



FACT SHEET: AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN SAN JUAN COUNTY

FIFTH IN A SERIES OF FIVE

APRIL/MAY 2006

THE HOUSING BANK IS READY TO TACKLE THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROBLEM.

How will the Housing Bank be Funded? It will be funded by a variety of different sources—some public and some private. Last February, the County Council consolidated modest county funding for low, very low and homeless families in the newly formed Housing Bank. Now, a one half of one percent real estate excise tax is being proposed to provide more substantial funding and to extend coverage through moderate income families. Other private and public funds will also be sought to meet the full spectrum of need including middle income families. Finally, San Juan County will have a cohesive plan for addressing this critical problem.

How will funds be spent? The Housing Bank will provide grants and loans to non-profit organizations on a competitive basis. The nonprofit organizations will provide affordable housing for very low to moderate income households. Jobs within this income range include such vital public functions such as law enforcement officers, fire fighters, teachers, medical personnel and other such public service functions.

The Housing Bank will administer funds, public and private, in a manner that is consistent with federal and state law. The proposed real estate excise tax is constrained by law to be used in programs that serve households of moderate income (roughly \$57,000 for a family of four) and below. Equally important are laws governing use of underutilized public land and creative private investment. Private funding will be used to reach households up to middle income (roughly \$72,000 for a family of four).

The mechanics of how the funds will be spent is specified by law. The Housing Bank must use a competitive solicitation process in which programs are publicly advertised and grants and loans are awarded to eligible and qualified recipients. The Housing Bank Commission selects projects to be funded and final approval is made by the County Council. The Housing Bank is required to implement management and financial controls to assure that statutory limitations are met and that all supported projects reflect sound financial management. Further, the Housing Bank is required to report to the public on both the current assessment of need and the progress in meeting that need.

Who will staff the Housing Bank Commission? We are fortunate to live in a county with a wealth of highly skilled and experienced individuals who are willing to donate their time as Housing Bank Commissioners. The County Council advertises for vacancies and appoints commissioners. In anticipation of successful passage of the real estate excise tax, the County Council will review candidates with qualifications in finance, the private mortgage market, project management, legal issues relating to housing and property, architecture and construction, affordable housing, grant writing, and public administration. A salaried Executive Director will provide continuity, additional expertise and support to the Commission.

In addition to meeting the prescribed requirements, the following priorities will be pursued in evaluating projects:

Perpetual Affordability: To maximize effectiveness and minimize cost in the long term, the Housing Bank has a responsibility to safeguard the community investment by giving priority to approaches that assure that future residents will be able to afford these homes.

Durable, high quality homes:

Because we are investing in the long term, the Housing Bank will place priority on design, materials, and construction techniques that result in homes that are low maintenance and built for a long life of service.

Mixed-income communities: The Housing Bank will give priority to projects that utilize both public and private funds to build homes for families across the spectrum of income including moderate and middle income.

Use of local contractors: The Housing Bank will encourage projects that utilize local builders, tradesmen and businesses.

Housing appropriate to the islands: Projects that conserve energy and water, are modest and attractive in design, and friendly to the environment will be given priority.

WE MUST ACT NOW! The Housing Bank is positioned for success: the enabling legislation been passed by the County Council, a plan has been developed on how the Housing Bank will operate, and we have the authority to assemble the staff. All that is needed now is your support: your vote to provide the funding necessary to address the need for affordable homes in our communities.

You will receive a special ballot in early May. Please take the time to be informed and vote before May 16th.

What can you do help?

- ✓ Stay informed: Go to www.sanjuanhousingbank.org
- ✓ Share the facts with your family, friends and neighbors
- ✓ **VOTE!**
Mail in your ballot before May 16th.



Dedicated to making quality affordable homes available to working islanders in San Juan County

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Please read on to become informed.

How will the Housing Bank operate?

** Paid for by Navigating Our Future in collaboration with the Housing Bank Education and Outreach Committee, to keep the people of San Juan County informed about local issues.*

Most working people in the San Juan Islands cannot afford to buy a home here, no matter how hard they work and try to save money. The gap between working incomes and housing prices is too wide. This is a challenge for us all; until we tackle the issue, we are endangering the quality of life we all enjoy in the islands. We need to begin to solve this problem now, before prices get any higher. The Housing Bank in San Juan County will encourage, facilitate and help fund initiatives to create attractive, quality homes that will be affordable for working people in the county.

The San Juan County Housing Bank is similar to the County Land Bank. While the Land Bank focuses on preserving our natural heritage by purchasing land and conservation easements, the Housing Bank will focus on preserving our diverse mix of people by providing funding for the development of affordable housing.