1: Island County, Local Integrating Organization, Northwest Straits Foundation, Marine Resources Committees, Tribes, Whidbey Camano Land Trust                                                            | 4.5.1-3: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                                  | 2. Continue to participate in the annual salmon release events.                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                               |
|                                                                                                  | 3. Continue to protect riparian areas through County regulations.                                                                                                                                                               | 4.5.2: City of Oak Harbor, Whidbey Camano Land Trust                                                                                                                                                          |                               |
| <b>6. Support and promote improvements to Island County's public lands, reserves, and parks.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 4.5.3: Island County                                                                                                                                                                                          | 4.6.1-5: Ongoing + long- term |
|                                                                                                  | 1. Expand environmental justice project review criteria for conservation land acquisitions to incentivize public access to green spaces and waterfronts, as a social driver of health, particularly for low-income communities. | 4.6.1: Island County (Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Citizens Advisory Board (CAB)), Whidbey Camano Land Trust                                                                                        |                               |
|                                                                                                  | 2. Intentionally create connected environments and expand recreational opportunities when designing community infrastructure, intentionally allocating infrastructure resources to low-income communities.                      | 4.6.2+5: Island County (Planning, Public Works, Health), Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Whidbey Camano Land Trust, Embrace Whidbey Camano Islands, private sector, community groups |                               |
|                                                                                                  | 3. Explore options for Conservations Future Funding for Freund Marsh.                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                               |
|                                                                                                  | 4. Maintain and improve Port recreational boat ramps and parks.                                                                                                                                                                 | 4.6.3: City of Oak Harbor, Whidbey Camano Land Trust                                                                                                                                                          |                               |
|                                                                                                  | 5. Increase equitable access to recreational environments through inclusive practices.                                                                                                                                          | 4.6.4: Port of South Whidbey                                                                                                                                                                                  |                               |

Goal 4: Sustainably manage the natural beauty and resources of Island County.

| Sub-Goal                                                                         | Action Items                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Partners                                                                                                                                                      | Timeline                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 7. Be prepared for population growth and in-migration.                           | 1. Support the Comprehensive Plan period update process, which includes updating population projections and housing unit allocations.                                                                                                                                                       | 4.7.1: Island County Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey<br><br>Support: EDC for Island County | 4.7.1: 2024-2025              |
| 8. Increase disaster preparedness among small business owners and entrepreneurs. | 1. Incorporate and share information about preparedness best practices (FEMA, WA EMD) with businesses as part of business assistance work.<br>2. Collaborate with Chambers and Emergency Management partners to have a coordinated effort to develop courses and business continuity plans. | 4.8.1: EDC for Island County<br><br>4.8.2: EDC for Island County, Island County Chambers of Commerce, Island County Emergency Management                      | 4.8.1-2: Ongoing + long- term |



RESOLVE TO BE READY

**Resolve to be ready for future disasters today.** Visit <https://www.ready.gov/business> for business resources. Photo provided by Ready.gov social media toolkits at <https://www.ready.gov/toolkits>.

## Goal 5: Deepen collaboration and coordination between Island County and regional partners.

| Sub-Goal                                                                                                                        | Action Items                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Partners                                                                                                                                                                                   | Timeline                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1. Further develop relationships with regional economic development agencies and strategic ADO partners.</b>                 | 1. Continue to participate in Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA).<br>2. Continue to build relationships with ADOs around Washington State.<br>3. Continue to participate in and build relationship with Washington Public Ports Association (WPPA). | 5.1.1-5.1.2: EDC for Island County<br><br>5.1.3: Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey                                                                                                 | 5.1.1-2: Ongoing + long-term |
| <b>2. Explore opportunities for collaboration and business support in Stanwood and Anacortes.</b>                               | 1. Explore options to support maritime business growth in Stanwood and Anacortes.                                                                                                                                                                                   | 5.2.1: City of Oak Harbor, EDC for Island County, EDASC, EASC, Island County, Skagit County, Snohomish County                                                                              | 5.2.1: Ongoing + long-term   |
| <b>3. Explore opportunities for developing the creative economy across Snohomish, Skagit, and Island Counties.</b>              | 1. Explore options to develop the creative economy across Snohomish, Skagit, and Island Counties                                                                                                                                                                    | 5.3: EDC for Island County, EDASC, EASC, Island County, Skagit County, Snohomish County, Coupeville Creative District, Langleigh Creates, ArtsWA                                           | 5.3.1: Ongoing + long-term   |
| <b>4. Explore opportunities to enhance disaster preparedness and resiliency between Island, Skagit, and Snohomish Counties.</b> | 1. Advance public health regional preparedness through continued resource sharing, continuity of operations planning, and mutual assistance agreements.<br>2. Continue to collaborate with Whatcom, Skagit, and San Juan Island on food system resiliency.          | 5.4.1: Island County (Emergency Management, Public Health), Snohomish County, Skagit County<br><br>5.4.2: Island County, Skagit County, Whatcom County, San Juan County, ARCIC, NABC, USDA | 5.4.1-2: Ongoing + long-term |

Goal 5: Deepen collaboration and coordination between Island County and regional partners.

| Sub-Goal                                                                                                                 | Action Items                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Partners                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Timeline                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 5. Explore additional opportunities for equipment and technology sharing between Island, Skagit, and Snohomish Counties. | <div>1. Explore options to work with Skagit and Whatcom County to develop shared agricultural infrastructure, such as a mobile slaughter unit.</div> <div>2. Explore options to work with Skagit and Whatcom Counties to develop a regional Wetland Mitigation Bank.</div> | <div>5.5.1: Island County, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley, City of Oak Harbor, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey, ARCIC</div> <div>5.5.2: Island County, Skagit County, Whatcom County, USDA, Northwest Agriculture Business Center, Washington State Department of Ecology, ARCIC</div> | 5.5.1-2: Ongoing + long-term |



The City of Oak Harbor and Oak Harbor Marina from the water with Mount Baker in the background during moonrise. Photo provided by the City of Oak Harbor.



This section provides information about how progress will be measured and what metrics will be tracked to gauge the progress and implementation of the Island County CEDS Action Plan.

### 1. Broad Performance Measures

Through the implementation of the vision, goals, and action strategies, the Review Committee expects the following long-term benefits:

- Living wage jobs that can support families will be created and retained.
- Infrastructure development and improvements will support residential and appropriate industrial development in non-critical areas.
- Economic development programming, coordination, communication, and information networks will be improved and strengthened, resulting in increased economic resiliency.
- Island County's highly valued quality of life and natural beauty will be maintained and conditions will improve for residents regardless of ability, race, gender, class, or religion.

Data and measurements can provide a snapshot of the region's economic health at a point in time or over time. Therefore, on an annual basis, the following metrics will be evaluated:

- Number of jobs by sector (WA ESD / BLS)
- Per capita personal income / average hourly and annual wages (WA ESD / BLS)

Island County has many stakeholders involved with economic development that have both distinct and overlapping responsibilities and authority. Therefore, it is important to note that outcomes may not be solely attributed to implementation of the economic strategy by any single partner and is likely due to a coordination of efforts. Additionally, Island County's economic system exists in a local, state, and global context. Some economic metrics are strongly influenced by factors outside of local control. For example, while affordable and available housing and childcare are both strongly influenced by state and federal policies and funding, as well as market forces, such as inflation and interest rates.

Therefore, in-depth local knowledge combined with available quantitative and qualitative data will be required to understand why changes may be occurring and obtain a holistic picture of the economic health of the region.

### 2. Specific Performance Measures

In addition to regularly reviewing econometric data related to Island County, specific performance measures will be evaluated as they relate to the details found in **Section 3, the Action Plan**. The metrics below will be measured over time and across different geographies and demographics (age, race, gender, etc.), where possible and data is available, to understand changes.

#### Goal 1: Infrastructure Metrics

- Grant investments in infrastructure projects (all types)
- System efficiency (water loss, electricity consumption, etc.) from Consumer Confidence Reports
- Water/wastewater: capacity limitations, number of systems with compliance issues, consumption rates
- Transportation: Transit ridership by purpose, number of fixed routes

- Broadband: Increase in number with access to high-speed internet, affordability rate
- Energy: Megawatts of installed local power generation, outage time per year
- Housing: New units built, housing stock volume, housing prices, permits issued by unit type; local ordinances updates related to affordability, ADUs/DADUs, vacancy rates
- Childcare: Number of providers, number of slots available

### **Goal 2: Business Support Metrics**

- Job creation in key sectors
- Net increase in average annual wage
- Number of networking events and number of attendees
- Number of entrepreneurs receiving counseling services
- Number of recruitment leads responded to
- Number of companies in key sectors
- Increase volume of small business lending
- Annual cost of living comparison

### **Goal 3: Workforce Development Metrics**

- Graduation / GED achievement rates
- Enrollment rates in postsecondary education
- Labor force participation rates
- Number of military spouses employed locally
- Jobs that align with the skills of Island County's workforce

### **Goal 4: Climate Resiliency Metrics**

- Number of public information events regarding required adaptations to sea rise
- Number of public information events regarding wildfires and wildfire smoke
- Number of events for business disaster preparedness
- Communications sent to businesses and residents regarding climate resiliency
- Number of local ordinances reviewed and amended to create incentives for forest, wetland, and farmland conservation
- Investments in public lands, reserves, parks
- Investments in blue and green infrastructure

### **Goal 5: Regional Collaboration**

- Increased communication between organizations, businesses, municipalities, counties
- Increased collaboration between municipalities and county
- Number of SWISS meetings with Island County elected officials in attendance
- Number of regional meetings related to economic resiliency
- Number of regional meetings related to workforce development
- Number of regional meetings related to transportation

### 3. Evaluation Plan

The evaluation framework serves as a tool to gauge progress on the successful implementation of the CEDS goals. The CEDS planning process and the creation of **Section 1.5**, Economic Conditions, required a review of “How are we doing?” and “What is our current situation?” As part of the evaluation process, CEDS stakeholders will be asked, “How are we doing now?” “What has been done?” and “Where do we need to focus more efforts?” Oversight and monitoring will provide the accountability required to ensure that the Island County CEDS 2024-2028 remains an active, living document with clear, meaningful, impactful economic development deliverables.

Per the recommendation the Review Committee, and with the consensus of the Board of Island County Commissioners, Island County intends to fund a third party responsible for evaluation monitoring and generating an annual progress report for all partners using RCED funds. The third party will be responsible for coordinating the annual Review Committee meeting as well as a quarterly review schedule to meet with responsible partners and collaborators regularly.

On a quarterly basis, the evaluator will meet with relevant partners to discuss progress on the goals they are responsible for. Quarterly meetings can also be used to identify ongoing gaps, additional partners, funding, and so on, related to the specific goal or sub-goal. The evaluator will also coordinate with relevant established committees (e.g. Transportation, Tourism, Broadband, etc.) and will be responsible for updating the CEDS Project List annually and on an as needed emergency basis.

In addition to evaluation of economic development activities countywide, as the ADO for Island County the EDC regularly reports deliverables and targets to Island County and the Washington State Department of Commerce on a quarterly basis. This includes financial reporting and reporting on business assistance efforts conducted during the quarter. The EDC also completes an ADO Best Practices report annually, which is submitted to the Department of Commerce and the Washington State Legislature.

Regional economic prosperity requires resiliency. The [EDA \(2023\)](#) defines resilience as “the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock altogether. Establishing economic resilience in a local or regional economy requires the ability to anticipate risk, evaluate how that risk can impact key economic assets, and build a responsive capacity.”

Examples of disruptions include:

- Downturns in economy or specific industries and sectors
- Changes in demand for locally produced goods or consumer spending
- External shocks such as the exit of a major employer or a disaster of any sort, including a pandemic

As outlined in [Island County’s Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), Island County is susceptible to many natural hazards and has experienced several disasters that resulted in a federal declaration. Since the Mount Saint Helen’s eruption in 1980, Island County’s disasters have primarily been from high tides and severe storms resulting in flooding, high winds, mudslides, and landslides.

Of particular concern to many in Island County is sea level rise. Currently there are already properties that are being submerged due to sea level rise, which has and will incur myriad economic impacts to Island County.

Those may include a reduction in property tax base, costs to the public of removing derelict and abandoned structures on the coast and holding back the sea, removal of ineffective shoreline armoring, as well as costs to recreation, tourism, fishing, and other maritime sectors due to the degradation of the coastal environment.

### 1. Planning

Island County, the Town of Coupeville, the Cities of Langley and Oak Harbor, and the Port of Coupeville and Port of South Whidbey are all undertaking various planning efforts related to generating resiliency, of which economic and climate resiliency are major parts.

The Island County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) works directly with Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD), FEMA Region X, and Homeland Security Region 1. The DEM is responsible for planning and coordinating actions for the preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery from emergencies and disasters. This includes updating and maintaining two related planning documents: The Island County [Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan](#) (CEMP) and the [Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan](#). The DEM is in the process of updating its Hazard Mitigation Plan, the most recently approved plan was in [2020](#).

In addition to being up to date with Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning, Island County and its municipalities subject to the GMA may also be required to include a new climate element in its 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update. In 2023, Washington State passed an update that added two sub-elements: Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction and Resilience.

Aside from emergency and disaster-related resilience, many aspects of the Island County CEDS helps generate and increase economic and climate resilience. For example, working with partners to create more affordable and available housing and childcare options will reduce employee turnover and make it easier for employers in Island County to find workers. This generates economic resilience. Workforce development and economic diversification also builds resilience to loss of major employers. By expanding access and inclusion, employers are less likely to overlook the talent and skills of people who are already living in Island County, which contributes to economic and climate resilience by retaining talent and reducing commute in/out of Island County. By improving accessibility to our marketing outreach efforts, more companies could get information critical to the health of their business, also increasing economic resilience. Finally, **Goal 4** is entirely about climate resilience.

### 2. Information Networks

There are several established communication and information networks in Island County that many key stakeholders regularly participate in, such as the Island County Council of Governments (COG). COG is lead by three members of the council, which is comprised of elected officials from Island County, the Cities of Oak Harbor and Langley, the Town of Coupeville, as well as the Ports of Coupeville and South Whidbey. This is an important venue for discussion and to gain consensus from elected leadership in Island County.

During the development of the Island County CEDS, two EDA representatives visited COG to provide an introduction to the EDA's work in March-April 2023. The EDC Executive Director and consultant again visited COG to provide information on the process, the intended use and benefits of the document, and to provide a progress report. In March 2024 COG reviewed, discussed, agreed upon the Evaluation Plan outlined in **Section 4.3** above.

Many elected official stakeholders in Island County also participate in the SWISS Counties Collaborative. SWISS Counties have adopted areas of focus, which include Internet expansion, behavioral health resources, and transportation investments. They also work together as a region to support disaster preparedness and coordinate emergency management plans. This effort intends to strengthen existing relationships in order to expand and to advocate to the State Legislature on issues that affect all five counties.

Likewise, multiple key stakeholders convene in industry specific workgroups in Island County, such as the Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism Board, the Oversight Group for Leadership Whidbey, and the Skagit/Island Counties Builders Association.



### 1. Frequently Asked Questions by Stakeholders

#### **What is a CEDS?**

CEDS stands for Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. It is a long-term planning document that is intended to guide economic development throughout a region.

#### **What are the benefits of having a CEDS?**

The CEDS is a requirement to be eligible to compete for EDA and other federal funding opportunities. It is also a requirement to be eligible for many Washington State funding opportunities. The CEDS also provides a long-term vision and plan for economic development in the region, making development more programmatic and efficient.

#### **How will feedback be evaluated and incorporated?**

The consultant managing edits for the document will review each comment and piece of feedback with the EDC for Island County and the CEDS Review Committee and assess what changes, if any, should be made to the document. The most important factors will be if the feedback complies with the CEDS purpose and guidelines and if it fits within the vision, priorities, goals, and objectives established by the CEDS Review Committee in the document.

#### **Who will implement the CEDS?**

Every partner that is listed in **Section 3.3 Action Plan** as a partner (Column 3) will be responsible for implementation within their jurisdiction or agency.

#### **How often will the CEDS be updated?**

Minimally, the CEDS will be amended annually to update the CEDS Project List. It will also be updated on an as needed basis in order to address external shocks or new situations. The entire document will be updated every five years.

#### **What is the difference between a CEDS and a Comprehensive Plan? And do we need both?**

Yes, we need both as the documents satisfy different requirements. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) oversees the CEDS requirements, process, and document. The EDA is the federal bureau for economic development in the United States. In order to access EDA funding, counties must have an up to date CEDS with a clear evaluation plan.

Comprehensive Plans are required for some counties, cities, and towns, based upon the Growth Management Act (GMA), which is Washington State law. An economic element is currently still optional, though a climate resilience element was mandated as part of the 2024-2025 update.

## 2. Key Stakeholders

From May 1, 2023 – February 29, 2023, several key stakeholder groups were solicited to engage in providing input and feedback into the CEDS process as well as the actual content to generate this document.

Those stakeholder groups were:

- Public agencies: city, county, tribal governments, public utility districts, regional planning groups
- Public advisory boards and committees: select groups that advise public agencies listed above on issues related to economic development
- Private sector: businesses, entrepreneurs
- Post-secondary institutions: institutions offering post-secondary course work, degrees, and workforce training
- Other economic, social, or health organizations, including nonprofits

The Review Committee identified key sectors within the private sector for targeted outreach. Those sectors were chosen based on several pieces of information. First, the consultant reviewed data on the largest employment and payroll sectors in Island County with the Review Committee. Second, the consultant also reviewed and provided information to the Review Committee on Washington State Department of Commerce's sector and cluster focus, as well as the Northwest Workforce Council's sector of focus for the Northwest Workforce Development Area, which Island County is a part of. This information weighs employment numbers, wages, as well as available local, state, and federal resources.

After the sectors of interest were agreed upon, the Review Committee agreed that the EDC for Island County would work with the consultant to generate a preliminary list of business owners and nonprofit leaders from each sector for targeted outreach. The list was then reviewed at a Review Committee meeting and distributed for comments and suggestions.

- |                                                    |                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| • Agriculture (62)                                 | • Manufacturing (5)                                   |
| • Construction (72)                                | • Maritime / Marine Trades (4)                        |
| • Creative Economy (13)                            | • Military / Defense (5)                              |
| • Education (16)                                   | • Nonprofits (26)                                     |
| • Healthcare (16)                                  | • Real Estate (11)                                    |
| • Infrastructure (includes energy, utilities) (29) | • Retail (includes restaurants) (18)                  |
|                                                    | • Tourism (includes events, leisure, recreation) (45) |

After the list was developed, the Review Committee members also provided contact information where possible. An initial email introducing the stakeholders to the CEDS process and requesting their feedback was sent to all stakeholders emails were identified for in September 2023. Additional follow up emails for those that did not respond were sent in September and October 2023. In total, over 600 emails were sent for targeted stakeholder outreach, not including follow ups, thank you notes, or responding to stakeholder questions.

### 3. SWOT Survey and Results

The SWOT survey was available for response from May 1 – February 29, 2024. Review Committee members actively advertising the opportunity to participate from May 1 – August 30, 2023.

The marketing and advertising of the SWOT survey included but was not limited to the following places:

- EDC for Island County newsletter to businesses and entrepreneurs
- EDC for Island County social media posts (Facebook and Instagram)
- EDC for Island County email to economic development partners to share via newsletter or social media posts templates
- EDC annual membership meeting (QR codes on all tables)
- Langley Chamber of Commerce social media posts and membership meeting
- Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce social media posts and board input
- Town of Coupeville newsletter

We consciously chose to order this survey as strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities so that survey respondents would end the survey on a positive, rather than negative note.

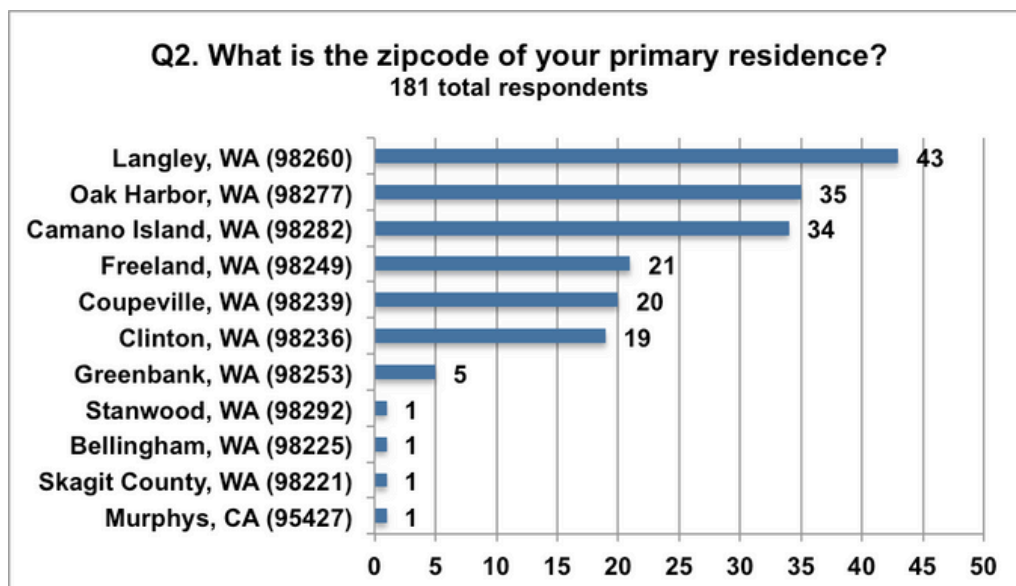
The English survey questions were as follows, with graphics and summarized data where aggregation is possible.

#### Identification

**1. What is your first and last name?** This data will be kept anonymous.

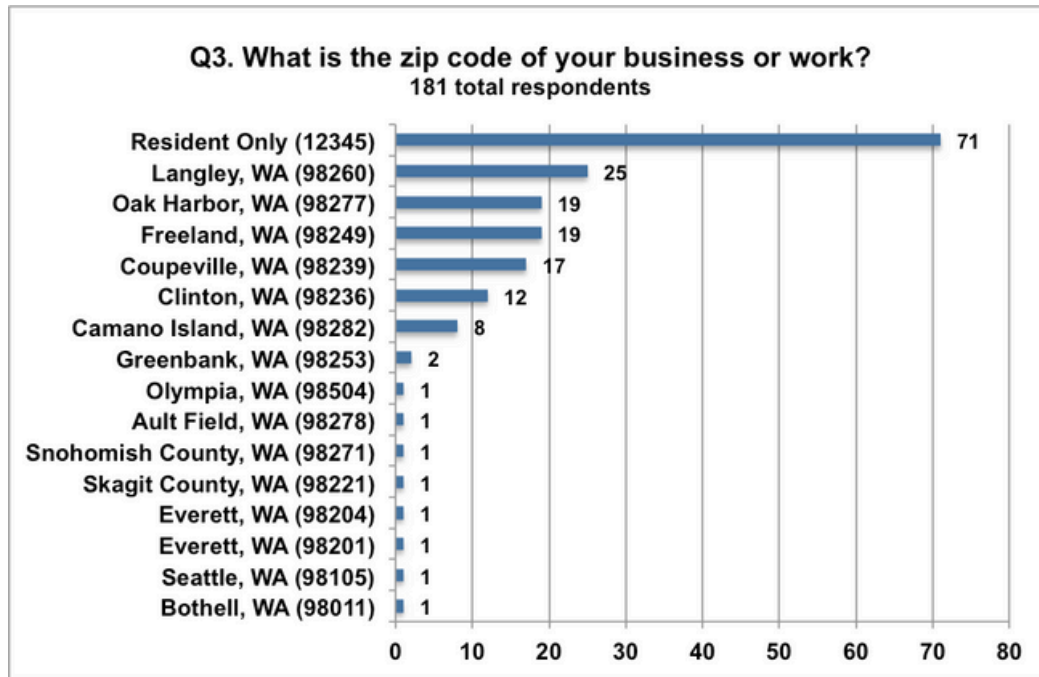
**2. What is the zip code of your primary residence?**

Out of 181 responses to the survey, the most responses were from individuals residing in Langley with 43 responses (23.75%). The next largest responses were from Oak Harbor (19.3%) and Camano Island (18.8%). There were only three responses from outside of Island County.



### 3. What is the zip code of your business or work? If you are retired, or are answering this survey as a resident only, please enter 12345.

Among the 181 responses, 71 indicated that they were answering from the perspective of a resident, rather than an employee or business owner. The top four answering from a business or work perspective were based in Langley (25), Oak Harbor (19), Freeland (19), and Coupeville (17). Only eight responded that their business or work was located outside of Island County.



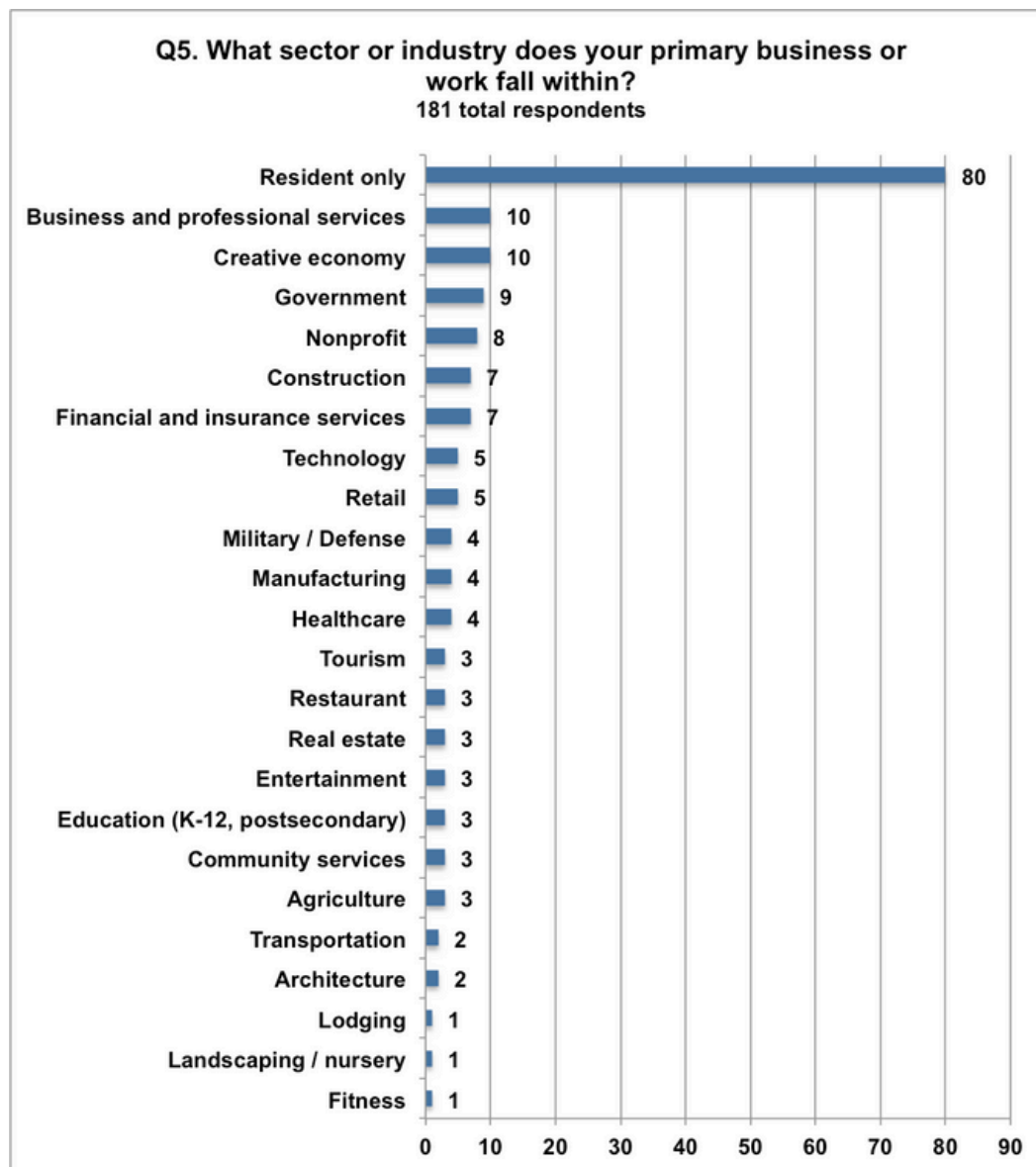
### 4. If you would like follow up information regarding the Island County CEDS, including future opportunities to provide comment, what is the best email address to reach you at?

This data will be kept anonymous.

### 5. What sector or industry does your primary business or work fall within?

While 71 of the 181 respondents indicated that they were answering from a resident only perspective in Q3, 80 respondents indicated that they were answering from a resident only perspective when asked what sector or industry their work or business was within. The top five sectors of responses after resident only were business and professional services, creative economy, government, nonprofit, and construction. For additional breakdown, see the Q5 figure below.

## 5. What sector or industry does your primary business or work fall within?

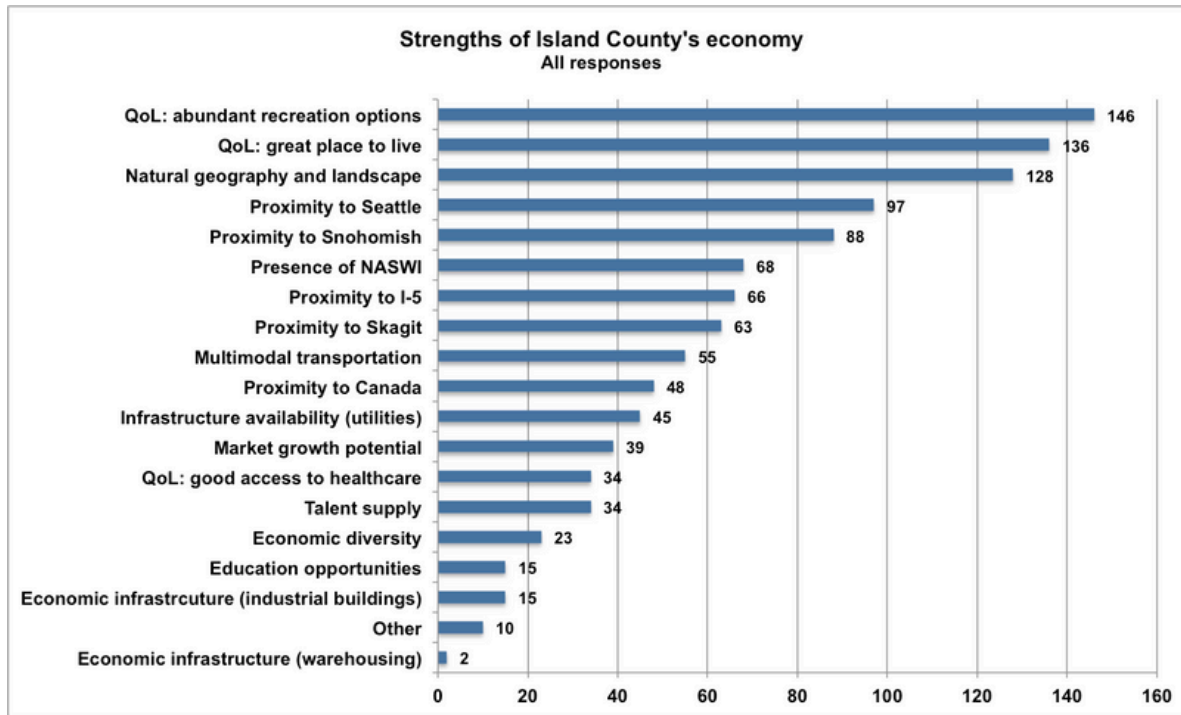


### Identifying Strengths

**6. Would you consider any of the following characteristics to be strengths of the Island County economy, as it relates to your particular business or sector?** Below is a list of strengths commonly identified in other communities. Some have been localized to make sense within Island County's context. *Check all that you believe apply to Island County. If you do not believe any to be true, please check Other.*



## Identifying Strengths



Far and away, respondents answered that Island County's greatest strengths are related to its high quality of life and geography, which results in abundant natural beauty and landscapes and offers many opportunities for recreation and tourism. While Island County is not as directly connected to I-5, Seattle, and Vancouver, many respondents believe that proximity to Seattle, Canada, and Snohomish and Skagit counties are a major strength and benefit to Island County. 68 respondents also noted that the presence of NASWI is a major strength of Island County's economy.

**7. Do you have any other feedback or inputs regarding strengths of your industry or sector or Island County's economy generally?** Topics of particular interest include economic diversity, business attraction, talent supply, business resources, infrastructure, and quality of life.

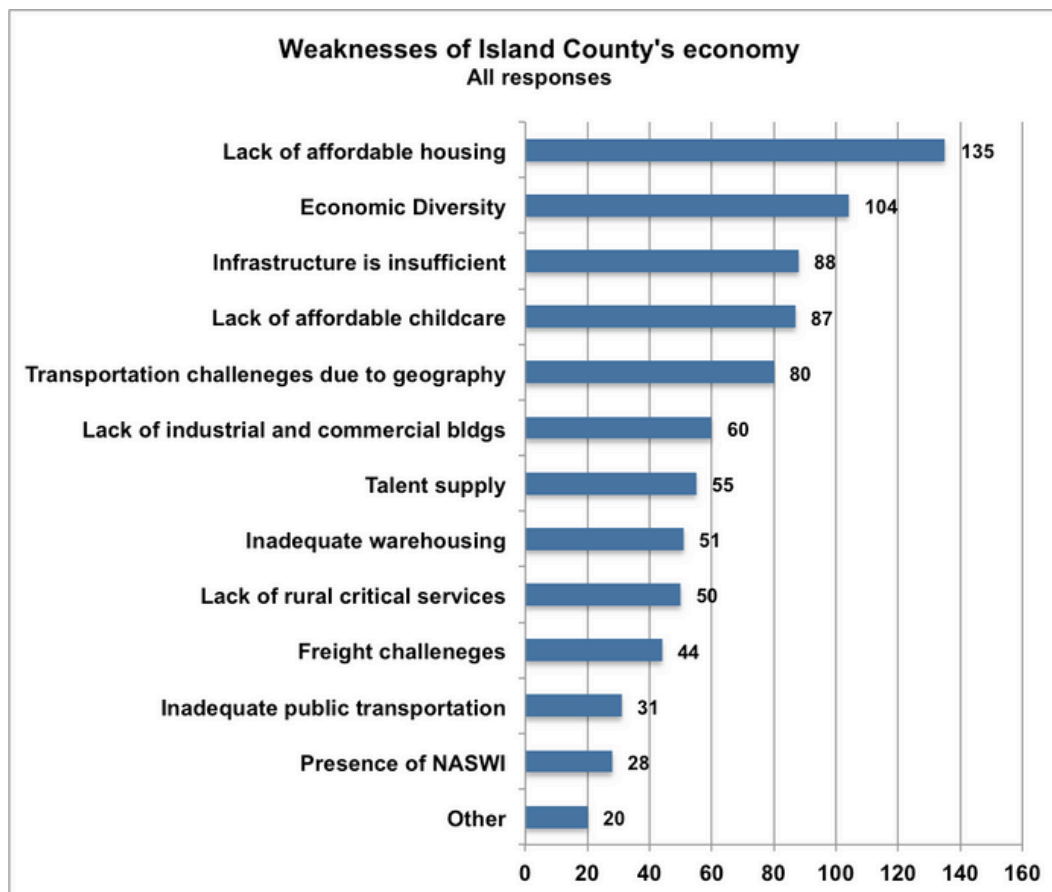
Respondents wrote in several additional strengths for this question, including but not limited to:

- People choose to live in Island County, resulting in very passionate communities
- Great business resources
- Tourism and agritourism creating business opportunities
- Many small farmers turning to more sustainable methods, small scale production
- Low crime rates
- A lot of housing expertise (construction, real estate, mortgage brokers, planners)
- Politically diverse communities

In addition, many respondents included weaknesses and threats in their optional write in. Those details are included appropriately under the weaknesses and threats descriptions below.

## Identifying Weaknesses

**8. Would you consider any of the following characteristics to be weaknesses of the Island County economy, as it relates to your particular business or sector?** Below is a list of weaknesses commonly identified in other communities. Some have been localized to make sense within Island County's context. *Check all that you believe apply to Island County. If you do not believe any to be true, please check Other.*



By far, the biggest challenge in Island County according to employers, residents, local elected leadership, nonprofits, and more is affordable housing. This is followed by the perceived lack of economic diversity, insufficient infrastructure, a lack of affordable childcare, and transportation issues due to island geography. This is not surprising as housing, childcare, and infrastructure are issues in nearly every county in the United States.

The transportation issues, however, are primarily local and stem from the nature of Island County's geography. The biggest of these issues being, 1) the unreliability of both the two ferries that go to/from Island County, but particularly the Mukilteo-Clinton route, and 2) the lack of connection between Camano and Whidbey Islands.

**9. Do you have any other feedback or inputs regarding weaknesses of your industry or sector or Island County's economy generally?** Topics of particular interest include economic diversity, business attraction, talent supply, business resources, infrastructure, and quality of life.

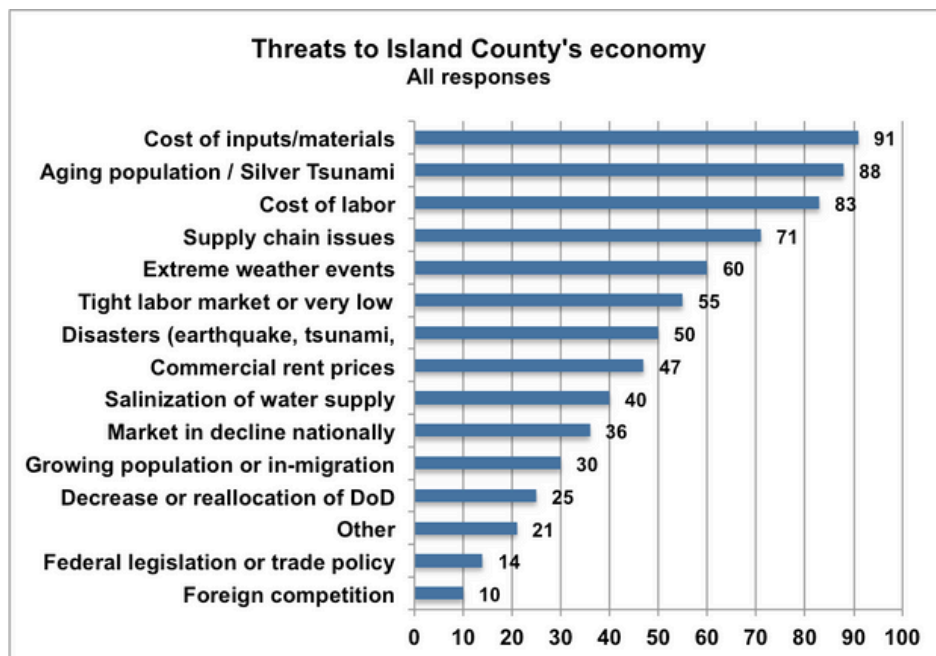
## Identifying Weaknesses

Respondents wrote in several additional weaknesses for this question (as well as in other write in areas), including but not limited to:

- Too many government jobs (not enough economic diversification)
- Lack of adequate sewer / water infrastructure (infrastructure inadequate)
- Low wages
- Lack of engineering jobs
- Many vacant commercial properties in some areas
- Permitting process too long and expensive for affordable housing
- Confusion over County's economic goals
- Commuting off Island to get some services and products is basically required
- Tight knit communities appear cold and closed off to newcomers
- Not enough entry level employees
- Small number of retail and restaurant options in some areas
- Lack of animal slaughter and processing resources
- Loss of Dutch colonial heritage
- Lack of easy access to veteran's centers and health services
- Lack of workforce / aging workforce
- Lack of youth night light and non-school activities
- Perceived misalignment between community wants/needs and government plans
- Very small market for certain services and products

## Identifying Threats

**10. Would you consider any of the following characteristics to be threats to the Island County economy, as it relates to your particular business or sector?** Below is a list of threats commonly identified in other communities. Some have been localized to make sense within Island County's context. *Check all that you believe apply to Island County. If you do not believe any to be true, please check Other.*



## Identifying Threats

As shown above, the biggest threats to Island County's economy, according to the 181 respondents, are primarily cost related (inputs, materials, labor), labor market related (aging population and very low unemployment), and disaster related (extreme weather, etc.).

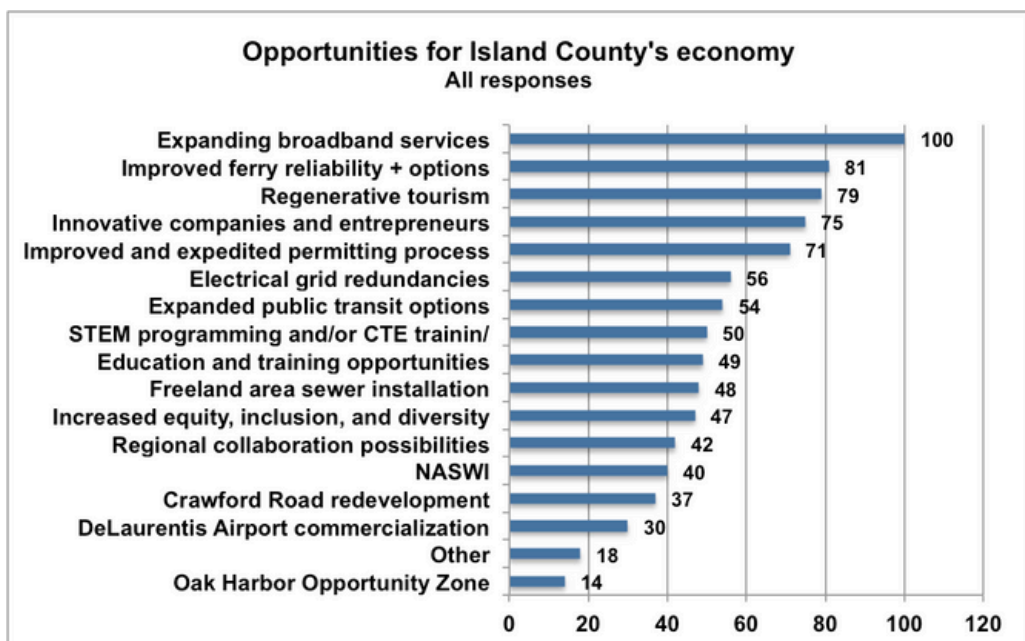
**11. Do you have any other feedback or inputs regarding threats of your industry or sector or Island County's economy generally?** Topics of particular interest include economic diversity, business attraction, talent supply, business resources, infrastructure, and quality of life.

Respondents wrote in several additional threats for this question (as well as in other write in areas), including but not limited to:

- Increased state regulations
- Impacts on land and resources due to tourism popularity
- Jet noise harming children's education experience
- Limited points of ingress/egress
- Loss of DOD funding / loss or cuts to NASWI
- Sprawl and lack of incentives to preserve and conserve Island County's environment
- Perceived racist culture
- Anti-development culture
- Us vs. Them mentalities related to the four census districts (N. Whidbey vs. S. Whidbey, Whidbey vs. Camano, etc.)
- NIMBYism

## Identifying Opportunities

**12. Would you consider any of the following characteristics to be opportunities for the Island County economy, as it relates to your particular business or sector?** Below is a list of weaknesses commonly identified in other communities. Some have been localized to make sense within Island County's context. *Check all that you believe apply to Island County. If you do not believe any to be true, please check Other.*



## Identifying Opportunities

**13. Do you have any other feedback or inputs regarding opportunities in your industry or sector or Island County's economy generally?** Topics of particular interest include economic diversity, business attraction, talent supply, business resources, infrastructure, and quality of life.

Respondents wrote in several additional opportunities for this question (as well as in other write in areas), including but not limited to:

- Lower road speeds, improving traffic flows
- Increasing walk/run/bike path availability
- Additional small health clinics
- Additional mental health services
- Public support for the creative economy, artisans
- Island Transit 7-day a week fare-free service
- Stabilizing planning departments throughout the county, reducing staff turnover
- Increasing predictability of code interpretation
- Expedited permitting for green, affordable housing projects
- Local, community solar projects
- Tighter relationship between County government and NASWI
- Increasing wages
- Aging population (many skills, knowledge to share)
- NASWI veterans and spouses (many skills, knowledge to share)
- Relationship building and listening sessions between planners and builders

## Outreach to Non-English Speaking Communities and Business

The survey was initially only available in English, however after discussion with the Review Committee and Island County, we decided to translate the a simplified version of the survey into Spanish and Tagalog, as well as social media assets for the EDC and partners to post. Island County generously funded the translation of the SWOT surveys and social media assets. The EDC for Island County, the City of Oak Harbor, the Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce, and Camano Island Chamber of Commerce all advertised the Spanish and Tagalog surveys on their social media or in their newsletters. Oak Harbor and Camano Island were targeted because they have the most diverse populations within Island County.

The survey was open from December 15, 2023 through March 15, 2024.

After receiving only one response to the Spanish SWOT by mid-February, additional outreach attempts were made by working with the Washington State Department of Commerce Community Engagement Team. This team is explicitly tasked with working with diverse community and business organizations. As a result, we were connected with the Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship (CIE) and the Asian Pacific Cultural Center. While willing to share the information, CIE noted that in the past they often had to discuss surveys face-to-face with respondents and sometimes help them fill them out. The Asian Pacific Cultural Center responded that they did not have any business connection located within Island County.



One of the lessons learned from this is that while translations are a necessary first step in reaching unserved and underserved population, it is not sufficient on its own and requires trauma-informed, culturally appropriate, trust-based outreach.

In discussion with staff experts at the Western Washing University Small Business Development Center (WWU SBDC) and CIE, this population of business owners and workers are unlikely to respond to emails or social media, especially from entities they do not personally know and have experience with. CIE also noted that in their other survey work, they first have to establish trust-based relationships with each individual business owner or worker in order to make them feel comfortable with responding to a survey. This population is very unlikely to respond to surveys or emails from organizations or individuals they do not have personal experience with.

Additionally, it is important to note that a large segment of Northwest Washington's population from Central and South America are actually not Spanish speakers. Many are Indigenous and either do not speak Spanish at all or Spanish may be their second language. During the Nooksack and Skagit River floods in 2021, which impacted Skagit and Whatcom Counties, FEMA translated emergency materials into Spanish, Russian, and Punjabi, Quechua, Mam, K'iche, Mixteco-Bajo, Mixteco Alto, and Triqui. Indigenous language translations occurred via negotiations between FEMA and the Guatemalan and Mexican Consulates.

Many workforce and economic development organizations in the region do not have the resources (staff or funding) to translate materials into every language that is truly needed. Additionally for some Indigenous languages there are only one to two translators available in the entire United States.



Camano Commons home to many shops and annual events on Camano Island. Photo courtesy of Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands.

## 4. Industry SWOT Results

Industry SWOTs are the consolidated results of the survey, stakeholder interviews, Review Committee input, and other targeted sector input.

### Agriculture

#### Strengths

- Approximately 370 small family farms
- Growing number of products grown
- Growing number of product-to-table growers
- Growing number of value-added products produced
- Contributes to conservation and land stewardship
- Contributes to natural beauty and scenic views
- Enhances local quality of life
- Increase local food security and resiliency
- Northwest Agriculture Business Center programs + resources
- Multiple local agriculture education options
- WSU Extension
- Organic Farm School
- Pacific Rim Institute
- Multiple farmer's markets, Whidbey Island Grown Cooperative
- Agricultural Resources Committee for Island County
- Tight-knit well connected industry

#### Weaknesses

- Labor shortage, hard to find seasonal workers
- Many farmers have inadequate access to healthcare
- Many farmers are aging with no retirement or succession plans
- Lack of workforce housing
- Lack of local slaughter services / mobile slaughter unit
- Perceived differences within industry between larger family farms and "hobby farms"
- Perceived conflict between industry and environmental groups
- Unreliability of Mukilteo-Clinton ferry

#### Opportunities

- Agritourism (Whidbey and Camano as Floating Farm Stands)
- Mobile slaughter unit
- Employee Ownership
- Revised Events code presents opportunities to aging and new farmers for alternative streams of income

### Agriculture

#### Threats

- Environmental degradation
- Climate change impacts
- Rising input costs
- Aging farmers
- Rapidly increasing land costs/value

### Construction

#### Strengths

- Growing number of businesses and jobs
- Industry forecasts indicate growth for 20+ years
- Many small local, on Island, builders
- Many in industry are well educated in local code
- Local businesses committed to hiring local workers
- Community wants to hire local construction companies
- Very tight knit industry
- Deeply involved with local community

#### Weaknesses

- Labor shortage
- Lack of affordable, accessible workforce housing
- Employee turnover in county, city, town planning departments
- Perceptions of arbitrary, lengthy government processes
- Lack of contractors results in off-Island, higher price services to commute in
- Long wait times for certain services (plumbing, sewage, water, electricians, etc.)
- Most construction focused on new builds, large projects, not small fixes

#### Opportunities

- Explore options to stabilize planning department staffing
- Explore options to standardize and increase predictability of code interpretation
- Additional Builder's Listening Sessions with County and other jurisdictions
- State Housing laws will require significant growth in this industry
- Workforce housing

#### Threats

- Rising cost of inputs / materials
- Cost of living creating wage pressure on small businesses

### Creative Economy

#### Strengths

- Two Creative Districts (Langley, Coupeville)
- Multiple artists; art nonprofits; galleries; sculpture gardens, forest, parks

### **Creative Economy**

#### Strengths

- Events and education opportunities for all types of artists (painters, writers, sculptors, actors, photographers, etc.)
- Flexible work hours and locations
- A lot of information and resource sharing within the industry
- A lot of industry knowledge

#### Weaknesses

- Many small arts nonprofits contributing to difficult operating environment
- Many artists require additional jobs to make ends meet
- Business training and resources available for creatives
- Cost of housing
- Cost of studio space / square footage available
- Aging industry with unclear succession and replacements

#### Opportunities

- Large consolidated performing arts center
- Entrepreneurial and leadership training for artists
- Pool of part time and flexible potential workforce
- Mentorship and networking events for young artists

#### Threats

- Economic cycles, downturns
- Lack of funding

### **Education**

#### Strengths

- Skagit Valley College, WSU Extension in Oak Harbor
- Proximity to WWU, WWC, BTC in Bellingham
- Multiple schools with remote options and local in-person supervision available
- Highly educated local population
- Four K-12 School Districts (3 in Island, 1 in Stanwood/Snohomish County)

#### Weaknesses

- Wages not in alignment with cost of living
- No Skills Center within Island County
- Students often have to commute off island to access programs
- K-12 early education readiness rates low
- Misperceptions about education and local job opportunities
- Lack of affordable housing is creating additional costs for school districts
- Lack of affordable housing and increased houselessness among students puts students in precarious, unstable positions, often resulting in poorer performance

### Education

#### Weaknesses

- Many youth training programs cut or limited due to budget cuts

#### Opportunities

- Engaging with school districts, teachers, parents to educate them about the trades, manufacturing, construction, healthcare
- Island County Skills Center
- Affordable, accessible housing
- Affordable, accessible childcare and early education learning opportunities

#### Threats

- Inadequate or reduced state and federal funding

### Infrastructure (includes Energy, Transit, Utilities)

#### Strengths

- Island Transit 7 days a week, zero-fare system
- Good working relationship between PSE-Island County and SNOPUD-Island County
- Good working relationship between ISPs and Island County jurisdictions
- Committed, active Broadband Action Team
- Several new routes planned for fiber internet expansion

#### Weaknesses

- Whidbey Island is a sole aquifer system
- Majority of potable water and septic systems are privately owned
- Many aging septic systems on both islands
- Resident concerns about PFAS and other water and soil contaminants
- Some areas of both islands lack stable cellular services
- Some areas of both islands lack reliable, quality high-speed internet services
- Several areas where traffic bottlenecks, especially at ingress/egress points such as Clinton, Coupeville, Deception Pass, and Stanwood
- Lack of redundancies (particularly energy)
- Residential and commercial solar expansion slow
- Unreliability of ferries to/from Whidbey Island
- Lack of connection between Whidbey and Camano Islands
- Currently not enough Level 4 chargers for electric vehicles on both islands
- Rapidly increasing utility rates

#### Opportunities

- Exploring options for electrical grid redundancies (community solar)
- Improving and expanding quality, affordable internet services
- Improving cellular network coverage
- Supporting Island Transit zero emission transition



### Infrastructure

#### Opportunities

- Create Active Transportation Plans
- Expand number of Level 3 chargers
- Educate the public on septic system maintenance and repair

#### Threats

- Disasters, especially weather related
- Increasing materials / inputs costs

### Healthcare

#### Strengths

- Largest private employment sector within Island County
- Growing employment sector, growing wages
- Family wage jobs with career paths for growth
- Growing demand due to aging population and expanding disabled population
- Tons of interest by youth for jobs and training this industry

#### Weaknesses

- Skills and certification are a barrier/bottleneck to creating more jobs
- Not enough trainers (nurses) because they are underpaid as trainers
- Trouble maintaining and retaining staff, services in some areas of the county
- Many private healthcare providers are increasingly having trouble with insurance payments and system set up
- Small number of large providers, some with long wait times
- High-rate of burnout in the industry since March 2020

#### Opportunities

- Maintain existing services and staff
- Aging populations in S. Whidbey and Camano require additional healthcare, eldercare and aging adult services
- Expanded mental health and substance abuse recovery services
- Telehealth industry expansion

#### Threats

- Additional certification requirements
- Legislation that preferences large conglomerates over private providers

### Manufacturing

#### Strengths

- Industry offers family wage jobs
- Close proximity to aerospace, food, and marine manufacturing centers
- Expanding support from State for sub-sectors (marine trades, food processing)

### Manufacturing

#### Weaknesses

- Small number of jobs within Island County, most require commuting
- Limited number of appropriate industrial sites with infrastructure available in Island County
- Many residents and elected officials in Island County oppose additional manufacturing, particularly heavy industry, due to environmental concerns
- Smaller contractors have difficulty obtaining military and aerospace contracts

#### Opportunities

- Expanded, value-added food processing
- Expanded, value-added light industrial in existing, appropriately zoned non-critical areas
- Oak Harbor Opportunity Zone
- Oak Harbor's Industrial North

#### Threats

- Vulnerable to economic cycles
- Vulnerable to global competition

### Maritime / Marine Trades

#### Strengths

- Three Ports, multiple marinas, two ferry route connections
- Strong regional ties to marine trades in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish
- Strong ties to manufacturing and construction industries
- Home to Nichol's Brothers Boat Builders
- Hundreds of miles of coastline

#### Weaknesses

- Lack of affordable, quality childcare
- Lack of affordable, quality workforce housing
- Cost of living increases creating wage pressure on employers
- Unreliable ferry between Snohomish-Island County

#### Opportunities

- Capitalizing on Maritime Blue and industry cluster resources
- Workforce housing
- Improved ferry services
- Electrification of maritime industry products (boats, batteries, etc.)
- Value added innovation
- Orca and marine life and environment stewardship

#### Threats

- Disasters (tsunamis, winter storms, King tides)

### **Military / Defense**

#### Strengths

- Proximity to Boeing, Paine Field
- Oak Harbor and Camano Island within reasonable commuting distance to Boeing
- NASWI is the only naval air station in the PNW
- Aerospace jobs pay higher wages

#### Weaknesses

- Majority of aerospace manufacturing industry located outside of Island County (e.g. Snohomish, Skagit Counties); requires commuting off-Island
- Workforce housing
- Lack of affordable, accessible childcare
- Negative public perceptions of the industry
- Lack of accreditation and certification of veterans

#### Opportunities

- Industrial North
- Light, environmentally friendly manufacturing
- Veterans with related skills and knowledge
- Military spouses with related skills and knowledge
- Certification of veterans for skills that can be used off-base

#### Threats

- Changes to Department of Defense spending
- Industry highly impacted by economic cycles

### **Real Estate**

#### Strengths

- Huge demand for all types of housing product
- Tight knit real estate community
- Good relationship with the construction and mortgage/banking industry
- Very knowledgeable realtors throughout the county

#### Weaknesses

- Outside realtors uninformed and not knowledge about Island County can create long-term problems for buyers, realtors, local governments
- Not enough product, not enough diversity of product
- High interest rates putting borrowers in precarious situations
- Extremely high median prices
- Housing and childcare costs impacting realtors themselves

#### Opportunities

- Develop permanently affordable units

### Real Estate

#### Opportunities

- Develop more of all types of units
- Create workforce housing
- Expedited permitting process for affordable housing, green projects
- Revised ADU / DADU codes

#### Threats

- Rising interest rates
- Changing fee structures

### Retail

#### Strengths

- Large employment sector
- Varied sector with many types of services and products
- Supports multiple other sectors (e.g. creative economy, tourism)
- Lots of opportunities for youth and seasonal employment

#### Weaknesses

- Labor shortages causing some businesses to limit operations/hours
- Main Street businesses not keeping regular M-F, 9-5pm hours
- Retail wages are low
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of affordable childcare

#### Opportunities

- Work share programs
- Workforce housing
- Affordable, quality childcare

### Tourism (includes Events, Recreation + Leisure)

#### Strengths

- Hundreds of miles of pristine coastline
- Forested areas, scenic views, myriad hiking, walking, running options
- Many state and county parks
- Multiple marinas and harbors
- Amazing farm stands, farm visit, and organic food opportunities
- Most visited State Park in WA (Deception Pass)
- Booming events industry throughout the year and on both islands
- Easy day trip for Seattle area population
- Embrace Camano and Whidbey Islands / Tourism Committee

### **Tourism (includes Events, Recreation + Leisure)**

#### Weaknesses

- Jobs are lower wage, hard to find workers, especially seasonal workers
- Lack of workforce housing
- Impacts of tourism on land, water, housing, traffic
- Negative perceptions that housing is being used for short-term rentals
- Potentially too many events
- Not all events have the same degree of positive impact on business
- Unclear messaging and marketing to date on new direction

#### Opportunities

- Creating a strategy and action plan to implement Transformative Tourism
- Expansion of agritourism
- Expansion of the number of DADU and ADUs
- Work share programs
- Workforce housing
- Affordable, quality childcare
- Whidbey and Camano wide events calendar
- Some events consolidation
- Events and tourism impact study

#### Threats

- Climate change impacts (including wildfire smoke)
- Disasters

### **Nonprofits**

#### Strengths

- Many engaged, caring local citizens
- Nonprofits provide many services and goods to local population
- Strong network increases local economic and disaster resiliency
- Cover many topics, something for all interests and passionates

#### Weaknesses

- High number of nonprofits creates difficult operating environments
  - Increased difficulty with fundraising
  - Increased difficulty differentiating products / services
  - Increased difficult finding workers
- Cost of living increases creating wage pressure nonprofits cannot afford
- County/City/Town departments recruiting for similar positions at higher pay, resulting in staffshortages and some nonprofits defunded
- Many nonprofits staffed by aging volunteers



### Nonprofits

#### Opportunities

- Nonprofit mergers
- Work share programs
- Workforce housing
- Affordable, quality childcare
- Relationship building with County staff

#### Threats

- Federal, state, and local reductions to funding



**A gray whale feeding off of Tillicum Beach, Camano Island.** Photo by [John Storbeck](#) on [Unsplash](#).



## 5. Stakeholder Interviews

As detailed in **Appendix 6.2** above, key sectors and stakeholders for targeted outreach were identified by the EDC, then reviewed and added to by the Island County CEDS Review Committee. Island County Planning and Community Development provided key stakeholder information for regular customers and users of planning and development services in the construction and real estate industries. Likewise, Island County Public Health provided names of key stakeholders in the childcare and healthcare industries.

This outreach, which included sending over 600 emails and follow up emails to key stakeholders, resulted in 81 interviews. Of those 81 interviews, approximately 19 interviewees were located in North Whidbey, 14 in Central Whidbey, 28 in South Whidbey, 8 on Camano Island, and 12 were county-wide businesses / agencies or roles. The interviewees included 45 women, 33 men, and three non-binary or gender non-conforming individuals, of who seven were Black, Indigenous, or People of Color, and four were veterans. Interviews were conducted over the phone or Zoom and ran 30 to 90 minutes in length, with the vast majority running approximately one hour.

At least one interview was conducted within every sector, with the bulk of interviews being conducted in the following with those working in agriculture, construction, infrastructure, government, education, and nonprofits.

### Interview Questions

All interviews were conducted using structured interview methods for the beginning of the interview and open-ended interview methods towards the end of the interview. In other words, all stakeholders were asked the same questions. Interviewees were provided the guarantee of anonymity.

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself, your business, and why you find yourself working or doing business in Island County.
2. What are some of the strengths of working in Island County? What is currently working well?
3. What are some of the challenges of working in Island County? What is currently not working?
4. What are some opportunities you see for Island County's economy?
5. What are some threats or issues you worry about for Island County's economy?

### Interviews Summary

#### Question #2 Strengths

Many of the people interviewed were very positive about Island County's economy. A number of themes emerged from the interviews, which support and contextualize the survey results.

Key themes included:

- Extremely knowledgeable and passionate population / communities
- New direction of Embrace Camano and Whidbey Islands very promising

- Agritourism options are abundant and growing
  - Whidbey and Camano Islands as “floating farm stands”
- Small farms and farm to table options increasing Island County food security
- Variety of types of farms and products creating niche markets and food processing opportunities
- Construction and real estate industry well versed in code interpretation and compliance
- Nonprofit provide many valuable important community services
- Amazing natural geography and resources

### Question #3 Weaknesses

Despite positivity and excitement about Island County’s economy, interviewees also had a number of concerns. Key themes included:

- Lack of affordable housing and workforce housing throughout Island County, but particularly in N. and S. Whidbey
- Misalignment between the cost of living and wages
- Lack of entry level workers, especially retail, restaurant and tourism workers
- Unreliability of both ferries causes myriad problems for businesses and workers
- County, city, and town employee turnover delaying projects and development progress
- Lack of consistency in planning and development code interpretation
- Misalignment between residents knowing more housing is needed and not wanting more housing built in their neighborhood or area
- Sole aquifer water system, aging septic systems, PFAS contamination
- County departments hiring nonprofit staff, reducing pool of available workers
- Lack of connections and communications between Whidbey and Camano Islands
- Communication lacking between County and some funded nonprofit partners
- Potentially too many events, too many nonprofits

### Question #4 Opportunities

Interviewees had many ideas regarding opportunities for Island County’s economy. Some of those ideas were to turn weaknesses into opportunities (e.g. build afford housing) and some were unique opportunities (e.g. DeLaurentis Airport commercialization).

Key opportunities included:

- Build affordable housing
- Build workforce housing
- Support and promote the expansion of affordable, quality childcare slots
- Build relationships between County, EDC, and key industry associations (such as builders, realtors)
- Commercialization of DeLaurentis Airport
- Paving Crawford Road
- Including and working with construction and infrastructure industry whenever considering building and planning regulations that impact the cost and speed of their work
- Expedited permitting process

- Stabilization of employee turnover at the County, Cities, Town
- Considering additional sewer treatment installation in S. Whidbey
- Oak Harbor marina improvements
- Oak Harbor's Industrial North
- Improved, reliable high-speed internet throughout both islands
- Improved, reliable cell service, especially in rural areas
- Community solar programs
- Revised events code
- Revised benefits and rating systems so that people use it more
- Create more incentives to conserve and preserve forests, shorelines, farmland
- Reducing or consolidating events / do an events study to evaluate impacts
- Limit events that are high impact to the environment but low impact and benefit to the local community and economy
- Promote events that are low impact to the environment and high impact and benefit to the local community and economy
- Developing how to and explanatory resources for businesses
- Expanding entrepreneurship programming to Camano Island
- Better prepare businesses and entrepreneurs for disasters and financial downturns
- To be a leader in climate resiliency action
- To be a leader in addressing the affordable housing crisis

### Question #5 Threats

Overall interviews were less focused on external threats and much more focused on issues interviewees to be particularly acute in Island County. For example, when asked about threats, the vast majority focused on the lack of affordable housing, childcare, and the unreliability of the ferry system. Most did not identify federal level issues or external shocks as a primary concern.

However, some key threats were still identified through the interviews, including:

- Climate change
- Climate refugees impacting in-migration
- Disasters and extreme weather events (king tides, tsunamis, earthquake, wildfires, smoke)
- Quickly changing state regulations that require financial capacity and workforce skills that many businesses and nonprofits do not currently have
- Rising interest rates
- Certain sectors highly subject to global competition
- Certain sectors very vulnerable to economic cycles and recessions (aerospace, military, manufacturing, construction)
- Ongoing supply chain issues and materials issues

Sector specific comments can be found in the **Appendix 6.4** Industry SWOT above.

## 6. Data Sources and Relevant Reports, Studies, Strategies.

This report is meant for electronic use. As such, the majority of data sources are cited and linked in text or below figures and tables. For those that are not, information and data was drawn from the following key websites, reports, plans, and studies.

2024. ArtsWA. [Creative Districts.](#)

2024. Choose Washington. [Washington's growth industries.](#)

2022. Childcare Aware of Washington. [Childcare in Island County.](#)

2020. City of Langley. [Comprehensive Plan.](#)

2024. City of Langley. [2025 Comprehensive Plan Update.](#)

2022. City of Oak Harbor. [Comprehensive Plan.](#)

2024. City of Oak Harbor. [Adopted Plans.](#)

2024. Economic Development Council for Island County. [Island County Profile.](#)

2023. Economic Development Council for Island County. [Major Employers of Island County.](#)

2022. Economic Development Council for Island County. [Seasonal Housing Report.](#)

2023. Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands. [Regenerative Guide.](#)

2023. Employment Security Department. Washington State. [Agricultural employment and wages.](#)

2023. Employment Security Department. Washington State. [County Profiles: Island County.](#)

2023. Employment Security Department. Washington State. [Labor Area Summaries.](#)

2024. Island Access 2045. [Island County Regional Transportation Plan.](#)

2024. Island County. [2023-2024 Community Health Assessment \(CHA\).](#)

2024. Island County. [Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.](#)

2016. Island County. [Comprehensive Plan Update.](#)

2021. Island County. [Comprehensive Plan 2025 Update.](#)



2020. Island County. [Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan](#).
2024. Island County. [Parks and Trails Documents](#).
2021. Island County Child Care Partnership Task Force. [Special Report](#).
2021. Island County Child Care Partnership Task Force. [June 2021 Needs Assessment](#).
2024. [Island Transit](#).
2024. [Langley Creates Creative District](#).
2018. Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. [Economic Impact Assessment](#).
2024. Puget Sound Energy. [Clean Energy Implementation Plan](#).
2024. SNOPUD. [Integrated Resource Plan](#).
2023. Town of Coupeville. [Comprehensive Plan](#).
2017. US Department of Agriculture. Census of Agriculture. [County Profile: Island County, Washington](#).
2022. US Department of Agriculture. Census of Agriculture. [County Profile: Island County, Washington](#).
2024. Washington State Department of Commerce. [Community Economic Revitalization Board \(CERB\)](#).
2024. Washington State Department of Commerce. [Economic Partnerships](#).
2024. Washington State Department of Commerce. [Housing](#).
2024. Washington State Department of Commerce. [Internet for All in Washington](#).

## 7. Public Comment

A 30-day public comment was held from Monday, April 15, 2024 to Friday, May 17, 2024. The document was posted on the EDC's [CEDS webpage](#) on Monday, April 15, 2024 with a link to the PDF and instructions for how to submit comments.

In addition to posting the document for comment on the website, an email was sent out to all Board members and EDC members and partners announcing the opportunity for public comment and asking partners to please share the opportunity with their members, employees, or constituents. The consultant provided the EDC and all Review Committee members with two social media and email templates for their convenience, one being an announcement and the other being a follow up reminder. Partners posted or emailed the announcement out to their networks at their convenience.

The consultant also provided the EDC and Review Committee with a press release announcing the public comment period. The EDC sent out an additional email blast to their members with the press release details and posted the opportunity for public comment on their social media (Facebook) on April 15, April 22, May 6, and May 15, 2024 (478 followers). The EDC Facebook posts tagged partner Chambers and Tourism agencies (over 10,000 followers combined), and were directly shared by the City of Oak Harbor (6,300 followers), the Clinton Chamber of Commerce (2,000 followers), and three accounts related to WSU Extension – Island County (approximately 1,000 followers combined). Island County government also posted the opportunity for comment on their social media (Facebook) on April 15, 2024. In addition, many agencies distributed the CEDS draft and public comment form within their organizations.

For example, the City of Langley shared the opportunity with the Langley Planning and Building Updates email list (245 recipients) as well as a reminder and posted two fliers on their bulletin boards in City Hall and at the Post Office. The City of Oak Harbor also included a link on the City's economic development page. NASWI included links to the draft and comment form in their "All Hands" distribution email, which goes to all NASWI personnel, with approximately 11,000 recipients. The opportunity to comment was also shared on the Camano Island Library webpage and with Island County library managers. The Clinton Community Council shared the opportunity with council members and community stakeholders. The Camano Chamber of Commerce shared the opportunity in their e-newsletter twice (650 recipients) and their social media (3,800 followers), and Board of Directors (16 individuals and business owners). Many other Review Committee members and agencies shared this opportunity to comment and overall, the opportunity to comment was widely publicized and distributed throughout Whidbey and Camano Islands.

Comments received were carefully evaluated by the EDC consultant and staff, with every comment categorized, necessity and content of edit discussed, required edits were then made and reviewed by all. Comments and edits made to date were then discussed at the May 2024 Review Committee meeting. Additional comments received after the meeting were catalogued, reviewed, and sent out to the Review Committee with an updated draft for their review. Any remaining questions about comments were reviewed with the EDC and Island County. The Review Committee agreed to the

substantive changes as well as the reporting method of comments via this summary appendix.

There were eleven unique commenters who provided a total of 38 comments, though many comments included anywhere from three to five sub-comments. Comments were received via the EDC website comment form and email.

Given space considerations, the following list contains a non-exhaustive high-level summary of comments received regarding the Island County CEDS 2024-2028, organized by topic. A 16-page detailed document with all of the public comments and actions taken is available upon request.

### Summary of Comments and Responses

| Comment Topic      | Summary of Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Climate Resilience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add organizations as partners to climate goals</li> <li>• Gear actions towards permanent protection</li> <li>• Gear actions towards prevention, not response</li> <li>• Add more about sea level rise and the costs to Island County</li> <li>• Require low impact design green infrastructure</li> <li>• Do not allow any development in flood prone or critical areas</li> <li>• Do not allow any new bulkheads</li> <li>• Do not allow any more shoreline armoring</li> <li>• Identify funding to remove existing derelict and lost structures and shoreline armoring</li> <li>• Specify how climate data and modeling will be used</li> <li>• Determine which areas will be estuarine and begin public acquisition of those properties</li> <li>• Add a commitment to build a community center for climate refugees and provisions for mass distribution of air filters</li> <li>• Adopt regulations for farm and livestock management, considering how changing environmental conditions impact water quality and zoonotic disease transmission</li> <li>• Create a county-wide biodiversity conservation plan</li> <li>• Create a county-wide dispersed recreation and trails plan</li> <li>• Add more detailed salmon conservations strategies</li> <li>• Add strategies to reduce light pollution and preserve dark skies</li> <li>• Do not focus on vehicle electrification, there is not enough power</li> <li>• Keep Island County rural</li> <li>• Conduct studies on the economic value of ecosystem services, including the costs of challenges and damages to those ecosystems</li> </ul> |
| Education          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not limit the goals to STEM, add art / STEAM</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

## Summary of Comments and Responses

| Comment Topic                 | Summary of Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Housing                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding needed to support building the number of housing units required by the 2045 by the state</li> <li>Promote the use of modular housing as a strategy for increasing housing on the islands</li> <li>No new housing infrastructure and no additional housing on Whidbey Island</li> <li>No low income housing unless it guarantees plant and animal biodiversity and conservation</li> </ul> |
| Industrial and business parks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One 10 acre shovel ready parcel available in Oak Harbor</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| NASWI                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns regarding negative impacts of the base on the environment and community health</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Overall document              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very comprehensive</li> <li>Overwhelming in scope, recommend a summary</li> <li>Include a general strategy to prefer strategies with the lowest long-term costs to the public</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Tourism                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include reference to the Maritime Heritage Plan and Area</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Transportation                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the SWOT to say “some” cities are walkable as some cities in South Whidbey lack sidewalks and ramps</li> <li>Add sidewalk and curb ramps in Freeland to improve safety and walkability</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Updating information          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update information about Langley Creates fiscal sponsor</li> <li>Update information from the USDA County Profile 2022</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

8. CEDS Project List

The following table is Island County’s CEDS Project List for 2024. This is the first time that Island County has had a consolidated economic development project list.

As noted in **Section 4**, the Evaluation Plan, the Island County CEDS Project List will be updated on an annual and as needed basis, in the event of an emergency.



| Project Name                             | Project Location              | Project Description                                                                                                                                                       | Project Type                                                                                                                                                      | Estimated Total Cost            | Potential Funding Sources                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Secured Funding Amount (Source)                                           | Island CED funding?                                                           | EDA funding?                                                    | Other funding?                                                    |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Short name                               | City, Island                  | Brief 1-3 sentences describing basics of project. Connect to biz or ecdev if not obvious.                                                                                 | Potential project types include: Public Works, Economic Development, Public Health, Workforce, Education, Public Safety, Parks & Rec, Tourism, Climate Resilience | As of the most recent estimate. | Potential funding sources include but are not limited to: Island County CED, TIB, REET I, REET II, LTAC, Bonds, General Fund, Capital Funds, Impact Fees, Port, State (CERB, Broadband), Federal (DOE, DOT, MARAD, USDA, etc.) | Amount secured / committed to date, if any (with source of funding noted) | Do you plan to apply for Island County CED funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for EDA funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for other funding for this project? Yes / No |
| Town of Coupeville                       |                               |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                           |                                                                               |                                                                 |                                                                   |
| Rural Water Service Water Main Extension | Big Cedar Ln to Patmore Rd.   | Out of Town water service extension                                                                                                                                       | Public Works, Climate Resilience, Public Health                                                                                                                   | \$1,400,000.00                  | Water Fund, Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                             | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Rural Water Service Water Main Extension | Patmore Rd. to Wanamaker Rd.  | Out of Town water service extension                                                                                                                                       | Public Works, Climate Resilience, Public Health                                                                                                                   | \$800,000.00                    | Water Fund, Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                             | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Rural Water Service Water Main Extension | Engle Rd. / SR20              | Out of Town water service extension                                                                                                                                       | Public Works, Climate Resilience, Public Health                                                                                                                   | \$1,105,000.00                  | Water Fund, Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                             | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Water System Consolidation               | Central Whidbey               | Consolidate smaller water systems Within the Town's Water Service area                                                                                                    | Public Works, Climate Resilience, Public Health                                                                                                                   | \$1,000,000.00                  | Water Fund, Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                             | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Sewer Line Extension                     | Moore Pl. to Town Limits      | Sewer Extension                                                                                                                                                           | Public Works, Climate Resilience, Public Health                                                                                                                   | \$1,300,000.00                  | Sewer Fund, Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                             | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Phase II: WWTP Water Reuse               | Coupeville, WWTP              | follow up to wastewater treatment plant water reuse feasibility study                                                                                                     | Public Works, Climate Resilience, Public Health                                                                                                                   | \$3,000,000.00                  | Sewer Fund, Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                             | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Boat Ramp Improvements                   | Coupeville, Thomas Coupe Park | Rehabilitate boat ramps, reconstruct small boat launch with storage and access. Install marine/ RV sewage pump out station.                                               | Public Works, Parks & Rec                                                                                                                                         | \$1,000,000.00                  | General Fund, Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                           | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Active Transportation Plan               | Coupeville                    | Develop an Active Transportation Plan to explore projects and investments to improve walk- and roll-ability within Town Limits and connections to regional trail networks | Parks & Rec, Tourism                                                                                                                                              | \$80,000.00                     | General Fund, Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                           | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Parks and Recreation Plan                | Coupeville                    | Develop a Parks and Rec Plan to explore improvements and investments to park facilities                                                                                   | Parks & Rec, Tourism, Climate Resilience                                                                                                                          | \$50,000.00                     | General Fund, Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                           | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |

| Project Name                                                               | Project Location                                              | Project Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Project Type                                                                                                                                                      | Estimated Total Cost            | Potential Funding Sources                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Secured Funding Amount (Source)                                           | Island CED funding?                                                           | EDA funding?                                                    | Other funding?                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Short name                                                                 | City, Island                                                  | Brief 1-3 sentences describing basics of project. Connect to biz or ecdev if not obvious.                                                                                                                                                                                                | Potential project types include: Public Works, Economic Development, Public Health, Workforce, Education, Public Safety, Parks & Rec, Tourism, Climate Resilience | As of the most recent estimate. | Potential funding sources include but are not limited to: Island County CED, TIB, REET I, REET II, LTAC, Bonds, General Fund, Capital Funds, Impact Fees, Port, State (CERB, Broadband), Federal (DOE, DOT, MARAD, USDA, etc.) | Amount secured / committed to date, if any (with source of funding noted) | Do you plan to apply for Island County CED funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for EDA funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for other funding for this project? Yes / No |
| Island County                                                              |                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                           |                                                                               |                                                                 |                                                                   |
| Airport Compatability and Economic Development Study                       | Whidbey Airpark; DeLaurtentis Airport; Camano Island Airfield | Study improvements near private airports to promote economic development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Planning                                                                                                                                                          | TBD                             | Grants, Island County                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| Sewer/Septic Study and Design for Clinton                                  | Clinton RAID                                                  | Assess the scope and design considerations for a sewer or community septic system for Clinton.                                                                                                                                                                                           | Planning, Public Works                                                                                                                                            | TBD                             | Grants, Island County                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| Transportation Improvement Program - Bike Trails                           | Hwy 20/Hwy 525                                                | Bridge to Boat implementation; connecting existing segments of trails with new or planned segments.                                                                                                                                                                                      | Planning, Public Works                                                                                                                                            | TBD                             | Grants, Island County                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| Land Acquisition for Affordable Housing                                    | Island County                                                 | County to work with developers and builders to identify land acquisitions to serve as a model for workforce housing.                                                                                                                                                                     | Planning, Human Services                                                                                                                                          | TBD                             | Grants, Island County                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| Water Study                                                                | Island County                                                 | Study to assess the water quantity and quality of our sole source aquifers to better understand locations that can support development and growth.                                                                                                                                       | Planning, Health                                                                                                                                                  | TBD                             | Grants, Island County                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| State Route 20 Shoulder Widening, Race Road to Welcher Road                | Central Whidbey                                               | Construct highway shoulders and improve intersections as needed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Public works, Economic Devleopment, Public Safety, Tourism                                                                                                        | \$7,000,000                     | Grants, WSDOT, Island County                                                                                                                                                                                                   | \$1,600,000                                                               | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| State Route Intersection Improvement at Bush Point Road/Honeymoon Bay Road | Whidbey Island Greenland Area                                 | Construct a roundabout at the intersection                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Public works, Economic Devleopment, Public Safety                                                                                                                 | \$3,000,000                     | Grants, WSDOT, Island County                                                                                                                                                                                                   | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Clinton Ferry Terminal Pedestrian Connectivity                             | South Whidbey                                                 | Construct improved pedestrian access between WSDOT park and ride on SR 525 and previous improvements (sidewalks and pedestrian crossing flashing beacons) connecting to the ferry. Construct improvements to the park and ride lot and improve existing cross walks on SR 525 as needed. | Public works, Economic Development, Public Safety, Tourism                                                                                                        | \$1,500,000                     | Grants, WSDOT, Island County                                                                                                                                                                                                   | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |

| Project Name                                                                                           | Project Location | Project Description                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Project Type                                                                                                                                                      | Estimated Total Cost            | Potential Funding Sources                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Secured Funding Amount (Source)                                                                                                                                    | Island CED funding?                                                           | EDA funding?                                                    | Other funding?                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Short name                                                                                             | City, Island     | Brief 1-3 sentences describing basics of project. Connect to biz or ecdev if not obvious.                                                                                                                                  | Potential project types include: Public Works, Economic Development, Public Health, Workforce, Education, Public Safety, Parks & Rec, Tourism, Climate Resilience | As of the most recent estimate. | Potential funding sources include but are not limited to: Island County CED, TIB, REET I, REET II, LTAC, Bonds, General Fund, Capital Funds, Impact Fees, Port, State (CERB, Broadband), Federal (DOE, DOT, MARAD, USDA, etc.)       | Amount secured / committed to date, if any (with source of funding noted)                                                                                          | Do you plan to apply for Island County CED funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for EDA funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for other funding for this project? Yes / No |
| Island County                                                                                          |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                               |                                                                 |                                                                   |
| Island County Solid Waste Transfer Station                                                             | Near Coupeville  | Design and construction of a solid waste transfer station                                                                                                                                                                  | Public works and public safety. All economic and tourism interests on Whidbey are ultimately dependent on this essential infrastructure.                          | \$7,600,000                     | Island County tipping fees, grants                                                                                                                                                                                                   | \$2,100,000                                                                                                                                                        | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| New Camano Island Solid Waste Transfer Station--preliminary engineering and site acquisition/selection | Camano           | Perform preliminary engineering and acquire/select a site to build a new solid waste transfer station on Camano Island. Cost estimated for preliminary engineering only.                                                   | Public works and public safety. All economic and tourism interests on Camano are ultimately dependent on this essential infrastructure.                           | \$500,000                       | Island County tipping fees, grants                                                                                                                                                                                                   | \$0                                                                                                                                                                | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Whidbey Airpark Access Improvements                                                                    | South Whidbey    | Develop public road improvements to the Whidbey Airpark                                                                                                                                                                    | Public works, Economic Development, Tourism                                                                                                                       | \$10,000,000                    | Road District, EDA, RCED                                                                                                                                                                                                             | \$50,000                                                                                                                                                           | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| Island Transit's Zero Emission Transition                                                              | Island County    | Island Transit will convert its service fleet to zero emission vehicles by 2040. In addition to vehicle purchases, this project includes adding the fueling/charging and maintenance infrastructure to enable this change. | Public works, climate resilience, economic development, and tourism.                                                                                              | \$46,000,000                    | Federal and state transit funding, federal green energy funding, state Commerce Department funding, local funds, Congressionally Directed Spending, Move Ahead Washington money funded in part by the state's Climate Commitment Act | \$7,000,000 in Move Ahead Washington/Climate Commitment Act funding; \$1,500,000 in Consolidated (state and federal) funds                                         | No                                                                            | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |
| Island Transit's South Whidbey Transit Center project                                                  | Whidbey Island   | Island Transit will build a transit center to support the safe and easy transfer between routes and modes, including parking for vehicles.                                                                                 | Public works, climate resilience, economic development, and tourism.                                                                                              | \$15,000,000                    | In addition to the federal funds already awarded, local funds.                                                                                                                                                                       | \$7,100,000 in federal bus facilities funding, and \$4,000,000 in a Congressionally Designated Spending request expected to be in the FY 2024 appropriations bill. | No                                                                            | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |

| Project Name                                                                       | Project Location        | Project Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Project Type                                                                                                                                                      | Estimated Total Cost            | Potential Funding Sources                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Secured Funding Amount (Source)                                           | Island CED funding?                                                           | EDA funding?                                                    | Other funding?                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Short name                                                                         | City, Island            | Brief 1-3 sentences describing basics of project. Connect to biz or ecdev if not obvious.                                                                                                                                                               | Potential project types include: Public Works, Economic Development, Public Health, Workforce, Education, Public Safety, Parks & Rec, Tourism, Climate Resilience | As of the most recent estimate. | Potential funding sources include but are not limited to: Island County CED, TIB, REET I, REET II, LTAC, Bonds, General Fund, Capital Funds, Impact Fees, Port, State (CERB, Broadband), Federal (DOE, DOT, MARAD, USDA, etc.) | Amount secured / committed to date, if any (with source of funding noted) | Do you plan to apply for Island County CED funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for EDA funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for other funding for this project? Yes / No |
| City of Langley                                                                    |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                           |                                                                               |                                                                 |                                                                   |
| Slope Stabilization - 1st Street Bluff - Capital Improvement, Design and Implement | Langley, Whidbey Island | Design and construct stabilization strategies to address ongoing and /or incipient failure along 1st street bluff to preemptively protect, water, transporation infrastructure located near down town main business corridor and main access to Marina. | Public Works, Public Safety, Parks & Rec, Tourism, Economic Development, climate resilience                                                                       | \$840,000                       | CED, TIB, Capital Funds,                                                                                                                                                                                                       | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | TBD                                                             | YES                                                               |
| Landslide Catchment Improvments - Cascade Ave & Wharf St                           | Langley, Whidbey Island | Construct a catchment structure to prevent landslide debris from impacting Wharf Street- the direct connection between downtown and the Marina                                                                                                          | Public Works, Public Safety, Economic Development, tourism, climate resilience                                                                                    | \$975,000                       | CED, Capital Funds, TIB, Port                                                                                                                                                                                                  | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | TBD                                                             | YES                                                               |
| Slope Restoration with Public Amenities - Cascade Ave and Wharf St                 | Langley, Whidbey Island | Remove invasive speciesa nd revegetate with native plants that contribute to erosion control and slope stabilization                                                                                                                                    | Public Safety, Tourism, Parks and Rec, Tourism, Economic Development                                                                                              | \$625,000                       | CED, Capital Funds, General Fund, LTAC                                                                                                                                                                                         | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| Stair Assessment and Maintenance - Boy and Dog Park                                | Langley, Whidbey Island | Structural evaluation of 70 Year old stair conditions to access shoreline and Seawall Park                                                                                                                                                              | Public Works, Public Safety, Economic Development, Parks and Rec, tourism, climate resilience                                                                     | \$34,000                        | CED, Capital Funds, General Fund, LTAC                                                                                                                                                                                         | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| Slope Restoration - Boy and Dog Park                                               | Langley, Whidbey Island | Remove invasive species and revegetate with native plants that contribute to erosion control and slope stabilization.                                                                                                                                   | Public Works, Public Safety, Economic Development, Parks and Rec, tourism, climate resilience                                                                     | \$125,000                       | CED, Capital Funds, LTAC                                                                                                                                                                                                       | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| EV Charging Stations                                                               | Langley, Whidbey Island | Install EV charging stations                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Public Works, Climate Resilience                                                                                                                                  | \$180,000                       | CED, Capital Funds, General Fund                                                                                                                                                                                               | \$35,000                                                                  | Yes                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |

| Project Name                                         | Project Location | Project Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Project Type                                                                                                                                                      | Estimated Total Cost            | Potential Funding Sources                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Secured Funding Amount (Source)                                           | Island CED funding?                                                           | EDA funding?                                                    | Other funding?                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Short name                                           | City, Island     | Brief 1-3 sentences describing basics of project. Connect to biz or ecdev if not obvious.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Potential project types include: Public Works, Economic Development, Public Health, Workforce, Education, Public Safety, Parks & Rec, Tourism, Climate Resilience | As of the most recent estimate. | Potential funding sources include but are not limited to: Island County CED, TIB, REET I, REET II, LTAC, Bonds, General Fund, Capital Funds, Impact Fees, Port, State (CERB, Broadband), Federal (DOE, DOT, MARAD, USDA, etc.) | Amount secured / committed to date, if any (with source of funding noted) | Do you plan to apply for Island County CED funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for EDA funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for other funding for this project? Yes / No |
| City of Oak Harbor                                   |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                           |                                                                               |                                                                 |                                                                   |
| Central Development Area Study & Implementation Plan | Oak Harbor       | Creation of a comprehensive development subarea plan for older sections of the City that includes the Marina, the Downtown, and the Midtown District to create the Central Development Area Study & Implementation Plan.                                                                                | Economic Development                                                                                                                                              | \$450,000                       | EDA                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | \$15,000 City General Fund                                                | No                                                                            | Yes                                                             | No                                                                |
| SE Pioneer Way Revitalization/Reuse Study            | Oak Harbor       | Oak Harbor will conduct a site clean up of 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Way in conjunction with a revitalization / reuse study focused on the downtown corridor.                                                                                                                                               | Economic Development; Tourism                                                                                                                                     | \$1,000,000.00                  | EPA, WA State Ecology                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$200,000 - WA State Ecology grant                                        | No                                                                            | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |
| Shoreline Restoration                                | Oak Harbor       | This project would be a combined effort from Streets, Sewer, Storm Drain and Streets to improve our infrastructure from Midway to Regatta.                                                                                                                                                              | Public Works, Public Safety, Economic Development                                                                                                                 | \$2,000,000.00                  | Streets Operation/REET, Water, Wastewater, Storm Drain                                                                                                                                                                         | \$1,099,075 - Streets/REET, Water, Wastewater, Storm Drain                | No                                                                            | No                                                              | No                                                                |
| Pioneer Way - SR20 to City Beach Street              | Oak Harbor       | Water main replacement and other utility upgrades. Multi-modal improvements including re-channelizing the road and full repaving of the street.                                                                                                                                                         | Public Works, Economic Development                                                                                                                                | \$3,000,000.00                  | Arterials, Unsecured grant                                                                                                                                                                                                     | \$0                                                                       | No                                                                            | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |
| SR20-SW Eagle Vista Ave to SW 24th                   | Oak Harbor       | Pedestrian and safety improvements, including providing crossings on SR20, improved access to transit and traffic calming treatments. Work may include construction of roundabouts at the intersections and speed limits reductions to promote a safe transition from rural highway to an urban setting | Public Works, Public Safety, Economic Development                                                                                                                 | \$5,000,000.00                  | Arterials, Unsecured grant                                                                                                                                                                                                     | \$0                                                                       | No                                                                            | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |
| Midway Blvd Reconstruction                           | Oak Harbor       | Pavement Preservation / ADA upgrades on Midway Blvd - Road Diet                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Public Works, Public Safety, Economic Development                                                                                                                 | \$950,000.00                    | STBG/IRTPO grant, Arterials                                                                                                                                                                                                    | \$821,750 - STBG/IRTPO grant; \$128,250 - Arterials                       | No                                                                            | No                                                              | No                                                                |



| Project Name                                | Project Location | Project Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Project Type                                                                                                                                                      | Estimated Total Cost            | Potential Funding Sources                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Secured Funding Amount (Source)                                           | Island CED funding?                                                           | EDA funding?                                                    | Other funding?                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Short name                                  | City, Island     | Brief 1-3 sentences describing basics of project. Connect to biz or ecdev if not obvious.                                                                                                                                                                                  | Potential project types include: Public Works, Economic Development, Public Health, Workforce, Education, Public Safety, Parks & Rec, Tourism, Climate Resilience | As of the most recent estimate. | Potential funding sources include but are not limited to: Island County CED, TIB, REET I, REET II, LTAC, Bonds, General Fund, Capital Funds, Impact Fees, Port, State (CERB, Broadband), Federal (DOE, DOT, MARAD, USDA, etc.) | Amount secured / committed to date, if any (with source of funding noted) | Do you plan to apply for Island County CED funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for EDA funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for other funding for this project? Yes / No |
| City of Oak Harbor                          |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                           |                                                                               |                                                                 |                                                                   |
| Industrial Avenue Tie-In                    | Oak Harbor       | This project includes a tie-in connection between the 12-inch water pipe in Goldie Rd right-of-way to the existing 8-inch PVC parallel line at Industrial Avenue. This will help provide adequate fire flows to meet the 3,500 gpm requirement for businesses in the area. | Public Works, Economic Development                                                                                                                                | \$60,000.00                     | Water, Reserves                                                                                                                                                                                                                | \$24,000-Water; \$36,000-Reserves                                         | No                                                                            | No                                                              | No                                                                |
| N. Whidbey Sewer Expansion                  | Oak Harbor       | This project is to begin the design process for the installation of a lift station and all related infrastructure to serve the North Enterprise Zone.                                                                                                                      | Public Works, Economic Development                                                                                                                                | \$250,000.00                    | Unsecured grant                                                                                                                                                                                                                | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Marina Additional Improvements              | Oak Harbor       | This project will consist of removing and replacing the whalers on the north and south side of the main walkway. It will also consist of upgrading or replacing 2-3 electrical junction boxes along the main walkway.                                                      | Public Works, Public Safety, Parks and Recreation, Economic Development; Tourism                                                                                  | \$250,000.00                    | Marina funds                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | \$250,000 - Marina                                                        | No                                                                            | No                                                              | No                                                                |
| Marina Boat Yard Acquisition                | Oak Harbor       | Purchase the boat yard at the south end of the Marina parking lot.                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Parks and Recreation, Economic Development                                                                                                                        | \$673,688.00                    | Marina funds; RCED grant secured                                                                                                                                                                                               | \$675,000 - Grant; \$24,813 - Marina funds                                | Yes - secured                                                                 | No                                                              | No                                                                |
| Marina Dredging                             | Oak Harbor       | Complete the Pre-design study and then dredge the Marina                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Parks and Recreation, Economic Development; Tourism                                                                                                               | \$12,000,000.00                 | Marina funds; Grant-CPP; Bonds; Unsecured grant                                                                                                                                                                                | \$150,000 - Rates; \$150,000-Grant-CPP                                    | Yes                                                                           | Yes                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Channel Dredging                            | Oak Harbor       | Work with the Army Corps of Engineers on design and dredge of the channel between Oak Harbor Bay and Saratoga Passage                                                                                                                                                      | Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, Tourism                                                                                                               | \$15,000,000.00                 | Federal                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | \$0                                                                       | No                                                                            | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |
| 7th Avenue Wetlands Trail Feasibility Study | Oak Harbor       | Planning and feasibility studies required to construct trails on city-owned property in the Northern section of the City. Trail network will provide passive recreation and pedestrian access to local residents, service providers and businesses in the area.            | Parks and Recreation, Economic Development                                                                                                                        | \$110,000.00                    | TAP Grant; Paths & Trails fund                                                                                                                                                                                                 | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |

| Project Name                                 | Project Location | Project Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Project Type                                                                                                                                                      | Estimated Total Cost            | Potential Funding Sources                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Secured Funding Amount (Source)                                           | Island CED funding?                                                           | EDA funding?                                                    | Other funding?                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Short name                                   | City, Island     | Brief 1-3 sentences describing basics of project. Connect to biz or ecdev if not obvious.                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Potential project types include: Public Works, Economic Development, Public Health, Workforce, Education, Public Safety, Parks & Rec, Tourism, Climate Resilience | As of the most recent estimate. | Potential funding sources include but are not limited to: Island County CED, TIB, REET I, REET II, LTAC, Bonds, General Fund, Capital Funds, Impact Fees, Port, State (CERB, Broadband), Federal (DOE, DOT, MARAD, USDA, etc.) | Amount secured / committed to date, if any (with source of funding noted) | Do you plan to apply for Island County CED funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for EDA funding for this project? Yes / No | Do you plan to apply for other funding for this project? Yes / No |
| City of Oak Harbor                           |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                           |                                                                               |                                                                 |                                                                   |
| N. Whidbey Broadband Study                   | Oak Harbor       | Conduct a study on the broadband needs of the City and North Whidbey Island. The study will focus on unserved and underserved areas within City limits as well as other areas in North Whidbey Island that have less than the State broadband download and upload speed and connectivity goals. | Economic Development                                                                                                                                              | \$75,000.00                     | CERB grant; IC Matching Funds; City General Fund                                                                                                                                                                               | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | No                                                              | Yes - CERB                                                        |
| Whidbey Island Regional Sports Complex Study | Oak Harbor       | Conduct a study on the viability of building an indoor sports complex for Whidbey Island                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Parks and Recreation, Tourism; Economic Development                                                                                                               | \$200,000.00                    | State legislature Community Project                                                                                                                                                                                            | \$0                                                                       | No                                                                            | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |
| North Industrial Park Feasibility Study      | Oak Harbor       | Conduct an Economic Development study for the North Industrial Park area of Oak Harbor                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Economic Development                                                                                                                                              | \$75,000.00                     | CERB grant (\$50,000)                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |
| Internet/Broadband expansion through Midtown | Oak Harbor       | Whidbey Telecom has a Middle Mile grant to expand its service from Coupeville north of Oak Harbor. Oak Harbor can connect for \$24/foot. Looking at connecting Fire Station 82, Swantown to CWF, Downtown/Citywide Wireless, Heller to Navy base & City shop on 16th.                           | Economic Development, Tourism                                                                                                                                     | \$24,000.00                     | Broadband grant                                                                                                                                                                                                                | \$0                                                                       | Yes                                                                           | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |
| Athletic Fields Renovation                   | Oak Harbor       | Give citizens a sense of pride in our community and positive places to play baseball, football and soccer. Fields need to be renovated to ensure children and adults have safe playing fields                                                                                                   | Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, Tourism                                                                                                               | \$300,000.00                    | RCO grant                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | \$0                                                                       | No                                                                            | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |
| Active Transportation Plan Implentation      | Oak Harbor       | Implement strategies to enhance quality of life, increase sustainability, support local economies and improve mobility and safety                                                                                                                                                               | Economic Development, Tourism                                                                                                                                     | \$1,000,000.00                  | grants                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | \$0                                                                       | No                                                                            | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |

| Project Name              | Project Location | Project Description                                                                                    | Project Type                                                                                                                                                      | Estimated Total Cost            | Potential Funding Sources                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Secured Funding Amount (Source)                                           | Island CED funding?                                                           | EDA funding?                                                    | Other funding?                                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| Port of Coupeville        |                  |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                           |                                                                               |                                                                 |                                                                   |
| Central Whidbey Broadband | Central Whidbey  | Bringing broadband to 1043 premises                                                                    | Public Works, Broadband, Ecomonic Development                                                                                                                     | \$6,557,244                     | Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Public Works Board \$4,842,933 & Dept of Commerce \$ 1,614,311            | NO                                                                            | No                                                              | No                                                                |
| EV Charging Stations      | Greenbank Farm   | Adding 6 Fast EV charging stations                                                                     | Public Works, Transportation, Climate Resiliance                                                                                                                  | Unknown                         | WAEVCP grant \$550,000.00 (been awarded, waiting for contract)                                                                                                                                                                 | Dept. of Commerce DOC \$172,000.00                                        | No                                                                            | No                                                              | No                                                                |
| Pond Rehabilitation       | Greenbank Farm   | This is our firesuppression system for the barn as well as ag. Provides water for farmers on our land. | Agriculture, Public Safety,                                                                                                                                       | Unknown                         | IDD funds                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| Envelope Repair           | Coupeville Wharf | Remove siding, install weather protection and stabilization, replace siding, windows and doors.        | Tourism; Economic Development                                                                                                                                     | \$800,000                       | Grants, IDD funds                                                                                                                                                                                                              | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| Raising the Wharf         | Coupeville Wharf | Due to sea level rising, we plan to raise the wharf to save it from rising sea levels 2025.            | Tourism, Economic Development                                                                                                                                     | \$6,000,000                     | Grants, earmarks                                                                                                                                                                                                               | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | Yes                                                               |
| Stadium Lights            | Greenbank Farm   | Replacing lights on extra parking area                                                                 | Tourism, Economic Development, Public Works                                                                                                                       | \$70,000                        | IDD funds                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| Dock Replacement          | Coupeville Wharf | Dock Replacement                                                                                       | Tourism, Economic Dev., Public Works, transportation                                                                                                              | Unknown                         | Unknown                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| Bulkhead Emergency Repair | Coupeville Wharf | Bulk head emergency repair                                                                             | Public Safety                                                                                                                                                     | Unknown                         | Unknown                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |
| Barn A Roof Replacement   | Greenbank Farm   | Barn A roof replacement                                                                                | Tourism, Public Works                                                                                                                                             | \$300,000                       | Unknown                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | \$0                                                                       | TBD                                                                           | TBD                                                             | TBD                                                               |

| Project Name                                          | Project Location        | Project Description                                                                                                                                                                           | Project Type                                                                                                                                                      | Estimated Total Cost            | Potential Funding Sources                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Secured Funding Amount (Source)                                           | Island CED funding?                                                           | EDA funding?                                                    | Other funding?                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| Port of South Whidbey                                 |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                           |                                                                               |                                                                 |                                                                   |
| Clinton Passenger-Only Ferry Dock                     | Clinton, WA             | The Clinton recreational dock was damaged in storms. The Port is planning to replace the dock with one capable of accommodating passenger-only ferries.                                       | Public Works, Transportation, Economic Development, Recreation, Emergency Preparedness                                                                            | \$4,600,000                     | Federal (FHWA, FTA), State (WSDOT, Washington State Ferries, appropriations), Island County CED                                                                                                                                | \$1,700,000                                                               | No                                                                            | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |
| Possession and Bush Point Boarding Float Replacements | Clinton WA, Freeland WA | The boarding floats at two Port of South Whidbey boat ramps are reaching the end of their useful lives. The Port plans to replace these critical assets.                                      | Public Works, Recreation                                                                                                                                          | \$2,000,000                     | State (Recreation and Conservation Office)                                                                                                                                                                                     | \$0                                                                       | No                                                                            | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |
| Workforce Housing                                     | Langley, WA             | The Port is pursuing worforce housing as a secondary use at the Whidbey Island Fairgrounds and Events Center. The project is in feasiblity assessment phase (architechtrual and enginnering). | Public Works, Economic Development, Workforce                                                                                                                     | \$500,000                       | Island County CED, State (CERB)                                                                                                                                                                                                | \$150,000                                                                 | Yes                                                                           | No                                                              | No                                                                |
| Campground Improvements                               | Langley, WA             | The Port plans to continue development of the campgrounds at the Whidbey Island Fairgrounds and Events Center.                                                                                | Public Works, Economic Development, Lodging, Recreation                                                                                                           | TBD                             | Island County CED, State (Recreation and Conservation Office), City of Langley (LTAC)                                                                                                                                          | \$337,500                                                                 | Yes                                                                           | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |
| Mooring buoys at the South Whidbey Harbor             | Langley, WA             | The Port plans to pursue additional moorage options at the South Whidbey Harbor in Langley, including potential mooring buoys.                                                                | Public Works, Economic Development, Tourism, Recreation                                                                                                           | \$100,000                       | State (Recreation and Conservation Office)                                                                                                                                                                                     | \$0                                                                       | No                                                                            | No                                                              | Yes                                                               |