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- The public is encouraged to comment via email to pced@cityofanacortes.org, via written comment addressed to PCED, P.O. Box 547, Anacortes, WA 98221. Public comments received prior to 3:00 p.m. the day of the meeting will become part of the record for the meeting, just as if presented in person.
- Complete guidelines for virtual participation in Anacortes Planning Commission meetings are available [here](#) (page 2). View the quick video example for connecting to the meeting [here](#).

Anacortes Planning Commission
Municipal Building - Council Chambers
904 6th Street

September 11, 2024
6:00 PM

PRELIMINARY AGENDA
[Packet Materials](#) / [Watch Meeting](#)

1. **Roll Call**
2. **Minutes**
3. **Public Comment**
4. **Public Hearings**
5. **Other Business**
 - a. 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update: Land Use and Housing Regulatory Concepts presentation and discussion
6. **Planning Department Update**
7. **Adjournment**

**Citizens wishing to comment on items not on the agenda may do so under Public Comment. Citizens wishing to comment during a public hearing may do so as those items are considered by the Planning Commission during the course of the meeting.*

The City of Anacortes is committed to making public meetings available and accessible to all members of the community. For assistance with special needs, please contact the City Clerk at 360-299-1960 in advance of the meeting.



Planning Commission Agenda Bill

Meeting Date: September 11, 2024

Agenda Item: 5.a.

Subject: 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update: Land Use and Housing Regulatory Concepts presentation and discussion

Staff Contact: LIBBY GRAGE

Approved for Submittal to Commission by

LIBBY GRAGE

John Coleman

Action Type

Discussion

Summary Statement: At tonight's meeting, MAKERS will review the remaining Housing Action Plan (HAP) strategies recommended by City Council for consideration during the 2025 Comp Plan update public process. The presentation slides include the corresponding HAP strategy number so that more detailed information can be referenced within the HAP itself (attached), if desired. The slides also include regulatory concepts for potential implementation of the strategies. Feedback from the Planning Commission and the community on these concepts will help inform the development of the forthcoming draft text development regulation amendment proposals. Once they are ready, the draft text proposals will be published for public review and comment and a Planning Commission public hearing will be scheduled.

Background: The City is currently conducting a periodic update of its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations, as mandated by the Growth Management Act (GMA).

The [2023 Anacortes Housing Action Plan](#) (HAP), adopted by City Council via Ord. 3104, includes suggested changes to Anacortes' development regulations that are intended to promote more diverse and affordable housing options in the City. Within Section 2 of Ord. 3104, the City Council states its intent to select certain measures from the HAP to propose as development regulation updates to address Anacortes' housing needs. The Council Planning Committee presented recommendations for specific measures from the HAP to move forward for consideration by the Planning Commission alongside the 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update public process. The Council Planning Committee's recommendations were reviewed by the full Council on August 19, 2024 and no changes were made.

Previous Action: At the 8/28/24 Planning Commission meeting, MAKERS presented some of the selected HAP measures forwarded by the City Council for consideration during the periodic update process, along with regulatory concepts for their implementation.

Links to agendas and videos of past Planning Commission and City Council meetings

relating to the Comprehensive Plan update can be found on the [2025 Comprehensive Plan Update webpage](http://www.planacortes.org) (www.planacortes.org).

Competing Viewpoints Considered: Public participation, including sharing of ideas and viewpoints, is an integral part of the periodic update process.

Recommended Motion: None - discussion only.

Alternative Actions: N/A

Attachments (listed in order presented):

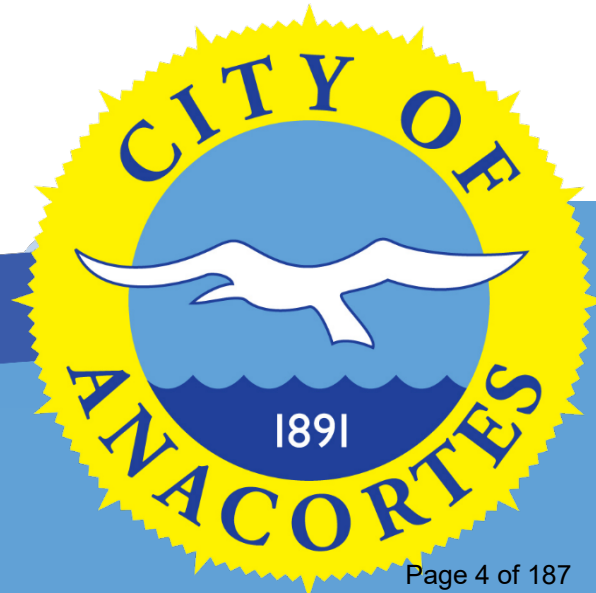
1. 9/11/24 PC Meeting Presentation Slides
2. Housing Action Plan Recommendations from CPC
3. Resolution 3104 and Adopted Housing Action Plan
4. Public Comments Received Thru 9/5/24

ANACORTES

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update

Land Use & Regulatory Concepts

Planning Commission Meeting, September 11, 2024



DISCUSSION ITEMS

Remaining regulatory concepts from the HAP

- Updates to development standards and density
- Adjusting design standards
- Adjusting parking standards

Anacortes Housing Action Plan



January 2023

DISCUSSION ITEMS

#	Summary	Recommendation	Notes
2.1.1	Residential Low Density 1 (R1) Zone	Include	Cottages are likely to be especially appropriate for the R1 zone
2.1.2	Residential Low Density 2 (R2) Zone	Completed	
2.1.3	Residential Low Density 2A (R2A) Zone	Include	
2.1.4	Residential Medium Density 3 (R3) Zone	Completed	Nursing homes were also included in this recommendation, but we don't recommend moving forward
2.1.5	Group Living	Include	Include Rooming House and Adult Family Home; HACS proposes further study of Nursing Home and Assisted Living Facility to ensure sufficient standards exist in code
2.1.6	Adult Family Homes	Include	
2.1.7	Prohibit New Large-Lot Single-Family Uses in Medium and High Density Zones	Include	Rework as a maximum lot size and apply to consolidation via BLA; apply to all zones
2.1.8	Duplex Cottages	Include	See Cedar Springs Lane development as an example of where this type has already been permitted
2.1.9	Single Room Occupancy Housing	Include	Limit to mixed-use zones
2.1.10	Supportive Housing	Required	Add design standards as allowed by state law
2.1.11	Tiny Homes	Exclude	This provision will become confused with ADU regs
2.2	Implement the R3A Zone	Exclude	
2.3	ADU Regulations	Include	Partially completed already; remainder is required by state law
2.4.1	Minimum Lot Sizes	Include	Focus on regulating by height, setbacks, open space, parking minimums rather than lot size and effective limits on the size of the units
2.4.2	Maximum Lot Coverage	Include	
2.4.3	Maximum Size of Single-Family Homes	Exclude	Sufficiently addressed through maximum lot size
2.4.4	Density	Include	
2.4.5	Setbacks	Include	
2.4.6	Height Bonus Program	Include	
2.4.7	Elevator Penthouse	Include	
2.4.8	Religiously Owned Land Density Bonus	Required	
2.5.1	Family Definition	Required	
2.5.2	Design Standards Applicability	Include	
2.5.3	Block Frontage Standards	Include	
2.5.4	Usable Residential Open Space	Include	
2.5.5	Townhouse Open Space	Include	

UPDATING MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE

HAP strategy 2.4.2

R4 and R4A zones

- Current code: R4 and R4A zones have a lot coverage of 50%
- Current code: R4 and R4A zones also have a minimum landscape area standard of 20%
- HAP describes current maximum lot coverage being on the lower side for a high-density zone, which particularly impacts smaller sites
- Proposed update: Increase the maximum lot coverage for R4 and R4A zones to 60%
 - For comparison the State Middle Housing Model Code sets max lot coverage at 55% for 6 units

F. Maximum lot coverage.

1. *The maximum lot coverage for middle housing are as follows. Maximum lot coverage less than the following is invalid:*
 - a. *For lots with a unit density of six: 55 percent.*
 - b. *For lots with a unit density of four or five: 50 percent.*
 - c. *For lots with a unit density of three or less: 45 percent.*

UPDATING DENSITY STANDARDS

HAP strategy 2.4.4

Minimum density for R4 zone

There is currently no minimum density standards in the zoning code

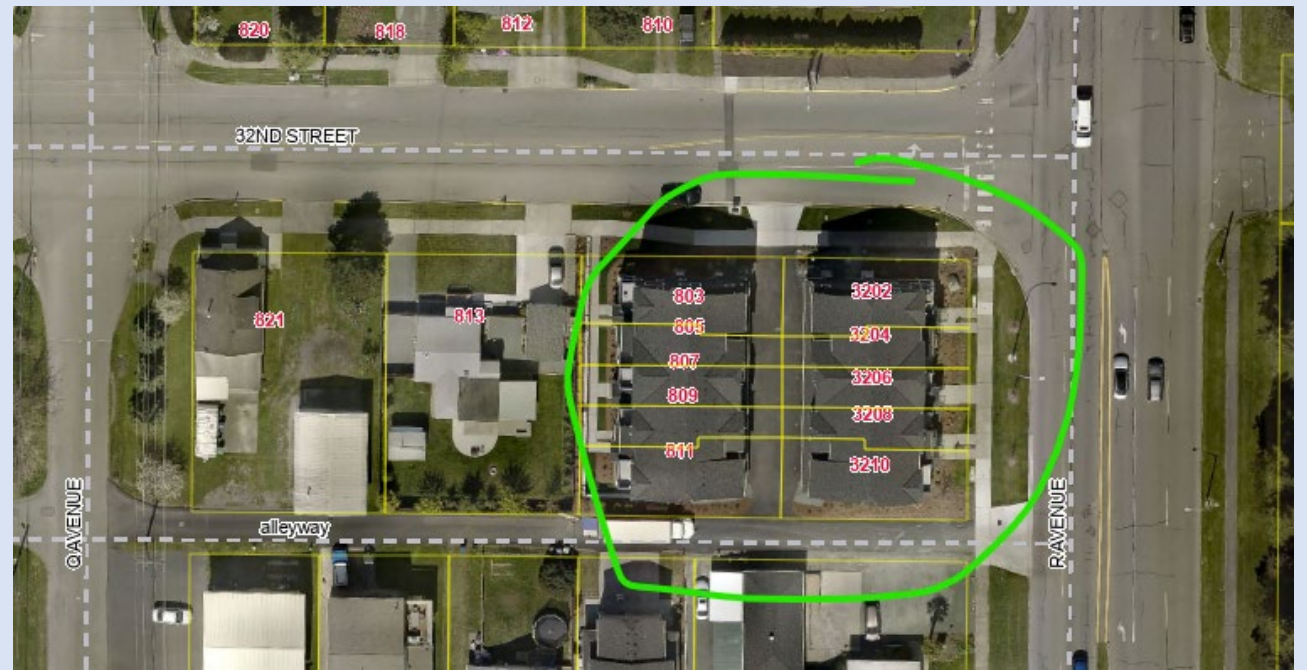
- Proposed update: Add a minimum density of 15 du/acre in the R4 zone applicable to lots:
 - 12,000 square feet or more in size; or
 - 15,000 square feet or more in size

(minimum density calculations would not include adjacent right-of-way)



Example development
on a 15,000 square
foot lot.

The 10 unit
development is about
30 du/acre

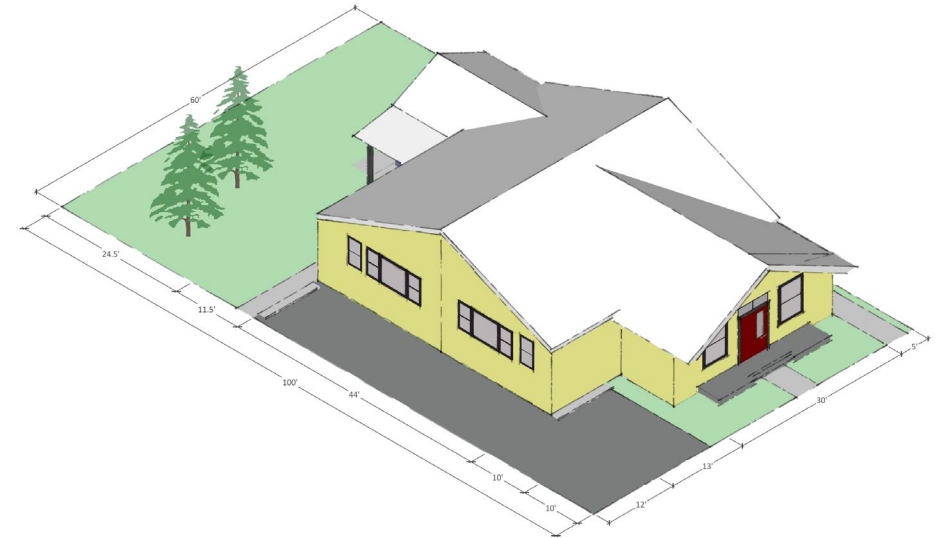


UPDATING DENSITY STANDARDS

HAP strategy 2.4.4

Updating maximum density in all residential zones

- Current code: Maximum density standards range from 2 to 18 du/acre depending on the zone
- The current maximum densities would prevent middle housing development even with lot size adjustments
 - Current max densities are calculated using gross acres, which includes $\frac{1}{2}$ of the abutting right-of-way
 - A duplex on a 6,000 sf lot is about 15 du/acre
 - A duplex on a 7,500 sf lot is about 12 du/acre
 - A 10-unit development in R4A zone on a 6,000 sf lot $\approx$ 70 du/acre



UPDATING DENSITY STANDARDS

HAP strategy 2.4.4

Updating maximum density in all residential zones

- Current code: Zones R3 and R3A have already been updated to focus on minimum lot size instead of typical du/acre measurement
- Proposed update: Remove the use of maximum density standards from the remaining residential zones and rely on minimum lot size standards and permitted uses

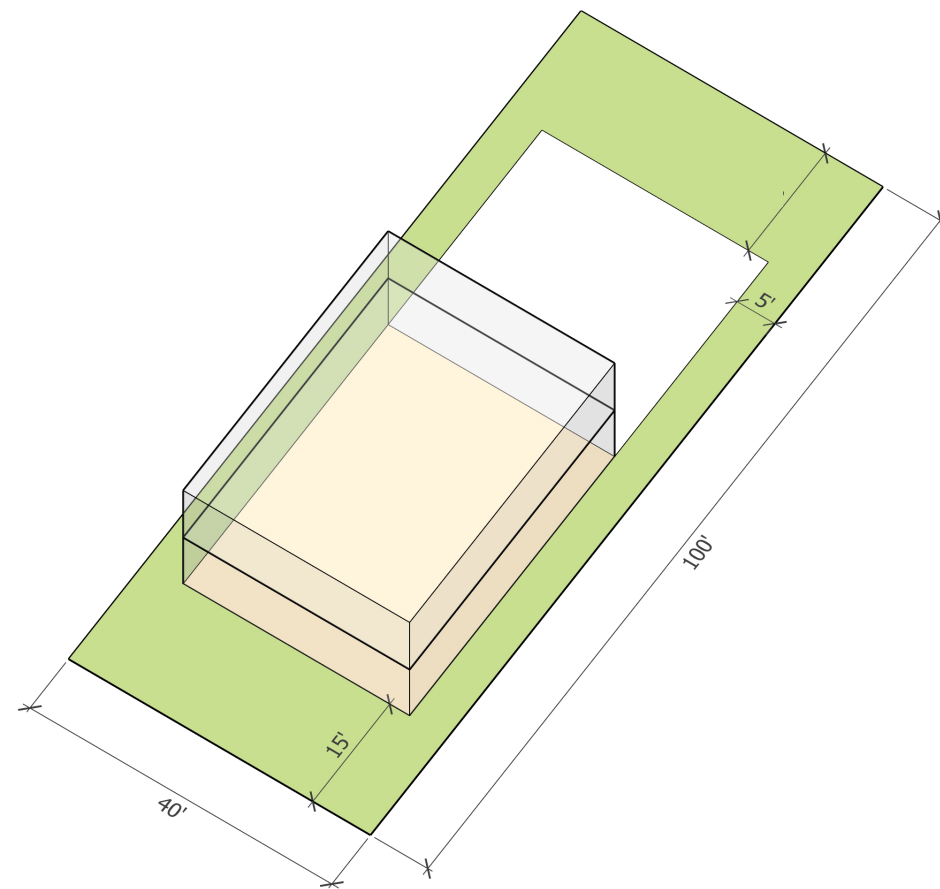
NOTE: HAP recommendations and discussions last meeting re allowing duplexes by right in the R2A zone. This provision complicates regulating maximum density. The solution is to just regulate min lot size and permitted uses.

UPDATING SETBACKS

HAP strategy 2.4.5

Street setback

- Proposed update: Reduce the street setback from 20 feet to 15 feet in R2A, and R3 zones
- 15 feet complements the recommended adjustments in lot size and permitted uses in these zones
- 15 feet still provides adequate space for useable open space and landscaping, and garages would still be required to have minimum 20-foot street setback



UPDATING SETBACKS

HAP strategy 2.4.5

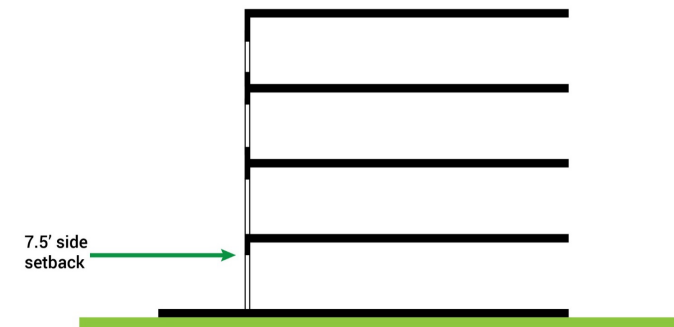
Interior side upper floor setback

- Current code: Residential zones have an interior minimum side setback for the upper floors different from the interior ground floor setback
- Proposed update: Remove the minimum interior side upper floor setback standard from R3, R4, and R4a zones
- Due to construction methods and cost, few developments will setback the upper floors further than the ground floor – especially for shorter low-rise buildings
- Therefore, the upper floor setback functions as a whole-building side setback

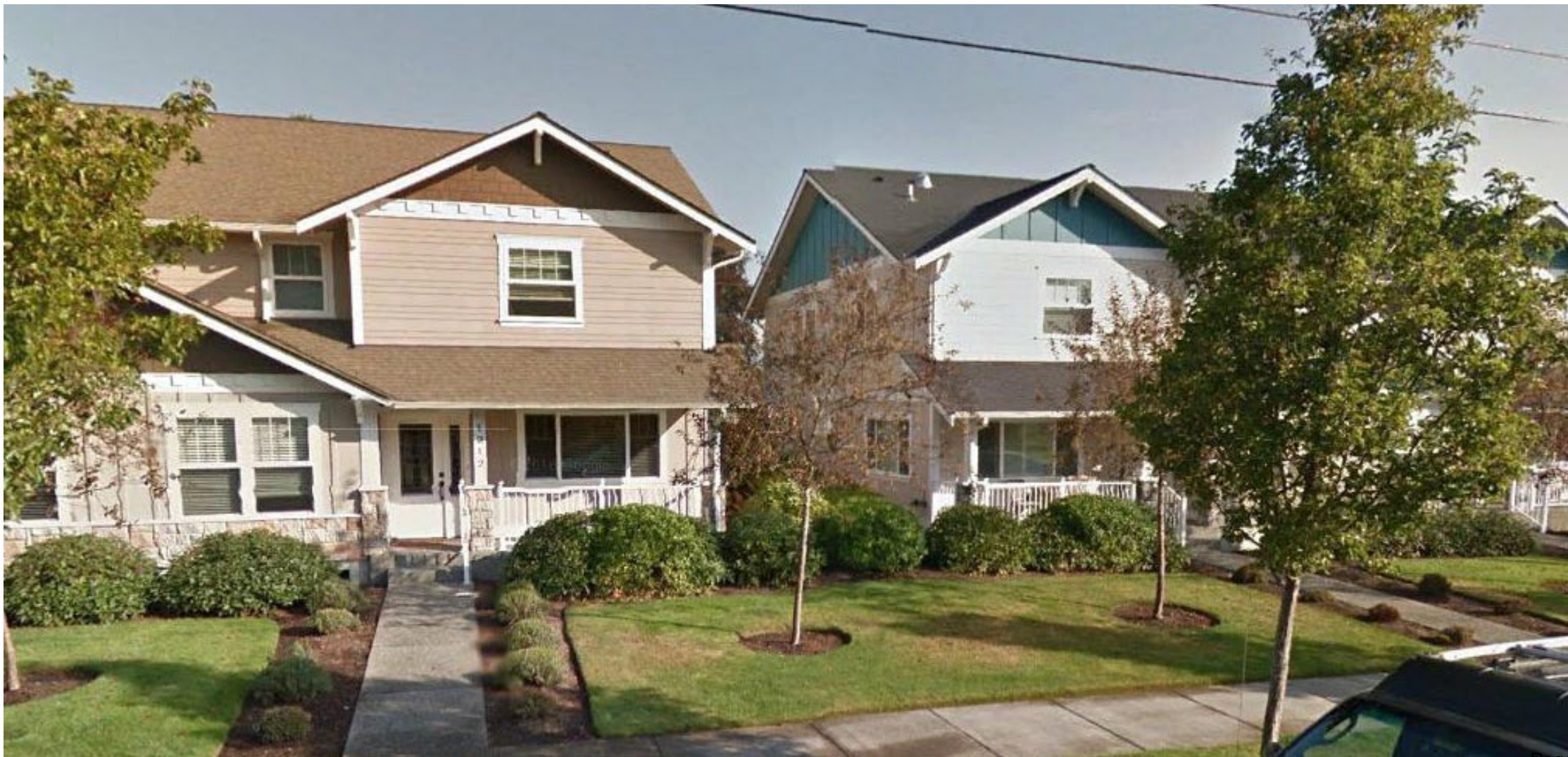
Expectation of upper floor setback standards



General reality of upper floor setback standards



UPDATING SETBACKS



HEIGHT BONUS PROGRAM

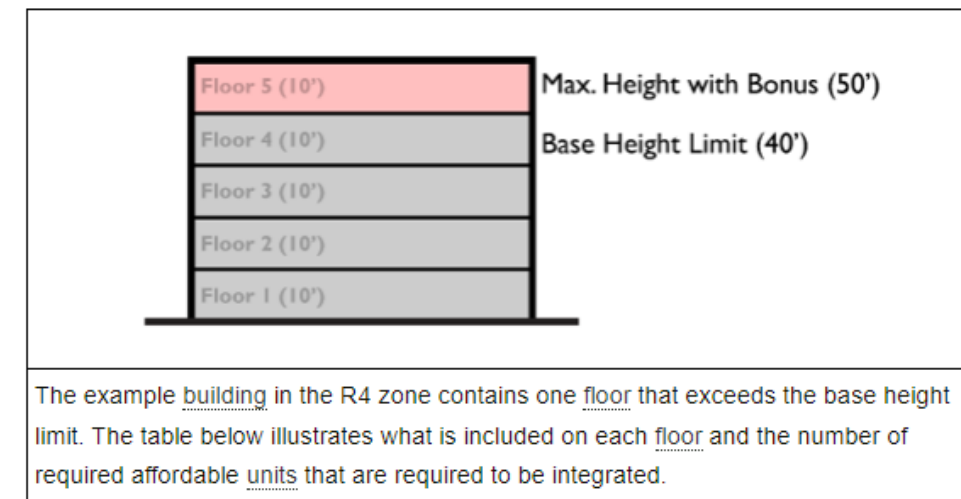
HAP strategy 2.4.6

Interior side upper floor setback

- Current plan: R4, CBD, and C, zones have a bonus height available to developments that meet certain conditions
- Current plan: One way to reach this bonus is for the development to have at least 50% of the units be small units no bigger than 600 square feet
- Proposed plan: Consider increasing the size of “small units” to no bigger than 650sf to allow for slightly more storage space
- Other height bonus criteria to consider:
 - Inclusion of day care space and service in mixed-use development
 - Development of senior housing
 - Development of assisted living facility or nursing home

Figure 19.42.050

Height bonus example—How affordable housing requirements are measured.



ELEVATOR PENTHOUSE

HAP strategy 2.4.7

Elevator Penthouse

As more multifamily and mixed-use housing is built in Anacortes, details like elevator design are important factors for livability and functionality.

- 10 feet tall elevator cabs help residents when moving large pieces of furniture
- Elevator-accessible roof decks are popular and help meet residential open space requirements
- Current standards make it difficult to have both 10 feet tall elevator cabs and residential roof decks
- Proposed plan:

b. Up to ~~15~~17 feet on buildings over four stories in height where they allow access to shared roof decks that meet the requirements of AMC 19.62.040(B)(1)(e). provided the area with the added height is limited to what is necessary to screen or enclose the use.

RELIGIOUSLY-OWNED DENSITY BONUS

Under state law RCW 35A.63.300 (enacted 2019)

- Cities must have/allow increased density bonuses on land owned by religious organizations if affordable housing for low-income households are being developed.
- Remote and virtual worship has changed congregation patterns and the use of religious space
- The law provides an opportunity for religious organizations to better serve faith-based missions related to affordable housing
- Bonuses can come in the form of *increased height, more lot coverage, reduction of setbacks, less required parking, etc.*

RELIGIOUSLY-OWNED DENSITY BONUS

HAP strategy 2.4.8

Religiously-owned land density bonus

Proposed plan: Set density bonus standards for each residential zone for if a religious organization chooses to develop affordable housing

- *Early suggestions that can be adjusted through the update process*

R1 Bonus	R2, R2A, OT Bonus	R3, R3A Bonus	R4, R4A Bonus
- Minimum lot size of 9,000 sf - Townhomes are permitted	- No interior side upper floor setback - Townhomes and triplexes are permitted	- Max height of 45 feet - No additional lot size needed - Multifamily of 5+ units is allowed	- Max height of 65 feet - Additional 5% lot coverage

ADJUST DEFINITIONS: FAMILY

HAP strategy 2.5.1

Action: Amend definition of “family” to comply with state law.

Under state law RCW 35A.21.314 (enacted 2021)

Cities may not regulate or limit the number of unrelated persons that may occupy a household or dwelling unit.

- Proposed update:

“Family” means:

- 1. One person or two or more related persons living together.*
- 2. ~~No more than five u~~ Unrelated persons living together as a single nonprofit housekeeping unit.*
- 3. Unrelated persons living together in a state-licensed adult family home pursuant to RCW 70.127.010, with the provider’s family counting as up to six persons not related to the providers living with them as one housekeeping unit for profit.*
- 4. ~~In a single family dwelling, one roomer or boarder is permitted in addition to the family.~~*

ADJUST DESIGN STANDARDS: TOWNHOUSES

HAP strategy 2.5.2

Action: Clarify what design standards apply to townhouse developments.

There's some current confusion as to what design standards apply to townhouses.

- Technically – it depends on whether such townhouses meet the definition of multifamily (currently 4+ units in a building)
- Thus provisions of Division 6 (including block frontage standards, site planning, building design, and landscaping) kick in for townhouse buildings with 4+ units)

This should be clarified in 19.61, 19.62, 19.63, and 19.43.010.G. Townhouse specific provisions apply in the event of a conflict



ADJUST DESIGN STANDARDS: BLOCK FRONTAGES

HAP strategy 2.5.3

Action: Clarify that multifamily developments are subject to the Landscaped block frontage provisions.

In 19.61.110(B) clarify that Landscaped block frontages apply to multifamily and non-residential development in residential zones.

In 19.43.10(G)(4) clarify that Landscaped block frontages apply to residential and commercial zone tables, including townhomes

B. All Undesignated block frontages in non-residential zones that are not designated are subject to the standards of this section. Per AMC 19.61.030(A)(2), Landscaped block frontages apply to multifamily and non-residential development in residential zones. These Undesignated block frontages are provided greater flexibility ~~with regards to the design of multifamily and non-residential development frontages.~~

4. Setbacks.

a. For minimum street setbacks, the greater setback applies from either the Landscaped block frontage standards of AMC 19.61.070 or the residential zone setbacks in Table 19.42.020.

b. For side and rear setbacks, see Tables 19.42.020 (residential zones) or 19.42.030 (mixed-use and industrial zones). ~~The minimum setbacks set forth in Table 19.42.020 apply to development frontage and external side and rear setbacks of the entire townhouse development.~~

c. See AMC 19.42.130(C) for exemptions involving interior side setbacks for townhouses.

ADJUST DESIGN STANDARDS: OPEN SPACE

HAP strategy 2.5.4

Action: Fine tune usable open space provisions for residential development.

1. Under AMC 19.62.040, provide an open space credit for multifamily developments adjacent to a park (33% reduction provided park is within 250')
2. For common indoor recreation areas under subsection B.1.d, add a minimum dimensional standard (250sf) to ensure that recreational spaces are functional
3. Provide for minimum open space standards for new supportive housing types (100sf/unit + same open space type design standards)



ADJUST DESIGN STANDARDS: OPEN SPACE

HAP strategy 2.5.4

Currently shared roof decks can account for 50% of required open space for multifamily buildings and 100% for mixed-use buildings. The HAP explored changes to make the code easier to understand and administer. Below are options:

1. Keep current language the same
2. HAP strategy: Allow them to count for up to 50% of required space for all development with multifamily uses (remove option to count for 100% in mixed-use buildings)
3. MJB proposal: Use current language and additionally allow multifamily buildings incorporated into a horizontal mixed-use development to also count shared roof decks as 100% of required open space.

ADJUST DESIGN STANDARDS: OPEN SPACE

HAP strategy 2.5.5

Action: Fine tune usable open space provisions for townhouse development.

Under the townhouse design standards of AMC 19.43.010(G)(9), provide more consistency between open space standards and setback standards (noting 10' setback standards in R4 /R4A):



a. Private ground-level open space that is directly adjacent and accessible to dwelling units. Such space must have minimum dimensions of at least 12-feet in one direction and 10-feet in other directions ~~on all sides~~ and be configured to accommodate human activity such as outdoor eating, gardening, toddler play, etc. Street setbacks may be used to meet this standard, provided they are defined with a fence (meeting standards of AMC Chapter 19.66 Fences, Walls & Hedges). ¶

ADJUST DESIGN STANDARDS: LANDSCAPING

HAP strategy 2.5.6

Action: Fine tune parking lot landscaping provisions for multifamily and townhouse development.

Under AMC 19.65.070(D), reduce and simplify minimum planting area widths (or average widths) to allow more efficient use of land.

3. Minimum Width and Length. Planting areas must have a minimum average width of ~~10~~ 7.5 feet (measured inside the curb) and must be the same length as the parking stall or column.

...

6.

a. For parking lots adjacent to public streets, use Type C landscaping at least 7.5 feet deep. ~~at a width equal to or greater than the minimum building setback specified for the applicable block frontage type specified in AMC Chapter 19.61, Block Frontage Standards.~~

b. For parking lots along internal lot lines, use Type A, B, or C landscaping at least ~~10~~ five feet deep, except where a greater buffer width is required per the standards in subsections A and B of this section.

ADJUST DESIGN STANDARDS: SERVICE AREAS

HAP strategy 2.5.7

Action: Fine tune service area and mechanical equipment standards.

Under AMC 19.62.070, some minor clarifications can be made about applicability to offer some more flexibility. Subsection (B) currently acts as a title but could be expanded with examples:

B. Location of ground related service areas and mechanical equipment. Ground-level building service areas and mechanical equipment includes loading docks, trash collection and compactors, dumpster areas, storage tanks, electrical panels, HVAC equipment, and other utility equipment. If any such elements are outside the building envelope at ground level, the following location standards apply:

1. Service areas ~~(loading docks, trash dumpsters, compactors, recycling areas, electrical panels, and mechanical equipment areas)~~ must be located for convenient service access while avoiding negative visual, auditory, olfactory, or physical impacts on the streetscape environment and adjacent residentially zoned properties. Service areas must be sited for alley access if available.

Under subsection B.6, consider adding to the list of dumpster storage requirements:

Trash collection areas must include roofs or overhead weather protection and must meet required stormwater standards. Drainage must be designed to meet applicable NPDES standards.

ADJUST DESIGN STANDARDS: SERVICE AREAS

HAP strategy 2.5.7

Under subsection C.1.d, add the following moderation to help control construction costs:

Collection points must be located and configured to the extent practical so that the enclosure gate swing does not obstruct pedestrian or vehicle vehicular traffic, or does not require that a hauling truck project into any public right-of-way. Ensure that screening elements allow for efficient service delivery and removal operations.

Under subsection E.2, consider removing the prohibition on perforated metal as a rooftop equipment screening material since it is cost effective and has a variety of design options.

For rooftop equipment, all screening devices must be well integrated into the architectural design through such elements as parapet walls, false roofs, roof wells, clerestories, or equipment rooms. Screening walls or unit-mounted screening is allowed but less desirable. Wood must not be used for screens or enclosures. Louvered designs are acceptable if consistent with building design style. ~~Perforated metal is not permitted.~~

ADJUST DESIGN STANDARDS: BUILDING DESIGN

HAP strategy 2.5.8

Action: Fine tune building design standards.

Under AMC 19.63.040(C)(2), consider minor revisions to the list of articulation standards:

- a. Use of windows and/or entries that reinforce an articulation pattern.*
- b. Use of awnings or similar weather protection features (not applicable to residential buildings).*
- c. Use of vertical piers/columns (applies to all floors of the façade, excluding upper level stepbacks).*
- d. Change in roofline per subsection (F) below.*
- e. Change in building material or siding style, ~~and/or window pattern~~ (applies to all floors of the façade, excluding upper level stepbacks).*

ADJUST DESIGN STANDARDS: BUILDING DESIGN

HAP strategy 2.5.8

Under AMC 19.63.050(E), consider revising the entry articulation standard for consistency:

The primary building entrance (when provided) for an office building, hotel, ~~apartment~~ multifamily building, public or community-based facility or other multi-story commercial building must be designed as a clearly defined and demarcated standout architectural feature of the building.

ADJUST DESIGN STANDARDS: BUILDING DESIGN

HAP strategy 2.5.9

Action: Fine tune building materials standards.

Section 19.63.060(B) can be updated to clarify the applicability of durable materials on the ground floor

B. Quality building materials. ~~Applicants must use high quality durable materials. This is most important for the base of buildings, particularly for commercial and mixed-use buildings where the façade is sited close to sidewalks.~~ Stone, brick or tile masonry, architectural concrete or other similar highly durable materials must be used for at least the bottom two-feet of the first floor façade on non-residential and mixed-use buildings (excluding window and door areas).



ADJUST DESIGN STANDARDS: BUILDING DESIGN

HAP strategy 2.5.10

Action: Fine tune blank wall standards.

Under 19.63.070(C), consider updating the applicability for blank wall treatment standards to reduce construction cost impacts.

Blank wall treatment standards. Untreated blank walls located within 100 feet of, and visible from a street, public space, ground-level individual outdoor space, or internal walkway, are prohibited. Methods to treat blank walls include the following (a variety of treatments may be required to meet the purpose of the standards): ~~adjacent to a public street, pedestrian-oriented space, common usable open space, or pedestrian pathway are prohibited.~~ Methods to treat blank walls can include:

ADJUST PARKING STANDARDS

HAP strategy 2.6.1

Recommended adjustments for parking standards are focused on providing more certainty and clarity.

- **Middle Housing:** For duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes move away from parking by bedroom counts and simplify to one per unit (*similar standard for single-family*)
- **Affordable Housing:** Define and list “multifamily dwelling, affordable” a set a minimum parking requirement of 0.5 to 0.75 spaces per unit
- **Senior Housing:** Rename the term “multifamily dwelling, restricted” to “senior housing” to clarify and set parking standard at 1 space per unit

ADJUST PARKING STANDARDS

Additional parking considerations:

- **Fee-in-lieu payments:** Consider allowing fee-in-lieu payments for retail uses in a mixed-use building in any location citywide.
- **Guest parking:** Currently, only the CBD zone waives guest parking requirements. This waiver could be extended to R4, C, and MMU zones
 - Alternatively, another option is to remove guest parking requirements citywide for multifamily uses

R-1 ZONE

HAP strategy 4.3.2

Action: In the next major Comprehensive Plan Update, reexamine the purpose, priorities, and development regulations for the R1 zone.

Current context:

- 15,000sf minimum lot size
- Home to an elementary school and ample park space
- Max density in code: 2du/acre
- Comp plan allows up to 4du/acre and cottages through special review process (but none currently established)

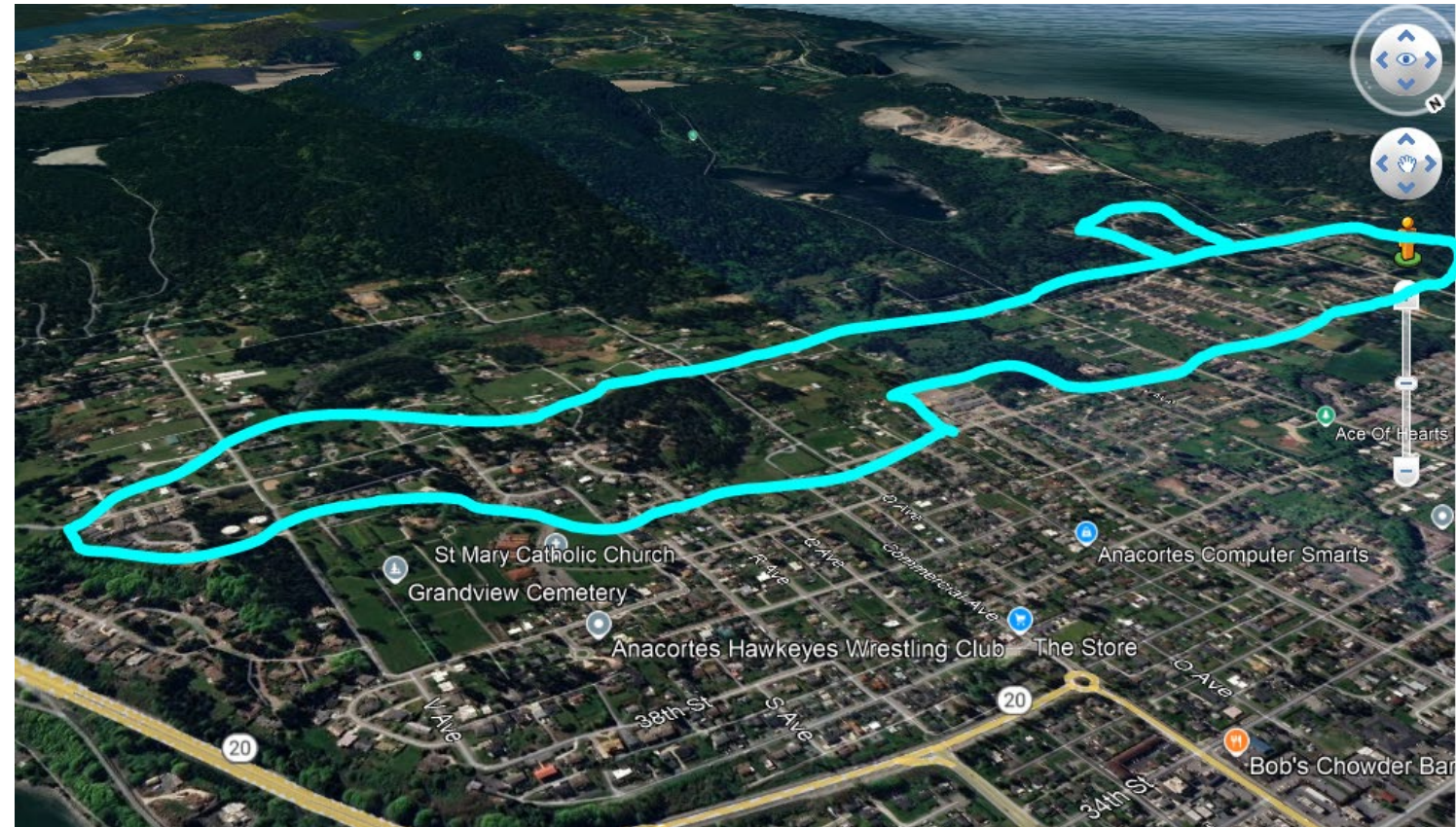


Given growth management goals and the findings of the HAP Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report, it is recommended that the next Comprehensive Plan examine the purpose and priorities for this zone more closely.

- The review will need to also account for the benefits of open space and wildlife corridors since the R1 zone acts as a moderate “buffer” between the city and the unincorporated Skagit County.
- The review will also need to examine the infrastructure implications of any zoning change, particularly the lack of pedestrian and bike routes and transit service (see the discussion of tax increment financing in Strategy 5.3).

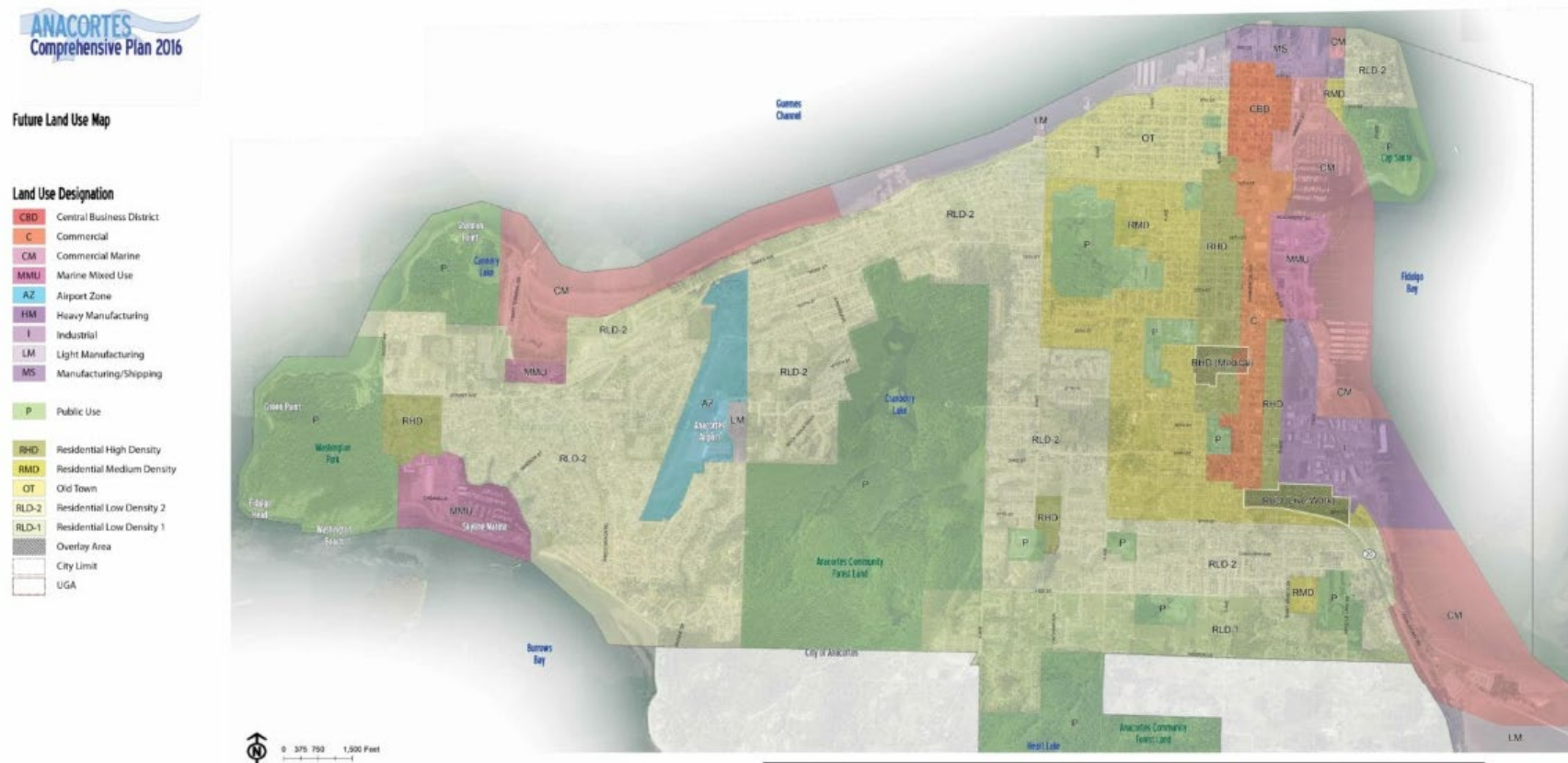
R-1 ZONE

- Most of R1 is currently several blocks away from current transit routes
- Currently a mix of connecting streets to the rest of the city and long blocks without shorter street grid
- New development is required to build connecting curb/gutter infrastructure
- Minor zoning changes would help create a few more developable lots
 - Reduce minimum lot size to 10,000 sf
 - Remove maximum density
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) could be a tool to help finance road, sidewalk, water, and sewer improvement (*HAP strategy 5.3*)



NEXT STEPS

- Future Land Use Map (FLUM) considerations
- Draft Land Use and Housing Goals and Policies



Memorandum



To: City Council
From: Council Planning Committee
Date: August 12, 2024
Re: Recommended HAP Measures

As discussed at Council during our docketing discussion, the Council Planning Committee reviewed the City's 2023 [Housing Action Plan](#), identified the proposed measures within it for changes to the City's Development Regulations, and in the attached table, recommend some of them to move forward alongside the Comprehensive Plan in the public process and for consideration by the Planning Commission.

For each measure, we recommend:

- Include (move forward in the public process)
- Exclude (do not move forward)
- Required (we must move forward to comply with state law)
- Completed (we have already satisfactorily implemented this measure)

#	Summary	Recommendation	Notes
2.1.1	Residential Low Density 1 (R1) Zone	Include	Cottages are likely to be especially appropriate for the R1 zone
2.1.2	Residential Low Density 2 (R2) Zone	Completed	
2.1.3	Residential Low Density 2A (R2A) Zone	Include	
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2.1.5	Group Living	Include	Include Rooming House and Adult Family Home; HACS proposes further study of Nursing Home and Assisted Living Facility to ensure sufficient standards exist in code
2.1.6	Adult Family Homes	Include	
2.1.7	Prohibit New Large-Lot Single-Family Uses in Medium and High Density Zones	Include	Rework as a maximum lot size and apply to consolidation via BLA; apply to all zones
2.1.8	Duplex Cottages	Include	See Cedar Springs Lane development as an example of where this type has already been permitted
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2.4.2	Maximum Lot Coverage	Include	
2.4.3	Maximum Size of Single-Family Homes	Exclude	Sufficiently addressed through maximum lot size
2.4.4	Density	Include	
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2.4.8	Religiously Owned Land Density Bonus	Required	
2.5.1	Family Definition	Required	
2.5.2	Design Standards Applicability	Include	
2.5.3	Block Frontage Standards	Include	
2.5.4	Usable Residential Open Space	Include	
2.5.5	Townhouse Open Space	Include	

#	Summary	Recommendation	Notes
2.5.6	Parking Lot Landscaping	Include	
2.5.7	Service Areas and Mechanical Equipment	Include	
2.5.8	Building Design	Include	
2.5.9	Building Materials	Include	
2.5.10	Blank Walls	Include	
2.6.1	Minimum Parking Standards	Include	Consult with AHA and AFC about their parking experience
2.6.2	On-Street Parking	Exclude	
2.6.3	Guest Parking	Include	Allow only when nearby streets are fully constructed
2.6.4	Unbundling Parking from Lease Agreements	Exclude	This is not a development regulation amendment.
4.3.1	Old Town Zone	Exclude	
4.3.2	R1 Zone	Include	
4.3.3	Multifamily and Mixed-Use Zone Height Limits	Exclude	
4.3.4	Industrial Zones	Exclude	Note that Sharpe's Corner has some LM zone, but we are addressing Sharpe's Corner separately
4.3.5	Parking	Exclude	

RESOLUTION NO. 3104

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
ANACORTES ADOPTING A HOUSING ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE
THE AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING FOR THE
ENTIRE COMMUNITY**

WHEREAS, Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A.600 provides for cities planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to prepare a Housing Action Plan (HAP); and

WHEREAS, the goal of the HAP is to encourage construction of additional affordable and market rate housing in a greater variety of housing types and prices that are accessible to a greater variety of incomes;; and

WHEREAS, preparation of the HAP involved extensive public outreach that included stakeholder interviews, community survey, planning commission public meeting, city council public hearing, and city web page that made available related documents and allowed for early and continuous public participation and public comment; and

WHEREAS, the City of Anacortes finds that adequate and affordable housing is key to ensuring a vibrant community with a desirable quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the City of Anacortes finds that there is a need for a variety of housing types that are affordable across all income levels; and

WHEREAS, the City of Anacortes recognizes the need for a more comprehensive strategy in addressing housing needs; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Action Plan was developed by evaluating the City's ongoing efforts and analyzing Anacortes's current and future housing needs through a housing needs analysis and collaborating with the community; and

WHEREAS, the City Council held a meeting on December 19, 2022, to introduce the Housing Action Plan and take public comment; and

WHEREAS, the City Council held a public hearing on **January 17, 2023**;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Anacortes, Washington, that:

SECTION 1 – The Council hereby adopts the Anacortes Housing Action Plan as shown in Attachment A.

SECTION 2 – The City Council intends to select specific measures from the Anacortes Housing Action Plan to propose as development regulation updates to address Anacortes’s housing needs.

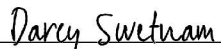
SECTION 3 – The Housing Action Plan will be a useful foundation for updates of the policies in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use and Housing Elements.

INTRODUCED, PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ANACORTES THIS 17th OF JANUARY 2023.



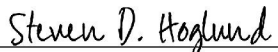
MATT MILLER, MAYOR

Approved as to form and legality:



Darcy Swetnam, WSBA #40530
City Attorney

ATTEST:



Steven D. Hoglund, City Clerk Treasurer

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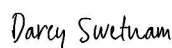
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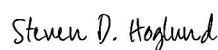
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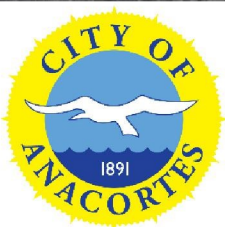
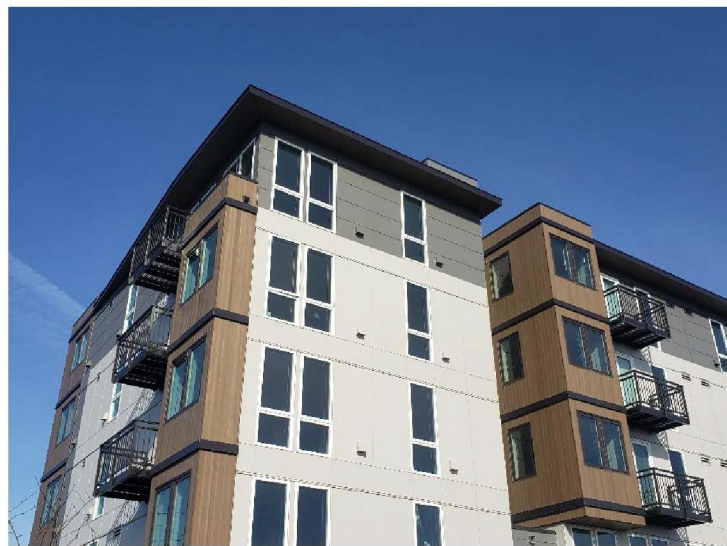
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Anacortes Housing Action Plan



January 2023

Thank You

Special thanks to the Anacortes community for sharing your time, knowledge, and energy to shape this housing action plan that meets your needs and interests.

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City Council

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Washington State

This plan was supported by a Department of Commerce grant for cities to support housing affordability.

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Abbreviations

ACS. American Community Survey, an annual product of the U.S. Census Bureau.

ADU. Accessory dwelling unit.

AHA. Anacortes Housing Authority.

AFC. Anacortes Family Center.

AMC. Anacortes Municipal Code (city law).

AMI. Area median income.

CHAS. Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, a product of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

GIS. Geographic information system.

GFC. General facilities charge.

HACS. Housing Affordability and Community Services, a committee of the Anacortes City Council.

HAP. Housing Action Plan.

HUD. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

LEHD. Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, a product of the U.S. Census Bureau.

MFTE. Multifamily tax exemption program.

MSA. Metropolitan Statistical Area.

OFM. Washington State Office of Financial Management.

RCW. Revised Code of Washington (state law).

Executive Summary

The Anacortes Housing Action Plan (HAP) defines strategies and implementing actions that promote greater housing diversity, affordability, and access to opportunity for residents of all income levels. The process to develop the HAP included a review of Anacortes's system of policies, programs, and regulations which shape opportunities for housing development and which impact the affordability of existing and new housing.

The purpose of this effort is to identify ways to encourage construction and preservation of both affordable and market-rate housing in a greater variety of types, densities, and cost levels. The priorities for the HAP were informed by a housing needs assessment, public engagement, discussion with the City Council and Planning Commission, and City staff.

The HAP is intended to inform updates to the Anacortes Comprehensive Plan (most notably the Land Use and Housing elements) and to guide implementation strategies such as development regulations, housing programs, and infrastructure spending priorities.

Objectives

The HAP objectives listed below were developed from the original research questions and the results of housing needs analysis report. They drive the recommended actions and strategies.

1. Support the local economy and workforce with more rental homes.
2. Create a greater variety of homeownership opportunities.
3. Slow down and stabilize the rise in housing prices.
4. Refine regulatory standards to reduce barriers to housing development.
5. Adopt new financial tools to support and promote development and maintenance of housing.

Housing Vision

The housing vision is common set of principles for people living and working in Anacortes. It builds off the vision statement of the Comprehensive Plan and the goals and policies of the Housing Element.

1. Everyone who works in Anacortes (from teachers and nurses to restaurant and retail staff) can afford to live in Anacortes if they choose.
2. Children who grow up in Anacortes can afford starter homes in the town near their friends and family.
3. Seniors have options to gracefully age in place in the community near essential services and caretakers.
4. Local housing contributes to climate change and sustainability goals by allowing people to drive fewer miles and live near jobs and daily services.

Why Housing Matters

Anacortes has an interest in providing a sufficient supply, diversity, and price range of housing because of housing's connections to all other qualities of the city and the needs of its people. Housing and shelter are essential to human health and well-being. The availability of housing for people in different stages of life and in different classes directly affects whether people choose to live and work in Anacortes, the success and vitality of local businesses, the protection of natural resources and rural lands, and the rate of climate-changing emissions.



Housing matters because people matter. Housing affects these major interests of Anacortes:

Quality of Life

Low vacancies prevent all generations and families from trading up or trading down their housing. Recent graduates looking for work seek housing they can afford at entry-level wages. Families make decisions on whether and where to raise children based on the availability and location of housing that fits their needs. The ability of seniors to have familial or hired caretakers relies on the availability and price of housing for themselves and healthcare workers.

Protecting Rural Landscapes

The lack of housing in the city puts pressure on the development of rural farms, forests, and resource lands outside of the city. This effect occurs at both a local and regional scale across Skagit County. Compact and taller housing helps Anacortes grow up instead of growing out.

Economic Development and Essential Workers

Local Anacortes businesses, industries, and essential services like policing, teaching, and healthcare depend on a stable workforce. Having housing choices affordable to most people earning local wages is critical to building a diverse economy and thriving community.

Traffic and Emissions

Without financial and practical options to live where they work, workers will mostly drive into Anacortes from elsewhere. This contributes to increased traffic congestion, safety risk, and carbon emissions. Transportation is the biggest contributor to carbon emissions in the state.

Avoiding Displacement

Higher housing costs make more people more vulnerable to losing their home, which affects their ability to hold down a job, graduate school, care for children, or contribute to community.

Housing Actions and Strategies

The housing actions are organized by broader strategy sections of this plan. The implementation timeline is an estimate of how long it will take to implement an action. There are also many sub-sections which may require different timelines if additional community outreach is needed, alignment with the City's annual budget process is necessary, or there is a desire to roll policy updates into the next major Comprehensive Plan update. See Section 6 for more details on implementation priorities.

Strategy	Description	Priority	Time
Regulatory Strategies			
2.1	Allow more housing types in more zones	High	0-6 months
2.2	Map the R3A zone and update its standards	High	0-6 months
2.3	Streamline ADU regulations	High	0-6 months
2.4	Adjust form and intensity standards	High	0-6 months
2.5	Adjust definitions and design standards	High	0-6 months
2.6	Adjust parking standards	High	0-6 months
2.7	Building code amendments	Medium	6-12 months
Programmatic Strategies			
3.1	Short-term rental regulations	Medium	0-6 months
3.2	Anti-displacement strategies	Medium	Ongoing
3.3	Homelessness strategies	High	Ongoing
Citywide Planning Strategies			
4.1	Hire a housing coordinator	High	0-6 months
4.2	Housing Element updates	Medium	12-24 months
4.3	Land Use Element updates	Medium	12-24 months
4.4	Public land for affordable housing	Medium	Ongoing
Funding Strategies			
5.1	Multifamily tax exemption program	High	0-6 months
5.2	Development fee adjustments	Low	0-6 months
5.3	Tax increment financing	Low	6-12 months
5.4	Funding for ADU development	Medium	6-12 months
5.5	Inclusionary zoning and fee-in-lieu	Low	Long term
5.6	Transit and sidewalk funding	Medium	6-12 months
5.7	State advocacy	Low	Ongoing

Next Steps

The urgency of Anacortes's housing challenges demand that a variety of strategies and actions be pursued immediately and simultaneously. This plan informs and recommends code updates in 2023 (Strategy 2). A housing coordinator staff position should be created and hired to implement all HAP strategies and serve as the City's lead on housing policy and coordination. Updates and evaluation are recommended in the next Comprehensive Plan update in 2025, and other programmatic, funding, and planning actions can start independently as soon as resources are allocated.

1 – Background Information

1.1 – Project Purpose

Anacortes is a great place to live, but it is getting more expensive. As the population grows, the supply of homes is not keeping up with increased demand. As a result, it is getting harder for people of average means to find and afford a home. The supply of housing is closely linked to the price of housing.¹

The purpose of the Housing Action Plan is to identify strategies that promote more housing options for current and future residents at all income levels and support increases in the housing supply. Anacortes's residents are diverse and each household has its own preferences and experiences in how they live. This plan is intended to help guide City actions over the next several years to promote more housing choices for current and future residents.

The City is able to undertake this project thanks to grant funding provided by Washington State through the Department of Commerce. This grant program allocated funds for cities with the goal of supporting housing affordability through regulatory and planning actions.

1.2 – Housing Needs

Anacortes's current and future housing needs are detailed in the HAP Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report. A summary is provided here.

Anacortes is expected to see demand for an additional 3,019 housing units through 2045, based on a projected annual growth rate of 1.4%. Figure 1 shows the approximate breakdown of these units by tenure and household income. There is demand for 1,451 rental units and 1,561 ownership units. The ownership units will likely target higher income brackets than the rental units. Many units will need to be affordable to households earning under 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), or \$68,900 for a family of four as of 2022. Currently, the Anacortes Housing Authority and Anacortes Family Center together provide 387 units to households earning under 80% of the AMI, and in some cases to households earning less than 50% of the AMI.

These estimates and Figure 1 are future-looking based on expected net population growth. A recent report by nonprofit Up For Growth also suggests there may be additional need based on historical underproduction of housing.² In most metropolitan areas, housing shortages worsened between 2012 and 2019.³ Based on the formation of new households or people living in undesirable situations (such as adult children living with their parents), the Skagit, Island, and San Juan Counties area unproduced nearly 2,300 units. If taken proportionally by population,

¹ "Housing Supply: A Growing Deficit." Freddie Mac. May 2021.

<https://www.freddiemac.com/research/insight/20210507-housing-supply>

² "2022 Housing Underproduction in the U.S." Up For Growth. 2022. <https://upforgrowth.org/apply-the-vision/housing-underproduction/>

³ "Housing shortage has spread across Pacific Northwest, new study shows." *The Seattle Times*. August 2022. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/housing-shortage-has-spread-across-pacific-northwest-new-study-shows/>

Anacortes underproduced 170 units between 2012 and 2019. Additional guidance on underproduction from the Washington Department of Commerce will be available in early 2023.

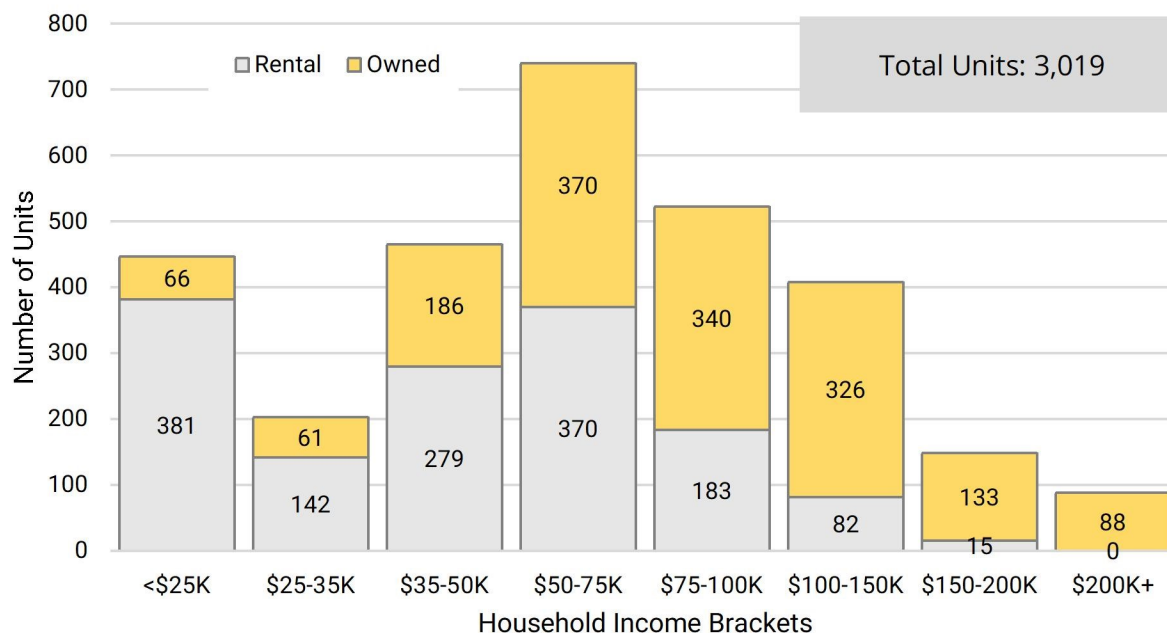


Figure 1. Approximate Demand for New Housing Units, City of Anacortes, 2021-2045. Source: Leland Consulting Group

Currently, about a third of Anacortes households are considered cost burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs. As shown in Figure 2 below, the share of cost-burdened households increases as income levels decrease. Almost 80% of very low income households (earning 30-50% AMI) spend more than a third of their income on housing.

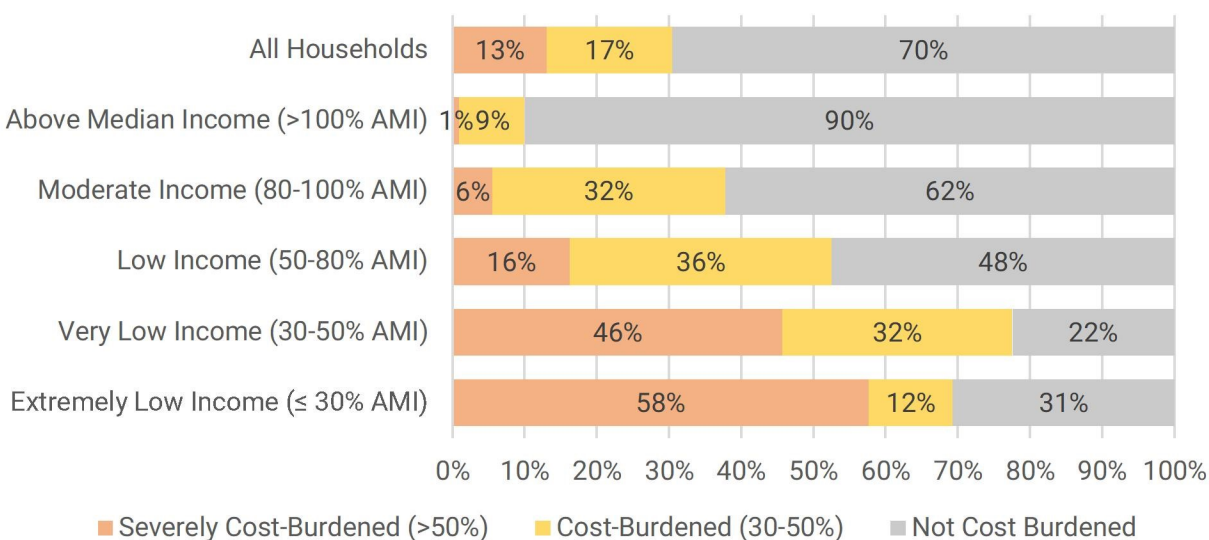


Figure 2. Cost Burden Status by Household Income Level (Percent), 2020. Source: HUD CHAS

Other subgroups of Anacortes residents identified in the HAP Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report include:

- Senior households make up 44% of the city's population and a third of these are housing cost burdened. The city is currently underserved by senior and assisted living housing.
- Disabled residents. About half of the households with disabled household members are earning less than 80% AML.
- People experiencing homelessness. The most recent point-in-time count showed at least 314 people countywide experiencing homelessness. This affects people of all walks of life and age (for instance, only 50% of Anacortes homeless high school students graduate compared to 92% of non-homeless students).⁴

A household is considered to be "cost-burdened" if they are spending more than 30% of their monthly income on housing costs (including rent or mortgage and utilities).

A "severely cost-burdened" household spends more than 50% of their monthly income on housing costs.

The strategies proposed throughout this Housing Action Plan are designed to increase housing options for current and future Anacortes residents at all income levels. Key strategies relating to affordability include increasing allowed density in residential zones, encouraging ADU and middle housing development through incentives and right-sized fees, discouraging new single-family development in some zones, explicitly allowing supportive housing and single-room-occupancy housing, and providing tax breaks in exchange for reduced-rent apartments.

1.3 – Racially Disparate Impacts

While Anacortes may not have explicitly racist policies in place today, many policies do have racially disparate origins and impacts. The practice of zoning emerged in the early 1900's and explicitly race-based zoning had to be banned almost immediately as a result of the 1917 Supreme Court case of *Buchanan v. Warley*. After that decision, cities crafted less direct methods to divide people by race and class with zoning policies that are still prevalent today.

The indirect methods largely rely on the differences of wealth, income, and tenure between peoples' race and ethnicities. In Anacortes, for example, 32% of all households are occupied by renters. About 31% of White households are renters, while 53% of Hispanic and Latino households and 63% of Black households are renters⁵. Therefore, policies that restrict the supply and price of rental housing have a disproportionate impact on people of color. Further, almost half of all renter-occupied households are considered cost-burdened, while just one in 10 owner-occupied households are considered cost-burdened.

⁴ "One WA school district helped homeless students graduate. Can others?" The Seattle Times. November 2022. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/one-wa-school-district-helped-homeless-students-graduate-can-others/>

⁵ Source: American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates, B25003 Tables.

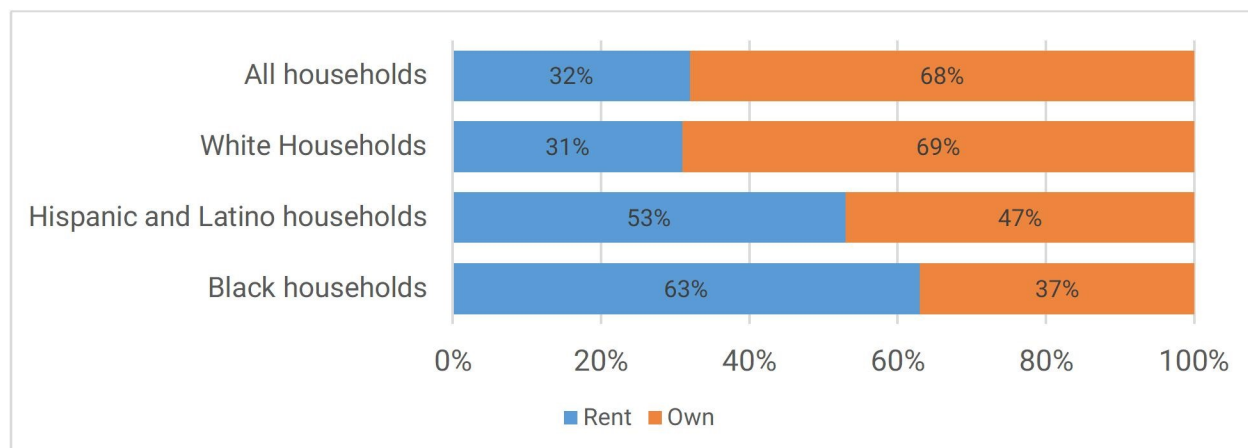


Figure 3. Tenure by race. Source: ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates, Table B25003 series

A common form of rental housing is multifamily (apartment) buildings, which are strictly limited in where and how they can be built in Anacortes compared to where and how single-family homes are regulated.

Zoning matters for social welfare because where people live makes a difference. Neighborhood quality can have significant effects on long-term outcomes like school performance, income, labor mobility, and health. It also contributes to the multi-generational wealth gap if some people are not able to purchase quality homes that increase in value as much over time as homes in higher-priced neighborhoods, resulting in smaller inheritances for descendants.

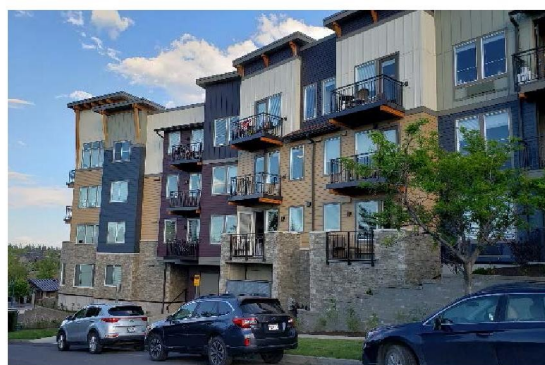


Figure 4. Example of multifamily housing.

People of color generally pay higher shares of their income for housing costs and have less savings for down payments, meaning the home prices they can afford are lower or they are forced to rent. Smaller homes which have lower costs are needed not only for people of color, but also Anacortes's large share of single-person and senior households. Occasionally, larger multi-bedroom homes are good options for people who want to split costs with extended family members or roommates, but apartments with three or more bedrooms are rare and there are few shared-living options like cottage clusters or triplexes available.

Common racially disparate policies and practices at the local level include the following:

- Minimum lot sizes
- Lack of available land zoned for multifamily housing and middle housing (like duplexes and townhomes)

- Multifamily housing only allowed in busy commercial districts, polluted industrial areas, in hazardous areas like floodplains, and/or near loud and unsafe arterial roads
- Multifamily housing not being allowed near amenities like parks, schools, grocery stores, and healthcare facilities
- Excessive minimum setbacks, building height limits, parking standards, historic preservation standards, and other restrictions that limit the housing capacity on individual sites, especially for multifamily and middle housing
- Excessive fees, complicated processes, and unclear regulations, especially for small projects commonly undertaken by local homeowners and small investors like adding an accessory dwelling unit or building a duplex
- Complete prohibitions on low-cost building materials
- Lack of trees and park space in areas near multifamily housing or neighborhoods with lower incomes
- Lack of low-cost transportation options like pedestrian/bike routes and transit service connecting multifamily housing to jobs and services

Middle housing refers to housing choices like duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, accessory dwelling units (ADU's), and cottage housing that fit between the scale of apartment buildings and single-family homes. This type of housing has historically been prohibited in many cities and towns. It has regained appeal because it can be economical to build and thus have lower costs, providing more affordable housing options.

Racially disparate impacts are not limited to Anacortes and this issue has been gaining much-needed attention across the state and country, even earning a [statement on zoning](#) from the White House. Other city-level racially disparate impacts have historically included redlining, where people of color were not able to access loans and credit in certain neighborhoods; highways built through communities of color; and disinvestment in infrastructure like transit, schools, and parks in communities of color.

This Housing Action Plan provides a number of strategies to address most of these issues, which focus on easing regulations and streamlining standards to make it easier to build middle housing and multifamily housing in more locations.

1.4 – Public Engagement

The Housing Action Plan was informed by early and continuous public engagement. Engagement was conducted to create a plan that meets the needs and interest of the Anacortes community. Key activities included:

- Public kickoff meeting at the HACS Committee (February 10, 2022)
- Proactive engagement (summarized in the September 2022 Public Engagement Report)
 - 15 stakeholder interviews (April-May 2022)
 - 1,067 valid survey responses (June-July 2022)
- Planning Commission briefing (October 24, 2022)
- City Council briefing (December 19, 2022)
- City Council public hearing and adoption (January 17, 2023)

1.5 – State Preemptions

Anacortes should anticipate state preemption on several common types of development regulations which have some of the greatest impacts on housing affordability and site-specific feasibility. The rate of preemption laws on peripheral housing issues has been accelerating in recent years (documented in the HAP Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report) and several major bills were proposed in the 2022 legislative session that will likely come around again (as of this writing, some similar housing proposals have been pre-filed for the 2023 legislative session). In some respects Washington is following the lead of Oregon and California which have also passed major zoning preemptions over the last several years.

State preemption is the invalidation of some action by, or the wresting of power from, a local government by the state legislature.

In particular, there is a statewide and national movement toward ending single-family zoning; that is, zoning where the only permitted residential land use is detached, large lot single-family dwellings. The only zone in Anacortes that meets this definition today is the R1 zone and the HAP recommends changing that. Upcoming federal funding programs may also contain grant award incentives or preferences for cities that are ending single-family zoning in the interest of providing diverse housing choices and economic opportunities.

Anacortes can expect other possible statewide interventions on:

- Common ADU regulations like size, parking, owner occupancy, and prohibition on subdivision
- Minimum residential density requirements
- Minimum parking requirements for multifamily housing and/or affordable housing

While no single action by the Legislature can be predictable or assured, growing consensus on the statewide housing affordability crisis gives Anacortes reason to stay updated on legislative proposals, updates to the Growth Management Act, and related laws.

2 – Regulatory Strategies

While the City of Anacortes does not directly supply or control the private housing market, it does shape what is possible on Anacortes's land through zoning and development regulations.

Anacortes is not seeing adequate construction of new housing. Since 2016, housing production in Anacortes is averaging 101 units per year. This is 29 units below the annual average of 131 units needed to meet the City's 2016-2036 growth targets.

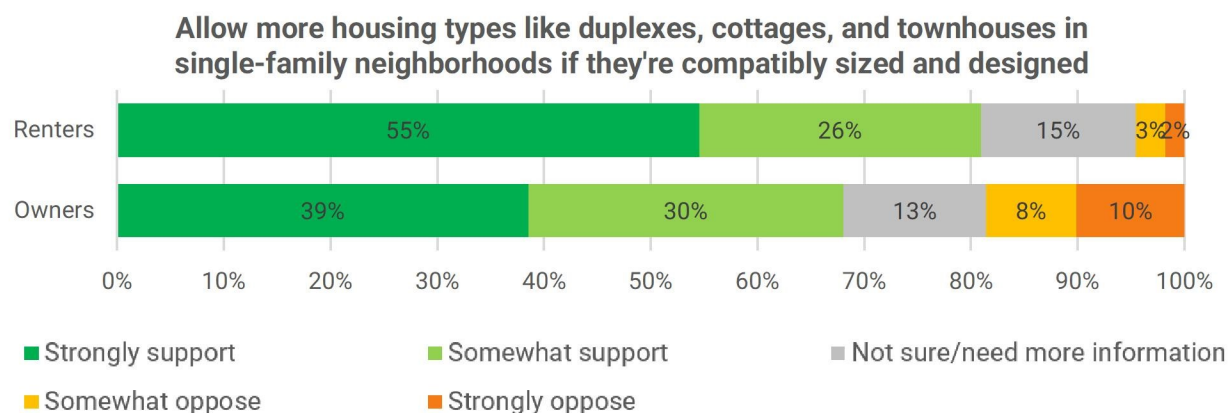
Zoning is not the only factor in these shortfalls – as noted by many stakeholders, vacant land in Anacortes is dwindling, the construction industry is seeing an unprecedented rise in material prices, a labor shortage, supply chain disruptions, and inflation and increased interest rates. Despite this, zoning is typically the main barrier to housing because it is the starting point in determining what type of housing and other buildings can be built on a parcel of land. A 2022 review of land capacity by Leland Consulting Group finds Anacortes has an approximate total capacity for just over 2,000 housing units remaining which probably reflects a development capacity of 10 to 15 years at current allowed densities.

The regulatory strategies and actions of this section could be implemented relatively quickly in a consolidated "Housing Options Ordinance." The actions largely focus on deregulation, streamlining, and relaxing of code requirements to promote more diverse and affordable housing.

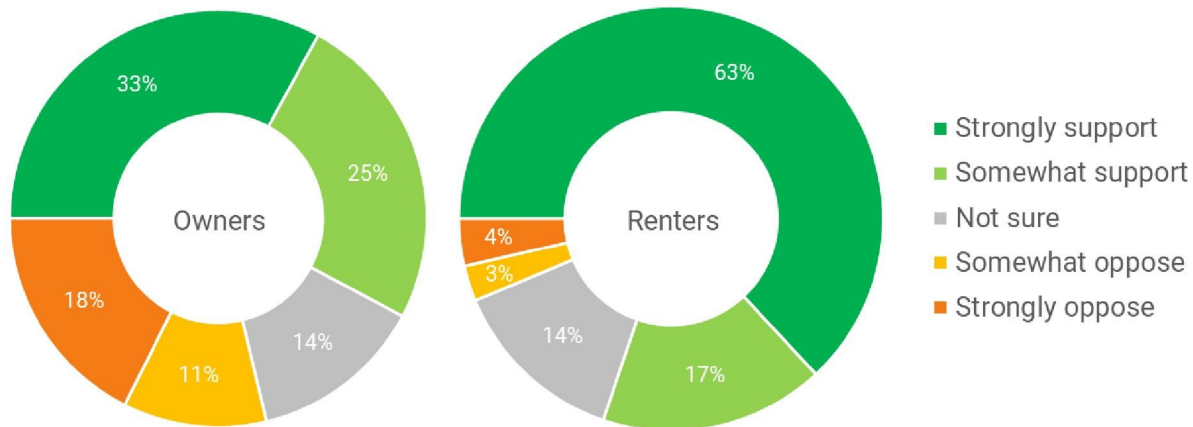
2.1 – Allowed Uses

Action: Allow more housing types in more residential zones to promote middle housing and affordable housing.

Changing allowed uses is key to expanding housing supply and land capacity. In the HAP community survey, a supermajority of 70% of respondents support the concept to "Allow more housing types like duplexes, cottages, and townhouses in single-family neighborhoods if they're compatibly sized and designed." This concept was also supported by most stakeholders when it came up in interviews.



In addition, a total of 61% of survey takers would strongly or somewhat support a hypothetical multi-floor apartment project planned in or near their neighborhood with rents affordable to people like recent college graduates, teachers, nurses, restaurant workers, mechanics, etc. This is mostly reflected in the proposed mapping of the R3A zone and recommended adjustments to dimensional standards.



Following public interest and an analysis of the situation by the consultant team, considerable changes to allowed housing types are proposed. These are summarized in the table below which is an excerpt from the Anacortes Municipal Code (AMC) Table 19.41.040. Text with an underline indicates an addition and a text with a ~~strikeout~~ indicates a deletion. The table is followed by a description of each major change and a list of related actions.

Note: Some changes to allowed uses will also require adjustments to minimum lot sizes and other standards. These are described throughout Strategy 2.

	Residential Zones								
Residential Uses	R1	R2	R2A	R3	R3A	R4	R4A	OT	Conditions/ Reference
Household living									
Single-family	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Single-family, small lot				P	P	P	P		
Cottage housing	<u>P</u>	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Duplex		G <u>P</u>	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Triplex			<u>P</u> (X)	G <u>P</u>	P	P	P		<u>(X) Alley-loaded lots only</u>
Townhouse			<u>P</u> (X)	G <u>P</u>	P	P	P		<u>(X) Alley-loaded lots only, max. 4 units</u>
Multifamily dwellings, 4 units				G <u>P</u>	P	P	P		
Multifamily dwellings, 5 or more units					<u>P</u> (X)	P	P		<u>(X) Max. 12 units</u>
<u>Multifamily dwellings, single room occupancy</u>						<u>P</u> (X)			<u>(X) Max. 50 units</u>

	Residential Zones								
Residential Uses	R1	R2	R2A	R3	R3A	R4	R4A	OT	Conditions/ Reference
Group living									
Adult family home	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	See Group Living Strategy 2.1.4 for potential conditions.
Assisted living facility				P <u>P</u>	P <u>P</u>	P	P <u>P</u>		
Nursing homes				<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	P <u>P</u>			
Rooming houses				P <u>P</u>	P <u>P</u>	P	P	P <u>P</u>	
Supportive living									
Permanent supportive housing				<u>P</u> (X)	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>		(X) <u>Max. 4 units</u>
Transitional housing				<u>P</u> (X)	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>		(X) <u>Max. 4 units</u>

Figure 5. Excerpt of Table 19.41.040

	Commercial and Mixed-Use Zones										
Residential Uses	CBD	C	MM U	CM	CM2	LM	LM1	MS	I	HM	Conditions/ Reference
Household living											
Single-family	C	C				C	P				
Single-family, small lot											
Cottage housing											
Duplex											
Triplex											
Townhouse	P	P	P								
Multifamily dwellings, 4 or more units	P	P	P	C		C		C			
Multifamily dwellings, single room occupancy	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>								
Live-work	P	P	P					C			
Group living											
Adult family home	P	P				P	P				
Assisted living facility	P	P	P								
Nursing homes	P <u>P</u>	P <u>P</u>	P <u>P</u>								
Rooming houses											
Supportive living											
Permanent supportive housing	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u> (X)	<u>P</u> (X)	<u>C</u> (X)		<u>C</u> (X)		<u>C</u>			(X) <u>Same conditions as for multifamily</u>
Transitional housing	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u> (X)	<u>P</u> (X)	<u>C</u> (X)		<u>C</u> (X)		<u>C</u>			(X) <u>Same conditions as for multifamily</u>
Emergency housing	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>		<u>C</u>					
Emergency shelter	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>		<u>C</u>					
Overnight Lodging	P	P	P	P		C					

Figure 6. Excerpt of Table 19.41.050

2.1.1 – Residential Low Density 1 (R1) Zone

Cottage housing is proposed to be a new permitted use in this zone. The Comprehensive Plan says single-family detached dwellings are the predominant type in this area and cottages satisfy that criteria; further, the plan explicitly says cottage housing may be allowed under certain circumstances. Those circumstances are not defined, but the new cottage housing design standards adopted in 2019 and the growing need for additional housing supply found by the HAP Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report are notable changes to the situation since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2016.

The Comprehensive Plan also says densities of up to four units per gross acre (above the base limit of two units per gross acre) may be permitted via a special review process. That special review process is undefined. Options and a recommendation should be considered as part of a subsequent code update. Longer term, consider allowing four units per gross acre by-right through a Comprehensive Plan amendment (see Strategy 4.3.2).

2.1.2 – Residential Low Density 2 (R2) Zone

Duplexes are proposed to be changed from conditional to outright permitted in the R2 zone. This streamlines the permitting process and reduces uncertainty. Conditional use permits are not necessary for duplexes due to the new 2019 design standards. Also see related Strategy 2.4.1 for the minimum lot size recommendation for duplexes.

2.1.3 – Residential Low Density 2A (R2A) Zone

Triplexes and townhouses are proposed to be new permitted uses in this zone, provided they meet proposed unit size limitations or additional lot size standards (see Strategy 2.4.1 for different options). The R2A zone represents a considerable amount of residential land with a connected street grid and is partially served by alleys, improving the feasibility of small-scale infill development. The lot dimension requirements and standards for open space, parking configuration, and architectural design help ensure that triplexes and townhouses will be compatible with the existing character of these zones.

*Figure 7 - Examples of triplexes and townhouses*

To retain neighborhood compatibility, it is proposed that:

- Triplexes and townhouses only be allowed on lots with alley access. This allows parking access and garages to be located in the rear of the lot and reduce visual impacts on the

streetscape. This condition would only allow triplexes and townhouses in approximately half the R2A zone, based on a review of street and block maps.

- Limit triplexes and townhouse units each to 1,000 to 1,200 square feet of floor area (and allow such small units to count as ½ a unit for density purposes)
- Limit townhouses to three or four units per structure (similar to the R3 and R3A zones under [AMC 19.43.010.G.3.a](#))

AMC 19.43.010(F) would be amended with a new subsection after the triplex definition:

#. R2A zone standards:

a. Triplexes located on a lot with alley access are permitted by right. Triplexes not located on a lot with alley access are prohibited.

b. Triplex units must have no more than [1,000-1,200] square feet gross floor area. Units meeting this standard are considered ½ a dwelling unit for density purposes.

AMC 19.43.010(G)(3)(a) would be amended to add the following townhouse standard:

#. R2A zone standards:

a. Townhouse structures with up to four attached units and located on a lot with alley access are permitted by right. Townhouse structures with more than four attached units or not located on a lot with alley access are prohibited.

b. Triplex units must have no more than [1,000-1,200] square feet gross floor area. Units meeting this standard are considered ½ a dwelling unit for density purposes.

2.1.4 – Residential Medium Density 3 (R3) Zone

Triplexes and Townhouses

Triplexes, townhouses, and multifamily projects with up to four units are proposed to be changed from conditional to outright permitted in the R3 zone, provided they meet proposed unit size limitations or additional lot size standards (see Strategy 2.4.1 for different options). The zone-specific standard for townhomes under AMC 19.43.010(G)(3)(a) can be amended as follows.

a. R3 and R3A zone standards: Townhouse structures with up to four attached units are permitted by right ~~in the R3A zone and conditionally permitted in the R3 zone~~. Townhouse structures with more than four attached units are prohibited in the R3 and R3A zones.

The lot dimension requirements and standards for open space, parking configuration, and architectural design help ensure that duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and small multifamily projects will be compatible with the existing character of these zones without the unnecessary cost and process of a conditional use permit.

Comprehensive Plan policy LU-6.1.D says, “Encourage [duplexes and triplexes] in the R3 and R4 zones provided design provisions that emphasize a pedestrian-oriented design and the inclusion of usable open space are included.” Such provisions are now in place for not only

triplexes but also duplexes, townhouses, and multifamily housing. Allowing uses by-right helps encourage them.

Multifamily

The R3 multifamily (4-units) change is also supported by the Comprehensive Plan description of the Residential Medium Designation, which is implemented by the R3 and R3A zones. It says, “low density multifamily may be allowed under certain circumstances”. Those circumstances are not defined, but the new multifamily design standards adopted in 2019 and the growing need for additional housing supply found by the HAP Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report are notable changes to the situation since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2016. Fourplexes are also valuable because the accessibility requirements of the Fair Housing Act apply in buildings of four or more units.

Nursing Homes

Nursing homes are the only prohibited group living use the R3 zone. They are proposed to be permitted outright. See the Group Living discussion (Strategy 2.1.4) for more information.

2.1.5 – Group Living

Barriers to the development of group living uses should be reduced to encourage their development. In particular, the HAP Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report and the Public Engagement Report both found a strong need for assisted living facilities and nursing homes as more seniors move to the city and the population ages. A considerable portion of the population also has disabilities who would benefit from more housing options.

Therefore, consider changing some or all of the current conditional use allowances for assisted living and nursing homes to outright permitted. This would significantly streamline the permitting process and reduce uncertainty. The same might be considered for rooming houses.

Both assisted living and nursing home uses are subject to project design standards to help ensure these uses are well-integrated into the neighborhood (see, for example, [AMC 19.43.020.C.2.b](#)). Other standards might be considered, particularly in the R3 and R3A zones to ensure compatibility:

- Maximum occupancy for assisted living facilities and nursing homes, with stricter limits in lower density zones (e.g. 10 units or beds at the low end and unlimited in R3A and above)
- Minimum spacing (e.g. minimum 1,000 feet at the low end and no minimum in R3A and above)
- Maximum size of porte cochere features for passenger loading, such as accommodating vehicles no longer than 30 feet

2.1.6 – Adult Family Homes

New state legislation passed in 2020, [RCW 70.128.066](#), provides a way for adult family homes to have seven or eight beds. The standards and definitions under AMC 19.43.020(B) should be updated accordingly.

Consider amending the requirements for adult family homes to be located in single-family homes. The enabling legislation under RCW 70.128.140 only requires that adult family homes be treated as single-family homes for regulatory purposes, not that they be physically designed as a detached single-family home.

2.1.7 – Prohibit New Large-Lot Single-Family Uses in Medium and High Density Zones

Combined, the R3 and R4 zones make up only 14% of the City's developable land but have some of the highest allowed densities. Given the limited land area of these zones, their intent to accommodate medium- to high-density development, and their walkable proximity to civic and commercial amenities, consider prohibiting development of new large-lot single-family uses in one or more of these zones. Clarify however, that this would not apply impact existing single family homes in these zones. Prohibiting new single family homes would ensure these lands are available for middle housing and multifamily development, with smaller units that are less costly and more land efficient.

Similar considerations need to be made for small-lot single-family. While more land-efficient, this use has the same issues as noted above. A starting point is to prohibit this use in the R3A, R4, and R4A zones, but still allow in the R3 zone. Small-lot single-family might also be considered to be expanded to the R2A zone, pending other changes in minimum lot size (see Strategy 2.4.1).

The 2022 land capacity analysis update for the Housing Action Plan found that the approximately 112-acre R4 zone has capacity for only 330 additional dwelling units. For reference, this is less than three years' worth of the housing production needed to meet the 2016-2036 growth targets. The R3 zone has capacity for only 299 additional dwelling units.

Existing single-family uses should be allowed to continue and be expanded or renovated, rather than be treated as a legal non-conforming use. Preferably, a note on the situation is added to AMC 19.43.010(B) to offer reassurance and clarity for code users. A more upfront alternative is inserting the use "existing single-family" into Table 19.41.040.

Any implementation of this action could be accommodated by removing and/or adjusting minimum single-family lot sizes in the same zones (see Strategy 2.4.1).

2.1.8 – Duplex Cottages

[AMC 19.43.010\(D\)\(3\)\(c\)\(iii\)](#) allows attached duplex cottages in the R3, R3A, R4, and R4A zones. This provision has already been used in at least two projects since 2019 code update. Consider streamlining the code and allowing more efficient use of land and materials by allowing duplex cottages in all zones where cottage housing is allowed.

2.1.9 – Single Room Occupancy Housing

Define, permit, and set standards for single-room occupancy (SRO) housing. This type of housing operates similarly to dorms or hostels and provides a dignified housing option for people with the lowest incomes. SRO's historically served as an invaluable affordable housing option, but these buildings were mostly zoned and demolished out of existence starting in the

1970's.⁶ In Anacortes, the Wilson Hotel (operated by the Anacortes Housing Authority) still operates similar to an SRO. Conversions of existing buildings (such as aging hotels) may be more likely than new ground-up SRO developments, but in either case the zoning code must be supportive for it to occur.

Anacortes already defines and regulates [rooming houses](#), which is a similar concept to an SRO. Rooming houses are limited to nine sleeping rooms and are only allowed in a few residential zones. Comparably, SRO's are recommended to be allowed in some non-residential zones and to be larger.



Figure 8 - The historic Wilson Hotel building

A maximum size of 50 units (50 rooms) is suggested in the R4 zone and having no size limitations in the CBD, C, and MMU zones. Minimum parking should be 0.5 spaces per unit or less (see Strategy 2.6 for related actions).

Below is a proposed definition to be inserted in a new subsection under AMC 19.43.010:

X. Multifamily dwelling, single room occupancy. A residential facility where individual secure rooms, of a smaller size than normally found in multifamily dwelling units, are rented on a weekly or monthly basis and which provides common facilities and services such as kitchens and meals, laundry, cleaning, bathrooms, and storage.

⁶ "The Hotel-Spirit." Slate. July 2022. <https://slate.com/business/2022/07/hotels-rental-market-housing-prices-shortage-solution.html>

2.1.10 – Supportive Housing

Under [RCW 35A.21.430](#) (2021), Washington cities may not prohibit permanent supportive housing or transitional housing in areas where multifamily housing or hotels are permitted (other parts of state law define “multifamily” as four or more units which is consistent with the definition in Anacortes). This supersedes a similar 2019 law, RCW 35A.21.305.

Similarly, emergency shelters and indoor emergency housing may not be prohibited in any zones in which hotels are allowed. Reasonable occupancy, spacing, and intensity of use requirements may be imposed on all of these supportive housing types as long they do not practically prevent their development. Some community education may be warranted to avoid fear of these housing types.⁷



Figure 9. Examples of permanent supportive housing buildings (right image courtesy of Jamboree)

Addressing these “supportive housing” uses directly in the code is recommended to avoid uncertainty and legal challenges. Explicitly list the four uses in the tables of allowed uses and provide the following definitions in a new section AMC 19.43.010 (following the same format as the rest of the chapter).

19.43.010. Supportive housing.

A. Supportive Housing Use Category. Residential facilities intended to house individuals and families experiencing homelessness, or at imminent risk of homelessness, and paired with on-site or off-site supportive services designed to maintain long-term or permanent tenancy, or to eventually transition the residents to independent living arrangements.

Emergency housing. Defined by RCW 36.70A.030.

Emergency shelter. Defined by RCW 36.70A.030.

Permanent supportive housing. Defined by RCW 36.70A.030.

Transitional housing. Defined by RCW 84.36.043.

⁷ What is Permanent Supportive Housing?” Jamboree. <https://www.affordablehousingpipeline.com/blogs/california-affordable-housing/what-is-permanent-supportive-housing>

Design standards should apply to these uses as they do for Group Living. Repeat the following standard each supportive housing use:

Design Standards. For the purpose of meeting the project design standards of Division 6 of this title, except for AMC Chapter 19.64, Parking and except for AMC 19.62.040, Internal open space, this use is considered a multifamily use when interpreting applicability provisions.

See Strategy 2.1.4 for possible occupancy and spacing standards for Group Living that could potentially also apply to Supportive Housing in lower intensity zones. See Strategy 2.6.1 for recommended parking standards on affordable housing projects.

Some jurisdictions require operational plans and information-sharing on supportive housing uses. For example, the City of Bellevue requires registration information from applicants prior to certificate of occupancy with the following information (and it must be updated when it changes):⁸

- Name and contact information of property manager(s) and/or owner(s) who may be contacted in case of emergency or code violations
- Name and contact information for on-site facility staff (if applicable)
- Standard operating procedures plan for the facility, including:
 - The number of residents intended to be housed in the facility
 - A description of the supportive services provided to the residents of the facility, on site and off site, including names and contact information of service providers
- A safety and security plan describing measures that the operator will employ to promote the safety of Supportive Housing occupants and surrounding residents; and
- A code of conduct that applies to all individuals granted access to the proposed Supportive Housing use

Seattle has more limited requirements. The code offers a number of waivers and modifications for parking and design standards that are reviewed by the director. A community relations plan is required.⁹

⁸ Bellevue Municipal Code LUC 20.20.845.E.2, <https://bellevue.municipal.codes/LUC/20.20.845.E.2>

⁹ Seattle Municipal Code 23.42.057, https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT23LAUSCO_SUBTITLE_IIILAUSRE_CH_23.42GEUSPR_23.42.057PESUHO

2.1.11 – Tiny Homes

Consider defining and permitting tiny homes in as another relatively affordable housing option. Because tiny homes are uncommon or unknown in Anacortes, the City could potentially create a pilot program that allows limited construction on one or two sites in partnerships with the property owners (such as at a religious facility). Regulation considerations and potential categories of tiny homes are shown in the following table.

Tiny Home Type	Considerations	Photo Example
Permanent ADU	When a permanent tiny home is placed on a lot with a principle structure, treat the tiny home as any other type of detached ADU. Such homes must be on permanent foundations with all required utility connections.	
Permanent cluster	When more than one permanent tiny home is placed on a lot, apply permanent tiny home cluster standards. Such homes must be on permanent foundations with all required utility connections. Consider density provisions, such as limiting tiny homes to 250 square feet of floor and counting each home as one-fifth of a dwelling unit for density purposes. Consider providing basic design standards, similar to cottage housing (AMC 19.43.010.D). Explore reasonable parking requirements that balance affordability with neighborhood integration; consider one space per two or three tiny homes as a starting point.. Do not allow tiny homes to be used for short-term rentals. Consider whether tiny homes should be able to use a unit lot subdivision to create homeownership opportunities. See some example standards from Langley.¹⁰ Consider limiting permanent clusters to low- and medium density residential zones such as R2, R2A, and R3. The limited land in higher zones should be preserved for their purpose of creating denser, multi-floor housing.	 
Mobile	When a tiny home is on wheels, apply the same standards for parking, sanitation, and other provisions that the City would apply to recreational vehicles. Allow mobile tiny homes to transition to permanent status.	

¹⁰ Langley Municipal Code 18.22.290.

<https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Langley/#!/Langley18/Langley1822.html#18.22.290>

Tiny Home Type	Considerations	Photo Example
Temporary transitional housing	Under Chapter 19.48 AMC, create standards for temporary tiny homes intended as transitional housing for homeless residents. These would primarily be intended for location on vacant land and parking lots and focused on religiously-owned land and commercial areas with transit access. Consider standards such as the maximum number of tiny homes in one location, community structures allowed, and required sanitation services. Discussions with potential operators of tiny home villages are recommended, such as with Skagit Friendship House who is operating this model in Burlington. ¹¹ Seattle’s standards for “transitional encampments” could also be consulted. ¹²	

Figure 10. Tiny home options

¹¹ <https://www.skagitfriendshiphouse.org/skagit-first-step-center.html>

¹² Seattle Municipal Code 23.42.054 and 23.42.056.
https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT23LAUSCO_SUBTITLE_IIILAUSRE_CH_23.42GEUSPR

2.2 – Implement the R3A Zone

Action: Map the R3A zone and update its development standards to create more opportunity for middle and multifamily housing.

The Residential Medium Density 3A (R3A) zone is unmapped but it is described as a medium density residential zone and it is consistently referenced throughout the development regulations. The R3A zone allows more intensive residential development. This HAP recommends mapping the R3A zone to increase land capacity for housing.

The Comprehensive Plan does not provide any guidance as to where the R3A should be created in comparison to the R3 zone. Possible alternatives include:

- Carve it out of the largest R3 zone by splitting the distance between R2A and R4
- Rezone the largest R3 zone to R3A within a couple blocks of Volunteer Park and the schools
- Create new R3A areas elsewhere, such as where the R2A zone has alleys
- Some combination of the above

Alternatively, do not map an R3A zone and instead apply all the HAP's recommend standards of R3A to the R3 zone.

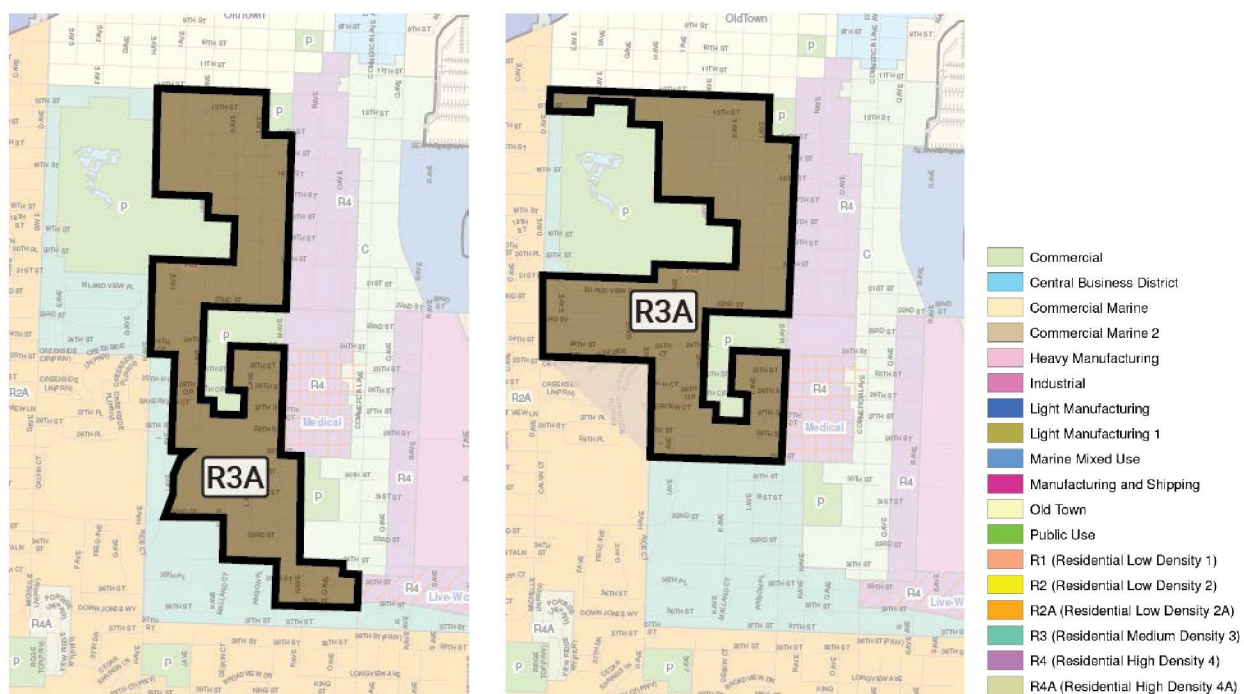


Figure 11 - Two conceptual options for the boundaries of the R3A zone

The Comprehensive Plan intent for this zone includes allowing multifamily uses under certain circumstances. Those circumstances are not defined, but the new multifamily standards adopted in 2019 and the growing need for additional housing supply found by the HAP Existing

Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report are notable changes to the situation since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2016.

Multifamily up to four units per building is allowed in the R3 zone and there is no limit on units in the R4 zone, so a middle ground is recommended for the R3A zone to help serve as a transition. A maximum of 12 units per building is a starting point for discussion. Note the related discussion on changing or eliminating minimum lot size per unit in this zone in Strategy 2.4.1 of this HAP.

Table 19.41.040 would be amended to show a “P” for multifamily. Subsection 19.43.010(H) would be amended with a new subsection:

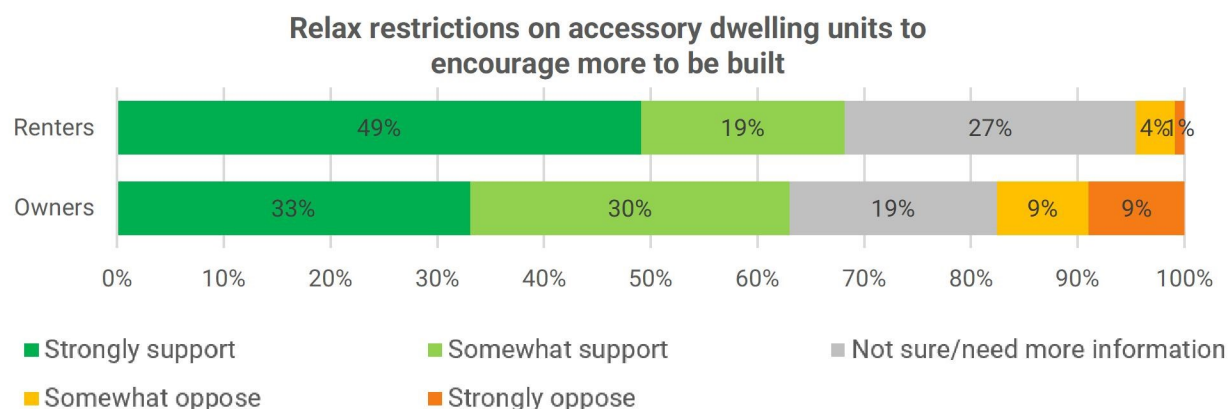
#. R3A Zone Standards. Multifamily structures with up to 12 units are permitted by right. Multifamily structures with more than 12 units are prohibited.

Nursing homes are the only prohibited group living use the R3A zone. They are proposed to be permitted outright. See the Group Living discussion (Strategy 2.1.4) for more information.

2.3 – ADU Regulations

Action: Streamline ADU regulations to make them easier to finance, permit, and build.

The HAP community survey found 63% of total respondents and 68% of renters are supportive of the concept to “Relax restrictions on accessory dwelling units to encourage more to be built.”



ADU's are regulated under AMC 19.47.030. Anacortes has already seen a surge in ADU production since the 2019 code update. It increased from 0-2 built per year prior to 2019 to 15 built in 2021. Given the thousands of single-family properties in Anacortes, ADU's remain a considerable opportunity. Anacortes still has barriers to ADU development that are recommended to be addressed.



Figure 12 - Examples of accessory dwelling units

First, under subsection C.10, remove the owner occupancy requirement, except for where the ADU is used as a short-term rental. This is a common requirement across Washington cities but it is discriminatory against renters and perpetuates economic exclusion. It also raises financial risk for homeowners by constraining their choice on where to live in the future (especially for seniors and military families) and reduces chances of receiving bank financing for some borrowers. It also unfairly targets ADU's with a restriction that is not in place for any other type of rental housing. The requirement is also difficult to enforce. Removing this restriction is

national best practice, recommended by organizations like the AARP and the Washington chapter of the American Planning Association.^{13, 14}

Under C.1, consider allowing ADU's to be located on lots at least with duplexes and possibly also triplexes. These housing types are generally located on large lots or have detached alley-loaded garages, meaning there can be space for ADU's to be developed. Zones that allow duplexes and triplexes already allow moderately increased density and ADU's fit within that concept.

Under C.1.c, clarify that ADU's may be an attachment to the principal building (not located just within the existing building).

Under C.3, consider allowing detached, ground-based ADU's to be subdivided through the unit lot subdivision standards of [AMC 19.32.050\(D\)](#). This would increase the opportunities for affordable homeownership.

Revise C.8 to more clearly state that only one parking space is required per ADU and it may be located with available on-street parking. As written, the standard also references the parking requirements for the principal house which could be confusing.

Under C.6.a, consider raising the point where the 45-degree daylight plane is measured from. Raise it from 15 feet to 18 feet. This would easily more allow ADU's to be built over detached garages facing an alley. Figure 19.47.030(C)(6) would need to be updated accordingly.

Under C.6.b, clarify that the 10 feet alley setback does not apply to existing garage structures. This ensures that ADU's can be built on top of alley-facing garages without creating a non-conforming situation.

Remove "moderate-income" from the (B)(1) purpose statement since ADU's could be occupied by people with a variety of income levels.

Lastly, prohibit new private agreements, covenants, and restrictions that bar the construction of accessory dwelling units (i.e. homeowner association rules).

See related ADU funding strategies in Strategy 5.4.

¹³ "All About Accessory Dwelling Units." AARP. <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2019/accessory-dwelling-units-adus.html>

¹⁴ Letter from Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association to the Washington House Local Government Committee, January 2021. <https://apawa.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/legislative-cmtee-archives/2022/2022-01-20%20APA-WA%20Comments%20on%20HB%201660%20%28ADU%29.pdf>

2.4 – Adjust Form & Intensity Standards

Action: Adjust the residential zones' form and intensity (dimensional) standards to improve the physical and economic feasibility of building small homes, multifamily housing, and affordable housing.

Following public interest and an analysis of the situation by the consultant team, modest changes to dimensional standards are proposed. These are summarized in the table below which is an excerpt from the Anacortes Municipal Code (AMC) Table 19.42.020. Text with an underline indicates an addition and a text with a ~~strikeout~~ indicates a deletion. The tables are followed by a description of each change and a list of related actions.

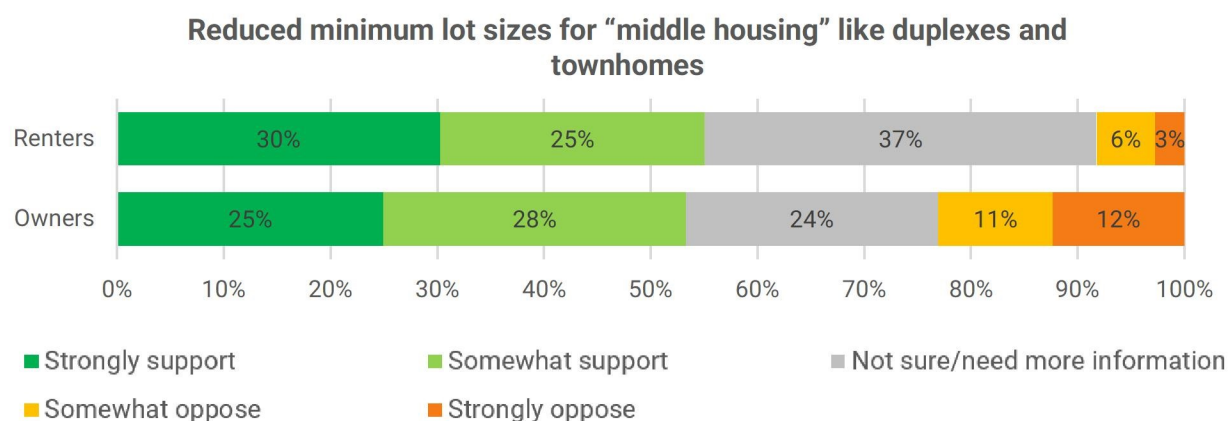
	Residential Zones								
Measure	R1	R2	R2A	R3	R3A	R4	R4A	OT	Conditions/ Reference
Lot Size & Development Intensity									
See Chapter 19.43 AMC for minimum lot size adjustments for small unit duplexes, triplexes, and townhouses in some zones.									
Lot size for single-family dwelling, minimum (square-feet)	15,000	7,500	6,000	4,500	3,000	3,000	3,000	6,000	
Lot size for duplex, minimum (square-feet)		9,000	9,000 <u>7,500</u>	7,500 <u>6,000</u>	5,000 <u>4,500</u>	4,200 <u>3,000</u>	4,200 <u>3,000</u>	7,500	
Additional lot size needed for additional <u>attached</u> dwelling unit beyond duplex, minimum (square-feet)			<u>1,500</u>	2,500 <u>1,500</u>	2,000 <u>1,000</u>		1,200		
<u>Density minimum (dwelling units/gross acre)</u>						<u>15 (x)</u>			<u>(x) Multifamily uses only</u>
Density maximum (dwelling units/gross acre)	2	4	6	See lot size min. above		None	18	9	
Lot coverage, maximum percentage	35%	35%	40%	50%	50%	50%	50%	35%	
Landscaped area, minimum percentage	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	
Height – Principal Structures									
Height, maximum (feet)	35	35	35	35	35	40	35	25	
Height, maximum with bonus						50			
SETBACKS (Feet)									
Street setback, minimum	20	20	20 <u>15</u>	20 <u>15</u>	20 <u>15</u>	10	10	20	
Street setback - garage, minimum	25	20	20	20	20	20	20	25	
Side street setback, minimum	20	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
Interior side setback, minimum	10	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	

	Residential Zones								
Measure	R1	R2	R2A	R3	R3A	R4	R4A	OT	Conditions/ Reference
Interior side setback - upper floors, minimum	10	7.5	7.5	7.5 5	7.5 5	7.5 5	7.5 5	7.5	
Rear setback, minimum	20	20	20	20	20	10	10	20	

Figure 13. Excerpt of Table 19.42.020

2.4.1 – Minimum Lot Sizes

The HAP community survey found 54% of total respondents are supportive of “Reduced minimum lot sizes for ‘middle housing’ like duplexes and townhomes.” This is a majority but not enthusiastic support, with some people wanting more information.



To moderate the impact of reduced lot sizes and to encourage affordable housing options, one possibility is to link reduced lot sizes to caps on the gross floor area (GFA) of the dwelling units. Providing a greater variety of smaller homes could help more moderate-income Anacortes households break into the homeownership market. Research by the *New York Times* and Freddie Mac finds that the production of entry/starter homes has never been lower than today (particularly homes smaller than 1,400 square feet).¹⁵

A range of recommendations and options were considered and are listed below. Where options are included, they are numbered in order of least to most change from current code. These options focus on duplexes and triplexes which tend to be the housing type most impacted by the current minimum lot sizes.

R2 Zone Lot Size Recommendation

Recognize small duplexes (<1,200-1,400 square feet) as a detached single-family unit, and allow by-right with the current 7,500 square feet minimum lot size. For larger duplexes, retain the current 9,000 square feet minimum lot size, and allow by-right rather than as a conditional use. The lot size provisions can be implemented by a new subsection under AMC 19.43.010(E).

#. R2 Zone Standards. Duplex developments have the following form and intensity adjustments from Table 19.42.020.

a. Minimum lot size: 7,500 square feet when all units have [1,200-1,400] square feet gross floor area or less.

b. Density: Duplex units with [1,200-1,400] square feet gross floor area or less are ½ a dwelling unit for density purposes.

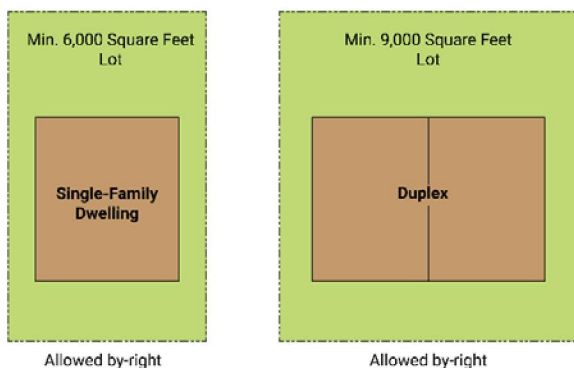
¹⁵ “Whatever Happened to the Starter Home?” The New York Times. September 2022.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/25/upshot/starter-home-prices.html>

R2A Zone Lot Size Options

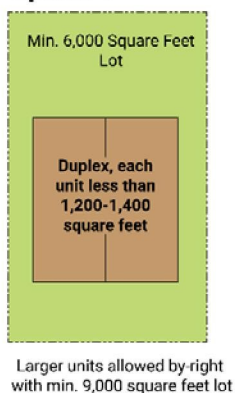
A density discount for small units is likely needed, unless the maximum density is removed for infill development (see Strategy 2.4.4). Lot size options include:

1. Consider small duplexes (<1,200-1,400 square feet) as a detached single-family unit and allow by-right on same 6,000 square feet min lot size as single-family. Make larger duplexes permitted by-right at same 9,000 square feet size (currently conditional).
2. Same as #1 except allow larger duplexes by-right at 7,500 square feet (the old R2 minimum lot size). This option is shown in the summary table above.
3. Allow all duplexes by-right at current the 6,000 square feet min. lot size for single-family
4. Coordinate with Strategy 2.1.3 to allow triplexes and townhomes on alley loaded lots: This option is the same as #3 and allows triplexes (or even fourplexes) with small triplex and townhouse units (<1,000-1,200 square feet). A smaller unit size than duplexes is suggested to provide moderation for more units, and another consideration would be requiring 1,500 square feet of additional lot per additional attached unit beyond a duplex.
5. Remove specific minimum lot size provisions for duplexes and other multi-unit structures in favor of form-based provisions such as a maximum floor-area ratio, maximum façade width, and/or other techniques to accommodate more units while managing the scale of developments in neighborhoods.

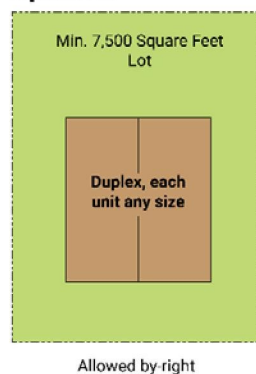
R2A Zone Current Standards



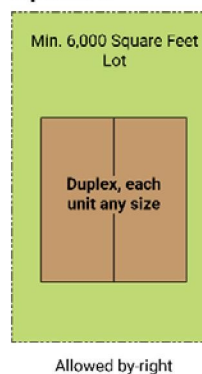
Option 1



Option 2



Option 3



Option 4

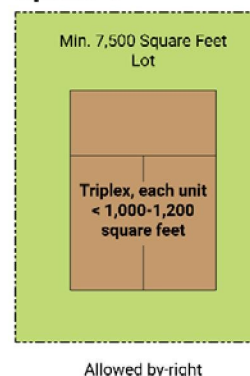


Figure 14 - Lot size options in the R2 zone

R3 Zone Lot Size Options

1. Recognize small duplexes (<1,200-1,400 square feet) as a detached single-family unit and allow by-right on the current 4,500 square feet minimum lot size as single-family. Make larger duplexes permitted by right at same 7,500 square feet lot size (currently CUP).
2. Same as #1 except allow larger duplexes by right at 6,000 square feet (the old R3 min lot size) and allow additional units for every 1,500 square feet (rather than every 2,500 square feet)
3. Allow all duplexes by right at current 4,500 square feet minimum lot size for single-family.
4. Same as #3 and allow small triplex (or even fourplex?) units (<1,000-1,200 square feet). A smaller unit size than duplexes is suggested to provide moderation for more units.
5. Remove specific minimum lot size provisions for duplexes and other multi-unit structures in favor of form-based provisions such as a maximum floor-area ratio, maximum façade width, and/or other techniques to accommodate more units while managing the scale of developments in neighborhoods.

R3 Zone Current Standards

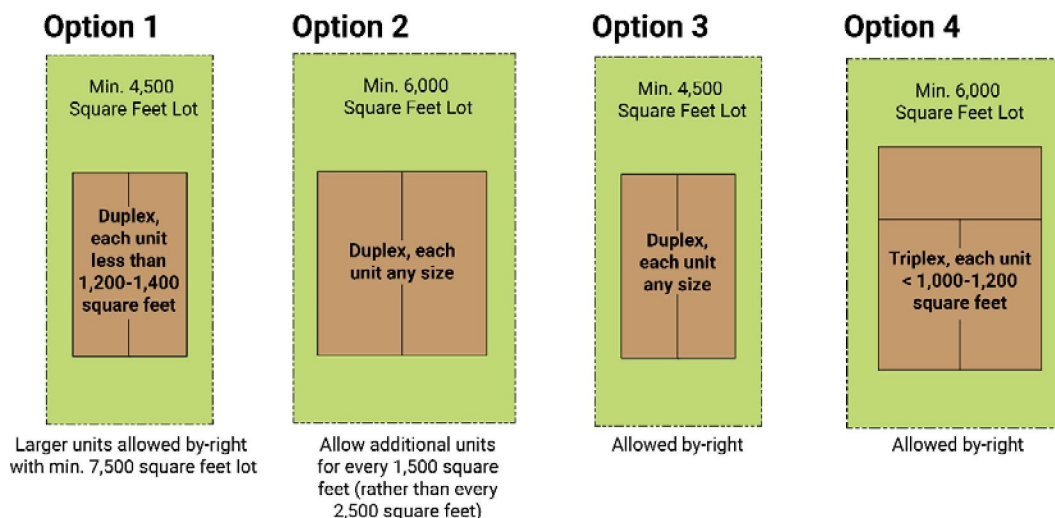
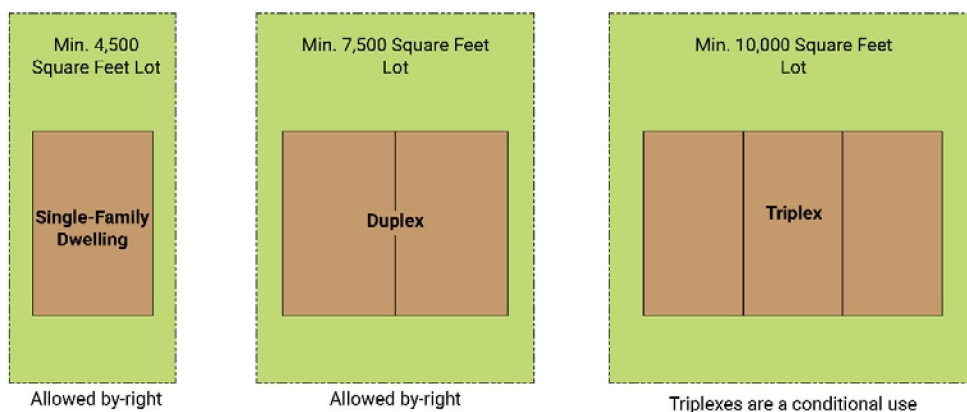


Figure 15 - Lot size options in the R3 zone

R3A Zone Lot Size Recommendation

This zone is currently unmapped and is proposed to be mapped under Strategy 2.2. Explore options similar to those suggested for the R3 zone, but scaled to the smaller R3A lot sizes standards, for integrating middle housing types

R4 and R4A Zones Lot Size Recommendation

Reduce the minimum lot size for duplexes from 4,200 to 3,000 square feet, and eliminate the reference to requiring additional lot area for additional dwelling unit beyond duplex. This simplifies the zone and code, and allows more flexibility for middle housing and multifamily development.

Consider consolidating the R4 and R4A zones if their standards become similar.

2.4.2 – Maximum Lot Coverage

The maximum lot coverage rates in Table 19.42.020 top out at 50%, which may be fairly limiting for the smallest lots. Upward adjustments of 10-25%, depending on the zone, may be considered depending on the minimum lot size options desired or chosen (see above). Adjustments could also be made for specific housing types, such as how the code does for townhouses under [AMC 19.43.010\(G\)\(3\)\(b\)](#).

Examples of maximum lot coverage or maximum impervious surface standards from other similarly sized Washington sites are shown below. Impervious surface includes paved areas like driveways and patios, which typically are 5-10% of lot area in addition to the building footprint regulated by Anacortes's lot coverage standard.

Measure	City of Port Orchard Residential Zones					
	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
Minimum lot size (no alley access), square feet	6,000	5,000	2,800 – 5,000	None	None	4,000
Minimum lot size (with alley access), square feet	5,000	3,000	2,400	None	None	None
Maximum hard surface coverage (i.e. impervious surface)	50%	70%	80%	80%	80%	75%

Measure	City of Port Angeles Residential Zones				
	RS-7	RS-9	RS-11	RMD	RHD
Minimum lot size (no alley access), square feet	5,000	7,000	9,000	3,500	None
Minimum lot size (with alley access), square feet	3,500	7,000	9,000	3,500	None
Maximum site coverage (i.e. impervious surface)	65%	60%	50%	75%	75%

Figure 16. Maximum impervious surface standards in Port Orchard and Port Angeles

2.4.3 – Maximum Size of Single-Family Homes

Provided all of the recommendations of Strategy 2.1 are implemented, consider limiting the maximum floor area size of new single-family home construction in the R2A and R3 zones, especially if the size of duplex/triplex and other units are going to be managed in one of the options from Strategy 2.4.1 (also note the recommendation to consider prohibiting new single-family uses in the R3 zone per Strategy 2.1.7).

This standard could involve a flat or scaled limit, such as a maximum floor-area-ratio (FAR). Using 2012-2016 permit data, the average size of new single-family units in the R2/R2A zones increased from 2,080 square feet to 2,146 square feet and the FAR decreased from 0.24 to 0.22 (more recent zoned-based data is recommended to be collected). Consider reasonable limits that allow some flexibility while encouraging the integration of middle housing types.

The rationale is that single-family homes are being built at larger sizes while household size shrinks, which is not sustainable for housing prices nor the use of Anacortes's limited land area.¹⁶ Anacortes has a high population of single-person households (29% compared to 25% in the county).

2.4.4 – Density

Minimum Density

Consider adding minimum densities for multifamily development (buildings with four or more units) to the R4 zone for larger lots (perhaps lots more than one or two acres). A minimum density of 15 units/gross acre should be considered for several reasons:

- To be consistent with the multifamily tax exemption eligibility provision of [RCW 84.14.020\(1\)\(C\)\(iii\)](#); see Strategy 5.1 for related considerations
- To be consistent with the minimum densities in place for Anacortes's CBD, C, and MMU zones
- This is the typical low range of density for contemporary multifamily development and the level of density that supports transit service

Maximum Density

Consider the applicability of the maximum densities in residential zones, as these can prevent middle housing development even with lot size adjustments. Maximum densities are most relevant to subdivisions where new lots are being created, but Anacortes has few if any large private land holdings left for major subdivisions.

Consider increasing or repealing applicable maximum density provisions based on lot size approaches chosen for middle housing types in Strategy 2.4.1 above.

¹⁶ "Whatever Happened to the Starter Home?" The New York Times. September 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/25/upshot/starter-home-prices.html>

2.4.5 – Setbacks

Street Setback

In the R2A, R3, and R3A zones, reduce the street setback from 20 feet to 15 feet. This complements the recommended adjustments in lot sizes and permitted use changes in these zones, and provides more developable area for smaller infill development. 15 feet is still a significant setback to allow for useable yard space and landscaping. Garages would still be required to have 20 feet setbacks from the street to provide adequate space for parking cars in driveways and to de-emphasize garage doors.

Interior Side Setback

In the R3, R3A, R4, and R4A zones, consider removing the minimum interior side setback for upper floors (or setting it the same as the ground level, five feet). Historically, in these residential zones the code required a combined 15 feet of side setbacks with at least 10 feet on one side. In the 2019 code update, 7.5 feet for the upper floors was suggested as a static minimum to provide some protection in single-family neighborhoods where duplexes, cottages, and other smaller housing types could be built. Few if any developments will setback the upper floors further than the ground floor, so it functions as whole-building setback.

The recommend zones are where higher-density development is planned and the land area is limited in these zones, so providing opportunity to make efficient use of lots is needed.

2.4.6 – Height Bonus Program

Under the height bonus section [AMC 19.42.050\(C\)](#), consider increasing the size of “small units” to be 650 square feet which allows for slightly more storage space.

If a multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program is re-adopted, add it as a third option for a height bonus (only the 12-year and 20-year programs should qualify). Retain the code’s current voluntary affordable housing option (subsection D) to provide flexibility.

Other options for height bonuses to consider based on Anacortes’s unmet needs and feedback from the HAP public engagement:

- Inclusion of day care space and service in a mixed-use development
- Development of senior housing
- Development of an assisted living facility or nursing home

2.4.7 – Elevator Penthouse

As more multifamily and mixed-use housing is built in Anacortes, details like elevator design are important factors for livability and functionality. 10-foot tall elevator cabs are desirable for residents to move the largest pieces of furniture which cannot fit through stairwells. Also popular are elevator-accessible roof decks that help meet developments meet residential open space requirements.

However, these two features are difficult to combine due to the limitations of AMC 19.42.120(B)(1)(b). This subsection limits structures screening elevators to 15 feet in height where the elevator is accessing a roof deck.

Elevator technology is evolving. Over the past decade the “Machine Room-Less” elevator has become a cost-effective option for buildings over four stories tall and it avoids the environmental impacts of hydraulic piston designs which penetrate deep into the ground below the building (a technology which was previously typical for buildings up to eight stories). The Machine Room-Less design uses a hoistway and mounts mechanical equipment on top of the cab, which increases the overrun above the roof level beyond that assumed by the code.

To achieve a 10-foot interior cab dimension and accounting for the assembly of the penthouse structure, it is recommended to increase the code allowance from 15 to 17 feet. The screening language from subsection (a) should also be copied.

b. Up to ~~15~~ 17 feet on buildings over four stories in height where they allow access to shared roof decks that meet the requirements of AMC 19.62.040(B)(1)(e), provided the area with the added height is limited to what is necessary to screen or enclose the use.

2.4.8 – Religiously-Owned Land Density Bonus

Under state law [RCW 35A.63.300](#) (2019), upon request from a religious organization, cities planning under the GMA must allow an increased density bonus on consistent with local needs for affordable housing development. The density bonus must be contingent upon the religious organization’s land being used for housing occupied exclusively by low-income households for at least 50 years. The density bonus can be used for any type of housing, ranging from single-family to multifamily.

Anacortes has not received any such request but might consider the implications and begin proactively reaching out to religious organizations to see if they are interested in developing affordable housing on their properties.

Anacortes is home to a number of churches with some sitting on fairly large properties in the center of town. Most of Anacortes’s religious facilities are in the R3 and R4 zones on properties ranging from 1-4 acres. These zones are not limited by maximum density but do have constraints on minimum lot size area needed per unit. Minimum lot sizes could be significantly reduced or eliminated for eligible developments.

The HAP community survey found less than majority support for this concept, but a large share of respondents were not sure and likely would need more information about specific regulatory and development proposals.

2.5 – Adjust Definitions and Design Standards

Action: Adjust other development regulations to help reduce barriers to housing production.

A miscellaneous set of other standards can be updated to streamline the development regulations and potentially reduce construction costs.

2.5.1 – Family Definition

Amend the definition of “family” under [AMC 19.12.020\(F\)](#) to be consistent with state law [RCW 35A.21.314](#) (2021). Cities may not regulate or limit the number of unrelated persons that may occupy a household or dwelling unit. A simple approach is shown below.

“Family” means:

1. One person or two or more related persons living together.
2. ~~No more than five u~~ Unrelated persons living together as a single nonprofit housekeeping unit.
3. Unrelated persons living together in a state-licensed adult family home pursuant to RCW 70.127.010, with the provider’s family counting as up to six persons not related to the providers living with them as one housekeeping unit for profit.
4. ~~In a single family dwelling, one roomer or boarder is permitted in addition to the family.~~

2.5.2 – Design Standards Applicability

Update the applicability sections of Chapters 19.61, 19.62, and 19.63 to clarify how townhouses apply.

Block frontage standards:

19.61.020 Applicability

A. The provisions of this chapter apply to all nonresidential, ~~and~~ multifamily, ~~and townhouse~~ development. The following are exempt:

Site planning standards:

19.62.020 Applicability

A. The provisions of this chapter apply to all nonresidential and multifamily development. The following are exempt:

1. All development in the I, LM, AZ, CM2, and MS zones.
2. Developments in the HM and LM1 zones when not abutting State Route 20 right-of-way.
3. Townhouse development, except that for large developments with multiple buildings, internal drive aisles, and/or featuring common service elements, the provisions of AMC 19.62.070 may be applied.

Building design standards:

19.63.020 Applicability

A. The provisions of this chapter apply to all nonresidential and multifamily development. The following are exempt:

1. All development in the I, LM, AZ, CM2, and MS zones.
2. Developments in the HM and LM1 zone when not abutting State Route 20 right-of-way.
3. Townhouse buildings, except where otherwise noted in this title.

2.5.3 – Block Frontage Standards

For clarity to code users on Undesignated block frontages under [AMC 19.61.110\(B\)](#), consider repeating that Undesignated streets in residential zones are subject to Landscaped standards.

B. All Undesignated block frontages in non-residential zones that are not designated are subject to the standards of this section. Per AMC 19.61.030(A)(2), Landscaped block frontages apply to multifamily and non-residential development in residential zones. These Undesignated block frontages are provided greater flexibility ~~with regards to the design of multifamily and non-residential development frontages.~~

For clarity on townhouses and block frontages, [AMC 19.43.10\(G\)\(4\)](#) needs to refer to both the residential and commercial zone tables.

4. Setbacks.

a. For minimum street setbacks, the greater setback applies from either the Landscaped block frontage standards of AMC 19.61.070 or the residential zone setbacks in Table 19.42.020.

b. For side and rear setbacks, see Tables 19.42.020 (residential zones) or 19.42.030 (mixed-use and industrial zones). ~~The minimum setbacks set forth in Table 19.42.020 apply to development frontage and external side and rear setbacks of the entire townhouse development.~~

c. See AMC 19.42.130(C) for exemptions involving interior side setbacks for townhouses.

2.5.4 – Usable Residential Open Space

Amount of Multifamily Open Space

Under [AMC 19.62.040](#), provide an open space credit for multifamily developments adjacent to a park, which provides some (but not all) of the benefits of building-specific open space and may help manage construction costs. This could be a new subsection (B)(3):

3. Multifamily development and multifamily portions of mixed-use development may reduce the minimum amount of usable open space required per unit under subsection (B)(1) by 33 percent (one-third) when the primary entrance of the development is located within 250 feet walking distance of a park at least one-quarter acre in size. The park may be public or private, and it must be accessible to all residents and be suitable for a variety of leisure and recreational activities.

Design of Multifamily Open Space

Under AMC 19.62.040(B), consider several minor adjustments to improve the clarity of the open space standards for multifamily and mixed-use housing developments.

Integrate subsection B.2 into B.1.a since the topic of both regards shared open space.

For common indoor recreation areas under subsection B.1.d, add a minimum dimensional standard to ensure that recreational spaces are functional. For reference, 250 square feet is about the size of a medium conference room.

iii. The minimum area is 250 square feet. The space must feature dimensions necessary to provide functional leisure or recreational activity (unless otherwise noted herein).

For shared roof decks under subsection B.1.e, remove the difference in applicability for single-purpose multifamily buildings compared to mixed-use buildings, allow intermediate level roof decks, and ensure access is available to all residents.

e. Shared roof decks. Such spaces are a type of private internal common area located on the top of buildings or intermediate levels (e.g., upper floor building facade step-back areas) and are available to all residents. Up to 50 percent of the required open space may be provided by shared roof decks. Examples of amenities include, but are not limited to, cooking and dining areas, seating areas, gardening areas, water features, children's play areas, and pet play areas. Shared rooftop decks must meet the following design standards: ~~For multifamily buildings, up to 50-percent of the required open space may be provided by shared roof decks located on the top of buildings which are available to all residents and meet the requirements below. For mixed-use buildings, 100-percent of the required open space may be provided by shared roof decks.~~

- i. Space must feature hard-surfacing, provide amenities such as seating areas and other features that encourage use.*
- ii. Space must integrate landscaping elements that enhance the character of the space and encourage its use.*
- iii. Space must incorporate features that provide for the safety of residents, such as enclosures, railings, and appropriate lighting levels.*

Other Residential Open Space

After subsection AMC 19.62.040(B), insert a new subsection to provide minimal open space requirements for some of the supportive housing uses.

C. Useable residential open space for permanent supportive housing and transitional housing. When located in a new development, these uses must provide minimum usable open space equal to 100 square feet per dwelling unit. The allowed types and design standards of open space are the same as subsection (B) above.

2.5.5 – Townhouse Open Space

Under the townhouse design standards of [AMC 19.43.010\(G\)\(9\)](#), provide more consistency between open space standards and setback standards. Minimum 10 feet street setbacks are required in the R4 and R4A zones and 10 feet side street setbacks are required in most residential zones. The recommended approach is to require a minimum 10 feet dimension in just one direction to allow more site design flexibility.

a. Private ground level open space that is directly adjacent and accessible to dwelling units. Such space must have minimum dimensions of at least 12-feet in one direction and 10-feet in other directions ~~on all sides~~ and be configured to accommodate human activity such as outdoor eating, gardening, toddler play, etc. Street setbacks may be used to meet this standard, provided they are defined with a fence (meeting standards of AMC Chapter 19.66 Fences, Walls & Hedges).

2.5.6 – Parking Lot Landscaping

Under [AMC 19.65.070\(D\)](#), reduce and simplify minimum planting area widths (or average widths) to allow more efficient use of land. This is critical for smaller lots where infill multifamily and townhouse development may occur, but still meet the purpose of parking lot landscaping.

3. Minimum Width and Length. Planting areas must have a minimum average width of ~~10~~ 7.5 feet (measured inside the curb) and must be the same length as the parking stall or column.

...

6.

a. For parking lots adjacent to public streets, use Type C landscaping at least 7.5 feet deep. ~~at a width equal to or greater than the minimum building setback specified for the applicable block frontage type specified in AMC Chapter 19.61, Block Frontage Standards.~~

b. For parking lots along internal lot lines, use Type A, B, or C landscaping at least ~~10~~ five feet deep, except where a greater buffer width is required per the standards in subsections A and B of this section.

Also, consider making parking lot landscaping its own code section so it is easier to find in tables of contents and because it is frequently used. For example, convert subsection (D) to new 19.65.075.

2.5.7 – Service Areas and Mechanical Equipment

Under AMC 19.62.070, some minor clarifications can be made about applicability to offer some more flexibility. Subsection (B) currently acts as a title but could be expanded with examples:

B. Location of ground related service areas and mechanical equipment. Ground-level building service areas and mechanical equipment includes loading docks, trash collection and compactors, dumpster areas, storage tanks, electrical panels, HVAC equipment, and other utility equipment. If any such elements are outside the building envelope at ground level, the following location standards apply:

1. Service areas ~~(loading docks, trash dumpsters, compactors, recycling areas, electrical panels, and mechanical equipment areas)~~ must be located for convenient service access while avoiding negative visual, auditory, olfactory, or physical impacts on the streetscape environment and adjacent residentially zoned properties. Service areas must be sited for alley access if available.

Under subsection B.6, consider adding to the list of dumpster storage requirements:

Trash collection areas must include roofs or overhead weather protection and must meet required stormwater standards. Drainage must be designed to meet applicable NPDES standards.

Under subsection C.1.d, add the following moderation to help control construction costs:

Collection points must be located and configured to the extent practical so that the enclosure gate swing does not obstruct pedestrian or vehicle vehicular traffic, or does not require that a hauling truck project into any public right-of-way. Ensure that screening elements allow for efficient service delivery and removal operations.

Under subsection E.2, consider removing the prohibition on perforated metal as a rooftop equipment screening material since it is cost effective and has a variety of design options.

For rooftop equipment, all screening devices must be well integrated into the architectural design through such elements as parapet walls, false roofs, roof wells, clerestories, or equipment rooms. Screening walls or unit-mounted screening is allowed but less desirable. Wood must not be used for screens or enclosures. Louvered designs are acceptable if consistent with building design style. ~~Perforated metal is not permitted.~~

2.5.8 – Building Design

Under AMC 19.63.040(C)(2), consider minor revisions to the list of articulation standards:

- a. Use of windows and/or entries that reinforce an articulation pattern.*
- b. Use of awnings or similar weather protection features (not applicable to residential buildings).*
- c. Use of vertical piers/columns (applies to all floors of the façade, excluding upper level stepbacks).*
- d. Change in roofline per subsection (F) below.*
- e. Change in building material or siding style, ~~and/or window pattern~~ (applies to all floors of the façade, excluding upper level stepbacks).*

Under AMC 19.63.050(E), consider revising the entry articulation standard for consistency:

The primary building entrance (when provided) for an office building, hotel, ~~apartment-multifamily~~ building, public or community-based facility or other multi-story commercial building must be designed as a clearly defined and demarcated standout architectural feature of the building.

2.5.9 – Building Materials

Section 19.63.060(B) can be updated to clarify the applicability of durable materials on the ground floor.

B. Quality building materials. ~~Applicants must use high quality durable materials. This is most important for the base of buildings, particularly for commercial and mixed-use buildings where the façade is sited close to sidewalks.~~ Stone, brick or tile masonry, architectural concrete or other similar highly durable materials must be used for at least the bottom two-feet of the first floor façade on non-residential and mixed-use buildings (excluding window and door areas).

2.5.10 – Blank Walls

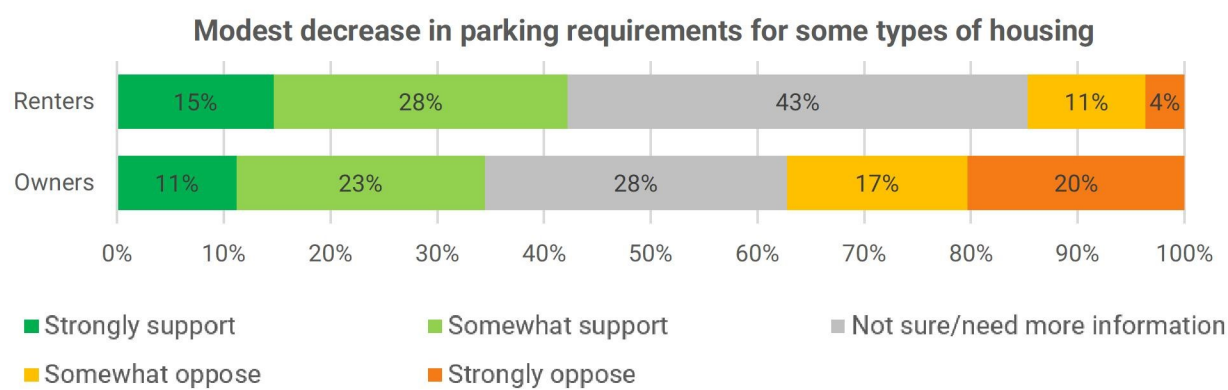
Under 19.63.070(C), consider updating the applicability for blank wall treatment standards to reduce construction cost impacts.

Blank wall treatment standards. Untreated blank walls located within 100 feet of, and visible from a street, public space, ground-level individual outdoor space, or internal walkway, are prohibited. Methods to treat blank walls include the following (a variety of treatments may be required to meet the purpose of the standards): ~~adjacent to a public street, pedestrian-oriented space, common usable open space, or pedestrian pathway are prohibited.~~ Methods to treat blank walls can include:

2.6 – Adjust Parking Standards

Action: Adjust parking standards for middle housing, affordable housing, senior housing, and consider additional parking strategies to promote mixed-use development. Allow on-street parking to meet parking needs and adjust guest parking standards.

The HAP community survey found little favor for the concept of a “Modest decrease in parking requirements for some types of housing”, with 34% of total respondents in support and a large share of “not sure” responses. There is also the practical limitation has Anacortes is a relatively isolated community with limited transit service (with opportunities to change that noted in Strategy 5.6). Therefore, the recommended adjustments to parking standards are focused on providing more certainty and clarity. Several changes are proposed for [Table 19.64.040](#).



2.6.1 – Minimum Parking Standards

Middle Housing

For duplexes, triplexes, and townhouses, provide clear quantitative standards instead of referring to multifamily bedroom counts. The market for these types of housing is similar for small lot single-family, which currently requires 1.0 parking space per unit. In residential areas where these housing types are common on-street parking tends to be available.

Affordable Housing

Following the recommendation of the 2017 Affordable Housing Strategic Plan, develop parking regulations specific to affordable housing. Define and list “multifamily dwelling, affordable.” A minimum parking ratio of 0.5 to 0.75 spaces per unit, regardless of bedroom count, is appropriate. Census data demonstrates that lower income residents own fewer vehicles. Affordable housing stakeholders also report this is the maximum range needed for lower income residents and that on-street parking is almost always sufficient to accompany any additional needs.

The definition of “multifamily dwelling, affordable” for parking purposes should include permanent supportive housing and transitional housing. Parking for emergency housing and emergency shelters should be Director decisions under AMC 19.64.040(B).

Senior Housing

Rename the term “multifamily dwelling, restricted” to “senior housing” or similar phrasing to clarify its purpose for parking calculations. One developer stakeholder was not aware of this option for senior housing. Consider setting the parking standard at 1.0 space per unit regardless of bedroom count to provide more certainty.

Other Parking Considerations

Additionally, consider allowing fee-in-lieu payments for retail uses in a mixed-use building in any location citywide. This would require adoption of a parking fee-in-lieu plan and amendments to [AMC 19.64.070](#).

Long-term, consider revisiting parking policies in the Comprehensive Plan (see Strategy 4.3.5).

2.6.2 – On-Street Parking

Similar to guest parking under [AMC 19.64.030\(B\)\(2\)\(a\)](#), allow the minimum parking under Table 19.64.040 to be met by on-street parking where it is available within 250 feet of the subject property. This option could be limited to just residential uses or certain housing types. On-street parking should not be used to meet the requirements for accessible parking.

2.6.3 – Guest Parking

The guest parking ratios under [AMC 19.64.030\(B\)](#) were created in the 2019 code update to offset reductions in the minimum residential parking standards and provide a measure of protection for existing neighborhoods. The appropriateness of guest parking standards in some zones could be evaluated.

Currently only the CBD zone waives guest parking requirements under [AMC 19.64.030\(B\)\(4\)](#); this could potentially be expanded to other near-downtown zones intended for higher-density development and areas with walk/bike/transit access like the R4, C, and MMU zones.

Alternatively or in addition, an option is to remove guest parking requirements citywide for multifamily uses. This would remove the “multifamily” row in Table 19.64.030(B). Public on-street parking can usually function as guest parking in most cases.

2.6.4 – Unbundling Parking from Lease Agreements

Explore requiring the unbundling parking from housing prices. Unbundling means the cost of parking for residential tenants and condo owners (and possibly commercial tenants) cannot be included in base lease agreements and prices.¹⁷ Parking is made available in an addendum or separate agreement. The rationale is that some residents, especially low-income renters, do not own vehicles or need extra parking spaces. Unbundling parking has the potential to lower housing costs and influence the parking supply of new development. Seattle is one of the first cities in Washington to use this strategy.¹⁸ Education and outreach to landlords and property owners would be necessary for implementation, similar to renter protections (Strategy 3.2.1).

¹⁷ “Unbundled residential parking.” Washington State Department of Transportation.

<https://tsmowa.org/category/transportation-demand-management/unbundled-residential-parking>

¹⁸ Seattle Municipal Code 23.42.070,

https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT23LAUSCO_SUBTITLE_IIILAUSRE_CH_23.42GEUSPR_23.42.070PARELEMUDWUNCOUS

2.7 – Building Code Amendments

Action: Evaluate potential building code amendments to facilitate more economical middle housing and small apartment buildings.

2.7.1 – Middle Housing Fire Sprinklers

Under Chapter 19.14 AMC, consider updating the locally-adopted version of international codes to allow small residential structures with less than 5,000 square feet of floor area (e.g. triplexes, townhouses, and small multifamily buildings) to be designed and built under the less-strict provisions of the International Residential Code (IRC). Normally, structures with three or more units are considered commercial and fall under the International Building Code (IBC) which requires fire sprinklers. In exchange, applicable structures would be required to have a higher 2-hour fire rating for wall and floor/ceiling assemblies.

Since sprinklers can cost up to \$15,000 per unit to install, this can help reduce the costs of attached middle housing while still ensuring fire safety. Other opportunities for streamlining include revisions to egress requirements in common spaces and allowing combined mechanical, electrical, and plumbing drawings.¹⁹

Initial feedback on this action is that six-unit buildings would not be supported by City staff due to liability and insurance ratings concerns, but demonstrated success in at least one community (Memphis, TN) suggests the topic may be worth further discussion. Making a change for only three- or four-unit buildings may still provide cost benefits. Coordinate with the design and development community, the fire department, building officials, and other stakeholders as appropriate to consider a possible amendment.

2.7.1 – Single-Stairwell Buildings

Examine updating the locally-adopted version of the International Building Code to allow single-stair multifamily buildings up to six stories where there are four or less units per floor. By default, the International Building Code limits this condition to four floors. Seattle has allowed it since 1977.²⁰ This could be an opportunity to reduce costs while still ensuring fire safety for small apartment buildings on infill lots in and around the downtown area.

Similarly as above, this would require coordination with the design and development community, the fire department, building officials, and other stakeholders as appropriate.

¹⁹ “A Trailblazing Reform Supports Small-Scale Development in Memphis.” Strong Towns. January 2022. <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2022/1/26/a-trailblazing-reform-supports-small-scale-development-in-memphis>

²⁰ “Second Egress: Building a Code Change”. <https://secondegress.ca/Seattle>

3 – Programmatic Strategies

These actions relate to ongoing staff support and enforcement needs.

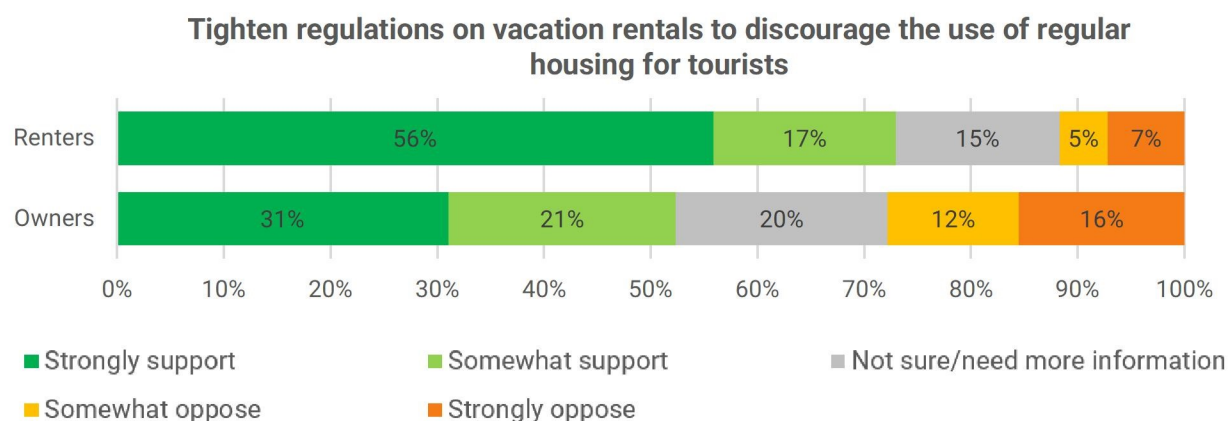
3.1 – Short-Term Rental Regulations

Action: Balance the positive and negative impacts of short-term rentals by implementing basic standards and additional regulations as needed.

Short-term rentals, also known as vacation rentals, are considered stays of 30 days or less in a residential dwelling. In 2021 City staff research found about 76 short-term rentals operating in Anacortes through the most popular commercial services such as AirBNB and VRBO. This is likely an undercount since not all short-term rentals are listed throughout the year and some may be advertised through other methods, but it still represents only a small percentage of Anacortes's housing units.

The City code does not specifically define short-term rentals. The code prohibits overnight lodging uses other than bed-and-breakfasts in residential zones, but this is not strictly enforced outside of development permits. Overnight lodging businesses are required to maintain a business license and only 12% of the identified short-term rentals have done so. It seems likely that many short-term rentals operating illegally in residential zones and not paying the lodging tax.

Housing stories collected during public engagement suggests short-term rentals are both a problem for long-term rentals and an opportunity for supplemental income by low- and moderate-income property owners. In the HAP community survey, 56% of total respondents are supportive of the concept to “Tighten regulations on vacation rentals to discourage the use of regular housing for tourists.”



There are many options to regulate short-term rentals, with some strategies provided by the American Planning Association and lessons learned from other Washington communities.²¹

²¹ “Short-Term Rentals: Regulation and Enforcement Strategies.” 2019. American Planning Association.
<https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9164214/>

Below is a non-exhaustive menu of regulatory options. Relatively light measures are recommended given the current number of short-term rentals in Anacortes, with stricter measures possible to enact if problems with short-rentals continue.

- Define short-term rentals, possibly with differences between accessory, temporary, and commercial types
- Prohibit short term rentals in residential zones, or only allow in residential zones where the owner/operator lives on the property
- Prohibit short term rentals in multifamily buildings
- Cap the number of short-term rental business licenses that may be issued, such as 1-3% of total housing units per neighborhood or citywide.
- Provide performance standards such as a cap on the number of guests and/or requiring availability of the owner/operator to respond to complaints and nuisances like noise, odors, and vibrations
- Require short-term rentals to be registered and have placards prominently displayed and visible from the right-of-way
- Provide resources for enforcing business license and registration requirements and enforcing the penalties for failure to comply

With any proposed action, communication and partnerships with the top listing platforms and affected neighborhoods should be conducted as early and continuously as possible.

3.2 – Anti-Displacement Strategies

Action: Adopt local tenant protections and consider other regulatory and programmatic anti-displacement actions to improve the stability of renter households.

As discussed above in Strategy 1.3, exclusionary zoning practices have led to numerous facets of housing inequity across the U.S. Additionally, redevelopment programs implemented in earlier decades resulted in both intentional and unintentional displacement of lower-income and people of color in many communities. Therefore, strategies to mitigate or prevent displacement have gained much attention in recent years, and a variety of approaches have emerged. Overall, the effectiveness of anti-displacement strategies is highly neighborhood- and community-specific, and recent academic research has found decidedly mixed results of many approaches.²²

While most strategies have been focused on minimizing displacement pressures, it should be noted that not all displacement is involuntary (there is always some movement in the housing market), and displacement can sometimes mean moving “up” to a higher opportunity neighborhood.

Increasing housing production overall, including market-rate housing production, is an important tool to moderate price increases and therefore make housing more affordable to low and moderate income families and prevent displacement.²³ This is particularly true in hot housing markets, such as the current market in Anacortes. A study in California found that market-rate and subsidized housing production both reduced displacement rates in San Francisco, but subsidized housing production decreased displacement risk more significantly.²⁴ The same study also found that the positive effects of production on displacement at a hyperlocal neighborhood scale may differ, depending on the complex neighborhood context.

One downside of increased production is the time it takes to build new housing, which can be lengthy not only for construction, but also design and permitting. Production can also be hampered by lack of land supply, an issue currently facing Anacortes as discussed in Strategy 1.2. The most comprehensive academic survey of anti-displacement strategies to date suggests that in addition to production, neighborhood stabilization and tenant protection policies have the most immediate impact on mitigating displacement.²⁵ The following are suggestions for proactive policies that Anacortes can adopt to further prevent displacement.

A study from Common Good Labs analyzed data on thousands of U.S. neighborhoods over 15 years (2000 to 2015) to understand how poverty is reduced without community displacement.²⁶ It found eight indicators that are associated with inclusion, increased prosperity, and decrease

²² Chapple, Karen and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris. “White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness.” Prepared for the California Air Resources Board, February 2021.

²³ Been, Vicki, Ingrid Gould and Katherine O’Regan. “Supply Skepticism: Housing Supply and Affordability.” New York University Furman Center, August 2018.

²⁴ Zuk, Miriam and Karen Chapple. “Research Brief. Housing Production, Filtering, and Displacement: Untangling the Relationships.” UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies. May 2016.

²⁵ Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris.

²⁶ “Reducing poverty without community displacement: Indicators of inclusive prosperity in U.S. neighborhoods.” Brookings. September 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/reducing-poverty-without-community-displacement-indicators-of-inclusive-prosperity-in-u-s-neighborhoods/>

in poverty. Three of the indicators can be most directly affected by municipal policies, noted in the table below.

Inclusion Indicator	How Anacortes Can Affect This Indicator
Increased housing density	Zoning standards that directly regulate the density of residential development.
Higher rates of homeownership	Zoning and subdivision standards that allow and encourage a greater variety of small and attached housing types (e.g. small single-family, cottages, townhomes, flats, condos). A New York Times report finds that the production of entry/starter homes has never been lower than today (particularly homes smaller than 1,400 square feet). ²⁷
Presence of community organizations	Financial and/or staffing support for community organizations. Zoning standards that provide low-cost commercial space and/or municipal facilities with space for community organizations to have offices, host events, run recreation and cultural programs, etc.

Figure 17. Inclusion indicators

3.2.1 - Local Tenant Protections

Washington State sets the baseline for the landlord-tenant relationship through the State Residential Landlord-Tenant Act, [RCW 59.18](#). Washington State regularly amends the Act as summarized in the HAP Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report. According to the Attorney General's Office, there is no centralized enforcement mechanism for the RCW, and so it is incumbent upon landlords and tenants to either self-remedy violations, seek counseling or low-cost legal help from non-profit organizations, and/or resolve disputes through the courts.

Local ordinances are enforced by the local jurisdiction. Cities are free to adopt additional or more stringent regulations than those provided by the state (with the exception of market-rate rent control), and numerous Washington communities have done so. Anacortes has not.

The King County Bar Association (KCBA) provides a model tenant protection ordinance within the framework of Washington State law. This is summarized in the table below.

No particular set of tenant protections is recommended as part of this HAP. The Anacortes community and decision-makers are encouraged to use this "menu" of options as a basis for continued discussion. Anacortes can look to other communities, Burien, Kenmore, and other communities that have adopted some of these protections.^{28, 29, 30}

Given the information provided during the HAP public engagement process, many renters feel their housing situation is unstable and at the mercy of large rent increases or evictions. When asked in the HAP community survey, over 58% of total respondents and 82% of renters are

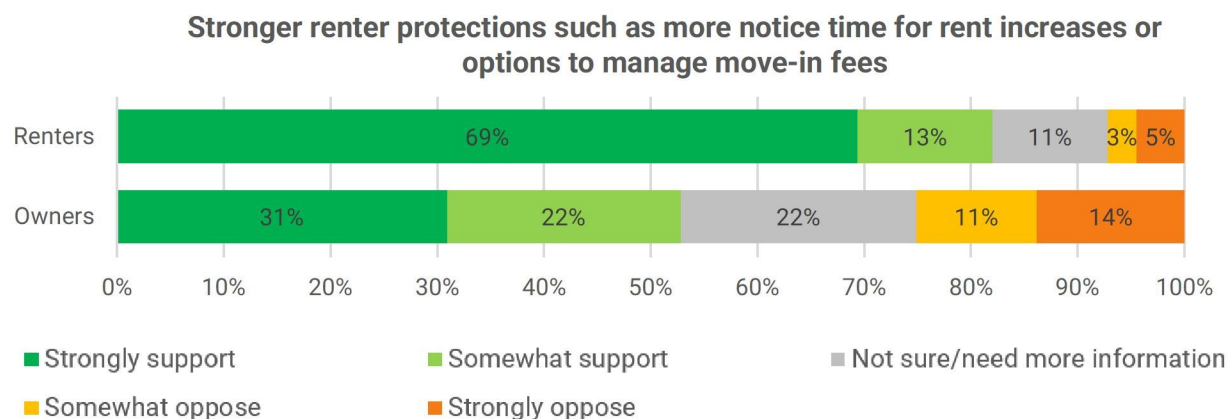
²⁷ "Whatever Happened to the Starter Home?" The New York Times. September 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/25/upshot/starter-home-prices.html>

²⁸ "City of Burien, Washington, Ordinance No. 804." October 2022. <https://burienwa.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/33975/?preview=76250>

²⁹ City of Kenmore, Washington, Ordinance No. 22-0545." March 2022. <https://kenmore.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/118191/?preview=119244>

³⁰ "Five Seattle suburbs added new landlord-renter laws this year. Here's what they do." *The Seattle Times*. December 15, 2022. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/five-seattle-suburbs-added-new-landlord-renter-laws-this-year-heres-what-they-do/>

supportive of “Stronger renter protections such as more notice time for rent increases or options to manage move-in fees”.



Local Tenant Protection Option	Other Considerations and Notes
Rents and Payments	
Notice of monthly rent increases 90-180 days before the effective date, with more notice required for larger increases	The state law default is 60 days notice per RCW 59.18.140. Upon receipt of notice, allow tenants to terminate tenancy early without further payment except pro rata rent.
No increase in rent allowed if the property is in poor condition	Poor conditions means the dwelling unit has defective conditions making it unlivable, a request for repairs has not been completed, or the property is otherwise in violation of RCW 59.18.060.
Increases over 10% of monthly rent over a 12-month period requires landlord to pay relocation assistance for economically-displaced tenants.	The tenant must be notified this is an option in every rent increase notice regardless of the increase amount. The assistance can be valued in a number of ways – the KCBA model bases it on three times the monthly rent amount. Optionally, this tool could require relocation assistance for physical displacement as well (due to property renovations or demolition).
Move-in fees capped at one month's rent and require offer of installment plans	Allow up to a six month installment plan which commences upon move-in. This helps lower income tenants manage move-in fees that can be many thousands of dollars.
Caps on rent payment late fees	The KCBA approach is a cap of \$10 per month and the tenant is not responsible for any legal fees or other services.
Leases must allow rent to be paid on different days of the month	This allows tenants to adjust the due date of rent payments if the tenant has a fixed income source (e.g. a paycheck lag after the first of the month or a social security payment). A landlord shall not refuse to lease to tenants who request this.
Evictions and Discrimination	
Require cause to evict as specified in the lease agreement	Only allow for evictions for: 1) failure to pay rent after receiving all notices required; 2) substantial breach of a non-monetary term of the lease and all steps to resolve it have failed within the time required; or 3) the landlord seeks to remove the unit from the market with honest intent (with 120 days notice).
Banning discriminatory, deceptive, and unfair practices in the rental market	Prohibits inquiries or verification requirements based on immigration or citizenship status, using social security numbers as a method of proving financial eligibility, and representing that a unit is not available when it is in fact available. Also prohibits requiring that a

Local Tenant Protection Option	Other Considerations and Notes
	lease be signed by children and deceptive omissions and practices like confusing lease terms or taking advantage of a lack of understanding by tenants.
Administration	
Rental unit registration and inspection programs	The purpose of such programs is to ensure rental housing meets standard living conditions. Registration includes property address, contact information, list of rental units, and condition of the housing units. Fees may be imposed and re-registration is required with new ownership.

Figure 18. Tenant protection options

Longer rent increase notice time, move-in fee caps, and economic/physical relocation assistance are some of the strongest anti-displacement strategies available for low-income residents forced to move, giving them an opportunity to find new housing in the same community within a reasonable amount of time.

Any new regulatory action would require some degree of effort, ranging from education and outreach to increased staffing and resources for monitoring and enforcement (including but not limited to the recommended hiring of a housing coordinator, see Strategy 4.1). Regulatory action could also be considered at the regional level to provide consistency for landlords and property management companies working across multiple Skagit County jurisdictions.

3.2.2 - Other Anti-Displacement Strategies

Strategic Acquisition of Existing Multifamily Housing

To better retain affordable housing, the City of Anacortes should continuously work with the Anacortes Housing Authority, land trusts, and other non-profit providers to identify naturally occurring affordable housing and multifamily housing with income restrictions or covenants that are close to expiration. Funds should be identified to acquire as many such properties as possible to avoid displacement of low- or moderate-income residents. This practice preserves existing communities and retains long-term affordable housing stock at a lower cost than development of new affordable housing.

Tenant Legal Services

Eviction rates have been shown to drop when tenants facing eviction have access to legal representation. The Washington State Office of the Attorney General has a comprehensive list of resources for tenants facing legal issues, including free phone assistance from the Northwest Justice Project for low-income tenants statewide.³¹ Contacts and guidance could be provided alongside or in addition to the homeless services directory (see Strategy 3.3.3).

Tenant Opportunity to Purchase

A tenant opportunity to purchase program, such as the one instituted in Washington, D.C. in 1980, gives tenants the first right to purchase their unit if it is being converted into a

31 "Residential Landlord-Tenant Resources." Washington State Office of the Attorney General.
<https://www.atg.wa.gov/residential-landlord-tenant-resources>

condominium. In D.C., a study of the program showed this helped 58% of eligible tenants purchase their unit.³²

Rental Assistance Programs

Rental assistance programs help low-income tenants pay rent in moments of hardship. Such a program can be very helpful in preventing families and individuals from becoming homeless and help stave off eviction and displacement. However, rental assistance programs are also relatively expensive and may have limited reach in a city of Anacortes's size. One option would be to investigate a temporary rental assistance fund for eligible low-income renters which can provide assistance for 1-3 months when a tenant is experiencing a financial crisis.

Housing Rehabilitation

Some low-income households are unable to afford ongoing maintenance on their homes, particularly older housing units. This can lead to displacement if the homes become uninhabitable or the home is sold at a low price. Many cities and counties in Washington, including Vancouver, Spokane, and Pierce County for example, provide no- or low-interest loans to qualifying low-income homeowners to help repair and rehabilitate their homes.^{33, 34, 35}

Some programs do not require repayment of the loan until after the house is sold, and others defer payments if residents cannot afford them, or waive interest for disability modifications. These programs are funded by a variety of sources, including city or county affordable housing funds, CDBG block grants from HUD, or HOME Investment Partnership programs.

Community Control of Land

There are several models of cooperative or shared land ownership which have been used to remove land speculation and market pressures from ownership housing and provide affordable and stable ownership opportunities for lower- and moderate-income households. Such organizations have mostly taken the form of cooperatives and community land trusts (CLT), or a combination of both approaches.

In a community land trust, the land is held in trust by a nonprofit or city and only the housing unit is bought and sold, usually with permanent affordability restrictions in the covenant. Although this can reduce the amount of equity which can be built by buying and selling a home in a CLT, it does create opportunity for households whose incomes would typically exclude them from homeownership.

In a co-op model, residents own shares in the land or buildings (depending on the model) and pay affordable monthly payments with limited equity to residents. There is at least example of this in Anacortes, the Skagit Cohousing project which is currently in construction (read more details in the HAP Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report). One Oregon model

³² Chapple, Karen and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris. "White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness." Prepared for the California Air Resources Board, February 2021.

³³ "Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program." City of Vancouver. <https://www.cityofvancouver.us/eph/page/housing-rehabilitation-loan-program>

³⁴ "Home Rehabilitation." City of Spokane. <https://my.spokanecity.org/housing/affordable/>

³⁵ "Home Rehabilitation Loan Program." Pierce County. <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/3093/Home-Rehabilitation-Loan-Program>

showed that combining a CLT and co-op yielded opportunities for homeownership for households earning 30-60% of the AMI.³⁶

Overall, the largest barrier to community land control models is lack of funding for ownership affordable housing to jumpstart these types of organizations.³⁷

Foreclosure Assistance

Foreclosure assistance can take the form of financial support to homeowners facing foreclosure, similar to the rental assistance programs described above. Additionally, foreclosure assistance can take the form of technical assistance and counseling to households at risk. A study conducted by the Urban Institute during the Great Recession found that households that received counseling were more likely to avoid default and modify their loans to be able to keep making payments.³⁸ Such a program could be provided by the city or in partnership with another organization.

Living Wage Ordinance

In the Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area, the hourly wage needed to afford the average two-bedroom apartment is \$25.13/hour.³⁹ The minimum wage in Anacortes is the default state law rate, \$14.49/hour.

A living wage ordinance requires a higher minimum wage than that required by state law, which can help reduce housing cost burden. Local ordinances are not widespread in Washington; only the cities of Seattle, SeaTac, and Tukwila currently have minimum wages higher than the statewide minimum.⁴⁰

Childcare and Early Education Subsidies

Subsidizing early education is another way to help lower-income households from being unable to afford housing, as well as improving lifelong outcomes for children. Washington State provides financial assistance for child care for low-income families through the [Working Connections Child Care subsidy](#). Other municipalities in Washington also provide childcare subsidy, such as Seattle's [Child Care Assistance Program](#) and the [King/Pierce County Child Care Resources subsidy program](#) for families experiencing homelessness.

Land Value Capture

See Strategy 5.3.

Inclusionary Zoning

See Strategy 5.5.

³⁶ "A Case for Public Investment in Shared-Equity Homeownership." SquareOne Villages. September 2020. <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Downloads/PublicTestimonyDocument/20717>

³⁷ Gabobe, Nisma. "How Can Cities Move The Needle on Community Land Trusts?" Sightline Institute. August 2021. <https://www.sightline.org/2021/08/23/how-can-cities-move-the-needle-on-community-land-trusts/>

³⁸ Chapple, Karen and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris. "White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness." Prepared for the California Air Resources Board, February 2021.

³⁹ National Low Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing." 2022. https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/2022_OOR.pdf

⁴⁰ "Minimum Wage", Washington State Department of Labor & Industries. <https://www.lni.wa.gov/workers-rights/wages/minimum-wage/>

3.3 – Homelessness Strategies

Action: Strengthen coordination between the City and local homelessness support services and adopt a Housing First approach.

Homelessness is a government concern because it relates to the health, safety, and welfare of individuals and the community at-large.⁴¹ This housing action plan is addressing homelessness because the production and price of housing, which is affected by City policy, is directly correlated to the rate of homelessness.⁴² At the national level, every \$100 increase in median rent is associated with a nine percent increase in the estimated homelessness population, even after accounting for demographic and economic characteristics.⁴³

3.3.1 – Data Collection

The scale of the homeless population in Anacortes is not well understood, which is one of the first barriers to overcome in addressing the issue. The most recent and granular data available from the Washington Department of Commerce is there were approximately 314 people (made up of 234 household or family groups) experiencing homelessness in Skagit County in 2022.⁴⁴ Perhaps a third or less of that number includes homeless people in Anacortes, based on stakeholder feedback.

More local and updated data is critical to understanding the problem and seeing how it is changing over time or in response to interventions. Many communities conduct an annual or semi-annual “point in time” count to conduct either a basic population estimate or a census of the visibly local homeless population, often led by social service providers and volunteer community members. This is a nighttime event counting people living on the street, in vehicles, and in shelters. Sometimes it is paired with a daytime survey of homeless individuals to understand their specific health challenges and needs and to identify family groups. Point in time counts may not capture other people who are on the edge of homelessness, such as people who are couch surfing or living in hotels, but it is a start.

3.3.2 – Coordination

Stakeholder interviews and the 2021 “unmet needs” report of the HACS committee suggest there is not a well-coordinated response to homelessness between the City and service providers. The City also does not directly offer any homeless shelters or transitional housing. A constellation of Anacortes organizations such as food banks, non-profit housing providers, and the hospital meets regularly to share information and resources and keep track of trends on homeless people’s needs.

Communication and coordination is hampered by the lack of a central communication hub for service providers. The City has taken the steps of establishing weekly meetings to facilitate

⁴¹ “Homelessness – Common Questions & Answers.” Washington State Department of Commerce. January 2019. <https://www.skagitcounty.net/HumanServices/Documents/Housing/Homelessness%20FAQs%2001-2019.pdf>

⁴² “Homelessness is a Housing Problem.” Greg Colburn and Clayton Page Aldern. <https://homelessnesshousingproblem.com/>

⁴³ “How COVID-19 Could Aggravate the Homelessness Crisis?” August 2020. United States Government Accountability Office. <https://www.gao.gov/blog/how-covid-19-could-aggravate-homelessness-crisis>

⁴⁴ “2022 Point in Time Count, County Totals.” Washington State Department of Commerce. <https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/ek9pu2w07oz8d77gq6c1rlpxuwcw0515/file/991370028199>

interagency discussions and contracting with Anacortes Family Center to provide support for the police department. Other frontline City staff, such as those working in parks and the library, are also encountering people in need.

As another step, it is recommended that Anacortes create a “housing coordinator” staff position to act as the point of contact with service providers, in addition to other housing-related duties (see Strategy 4.1).

3.3.3 – Intermediate Actions

Create a directory of homeless support services with available times and contact information, and distribute it on the City website and with local service providers. Assign a City staff person (such as the new housing coordinator, see Strategy 4.1) to contact each service at least monthly to maintain and update the directory.

Identify at least one underutilized or abandoned parking lot to create a legal and organized area for people living in vehicles. The site should be reasonably located near existing services. Provide basic on-site functions such as trash collection and showers. Work with service providers for site management and outreach. The capacity of the site should be capped at a reasonable amount based on the staffing capacity of service providers and the number of people living in vehicles.

Similarly or in combination with a vehicle lot, identify at least one underutilized or abandoned site near services to create a legal “tiny home village” to help shelter homeless individuals and consolidate them for case management and health treatment. Sanitation and site management should be provided. Public parking lots may be opportune sites on a temporary basis (see Strategy 4.4.5).

Several housing communities or service providers are potential partners and can offer lessons for sanctioned temporary homeless housing sites: The First Step Shelter operated by [Skagit Friendship House](#), housing and services by [Community Action](#), transitional housing support from the [Northwest Regional Council](#), the medical clinic operated by [Swinomish Indian Tribal Community](#), portable showers by [Skagit Connections](#), and food banks operated by [Salvation Army](#) and [Helping Hands](#).

3.3.4 – Adopt a “Housing First” Approach

Decades of research have found that helping homeless people move off the street and into a home of their own is the most effective way to reduce long-term (chronic) homelessness for the most vulnerable people.⁴⁵ This is because it is extremely difficult or impossible to address the personal, financial, mental, or physical problems that underlie homelessness while simply trying to stay alive.

The “housing first” approach eliminates bureaucratic steps and places no criteria on sobriety, employment, criminal history, or completing a religious program before individuals are moved into a home. When someone is drowning, it doesn’t help if a rescuer insists the victim learn to swim before bringing them to shore. They can address their issues once they are on solid

⁴⁵ “Homelessness research: A guide for economists (and friends).” 2019.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1051137718302109>

ground with private space, a stable address, and the dignity of meeting basic needs like food, warmth, and bathing.

This approach is less costly to taxpayers than the combined costs of roving service contacts, emergency room visits, jail and shelter stays, towed vehicles, and maintenance of public spaces. Success stories and lessons abound from places as varied as Houston, TX, Columbus, OH and Salt Lake City, UT.

The provision of homes can be done indirectly through vouchers, in which public funding directly subsidizes the cost of a market-rate rental unit, or directly through publicly-owned housing. The type of housing is oftentimes and preferably in the form of apartments which are the cheapest type of housing to build and operate per unit. Sometimes existing apartment or hotel buildings are purchased, or a warehouse can be renovated for residential use. “Tiny home villages”, which are rapidly constructed on vacant sites or parking lots, may be appropriate but only on a temporary basis since they are not as durable, weather-proof, or livable as permanent structures.

“Housing first” includes intensive wraparound social services and case management for the residents, either on-site or off-site. These services usually include support for people living with complex and disabling behavioral health or physical health conditions, addiction treatment, and employment assistance. Research has found that an overwhelming majority of permanent supportive housing residents eventually stabilize their lives and health enough to move to market-rate housing.

The “housing first” policy has its limitations. It can only work if housing and service providers agree on the approach, if there is enough supply of housing available to work with at different income levels, and there is adequate long-term funding. All three requirements will require strategic planning and time to develop. To that end, this HAP recommends the following:

- Convene a meeting of all relevant homelessness stakeholders to discuss the “housing first” approach
- Adopt a “housing first” policy in the Comprehensive Plan
- Create a “housing coordinator” staff position (Strategy 4.1)
- Regularly survey and monitor the scale of the homeless population
- Provide or seek new funding for supportive housing such as rent vouchers or a City-owned supportive housing development
- Study alternatives for providing supportive housing with City funding or grant funding
- Inventory hotels/motels which could be candidates for purchase and conversion to permanent supportive housing
- Explore programs and partnerships that could enable more social, health, and human care services to establish branch locations in Anacortes.

4 – Citywide Planning Strategies

These actions relate to the City’s budget and updating the Comprehensive Plan.

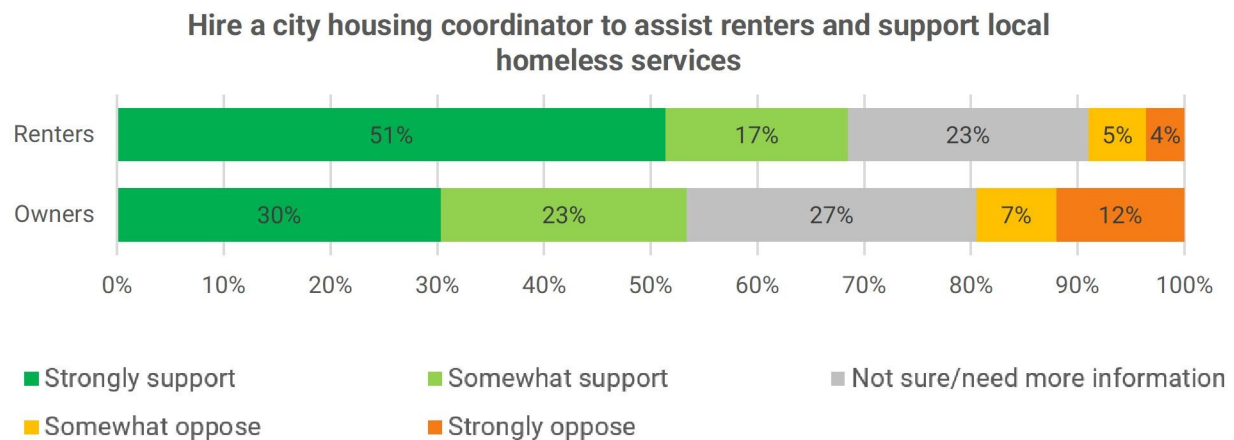
4.1 – Hire a Housing Coordinator

Action: Fund, recruit, and hire a housing coordinator to help implement this Housing Action Plan, connect and collaborate with housing stakeholders, and promote more market-rate and affordable housing development in Anacortes.

A housing coordinator would be a specialized position in the Planning, Community & Economic Development Department that promotes implementation of the Housing Action Plan and provides long-term policy support and relationship-building among Anacortes’s residents, landlords, developers, human service providers, and City staff.

This could be a permanent position or, at a minimum, a two year position focused on implementing the Housing Action Plan.

When asked in the HAP community survey, 56% respondents were strongly or somewhat supportive of hiring a city housing coordinator to assist renters and support local homeless service.



Key responsibilities for the position should include:

- Implement the actions and strategies of the Housing Action Plan
- Plan, organize, coordinate, and implement the work plan and policies related to the City’s housing policies, projects, and programs. Study, evaluate, and recommend housing policies and procedures.
- Serve as the City liaison to other departments and advisory boards on housing issues related to housing policy and provide citywide leadership and coordination on housing policy issues.
- Oversee and manage the City’s housing funds including the housing sales tax and Community Development Block Grant funds. Monitor other state funding and grant

opportunities and write applications for funding, including joint applications with partner agencies.

- (If implemented) Administer and monitor the MFTE program and provide guidance for property owners
- Monitor housing production, the number and location of affordable housing units, and the number of unhoused people in Anacortes and support PCED department reports on housing and demographic trends
- Build relationships with community partners in the non-profit, public, and private sectors, including acting as liaison to the Anacortes Housing Authority, Anacortes Family Center, and the Anacortes Community Health Council
- Market Anacortes to the residential real estate industry and manage inquiries, with a focus on promoting the qualities of the town, economic development opportunities, the friendly regulatory environment, and any financial incentives available
- Recruit human service providers and senior housing developers to locate and build facilities in Anacortes
- Connect businesses and prospective residents to housing listings and providers
- Connect tenants and landlords to resources help resolve disputes
- Educate property owners and developers on development regulations and site-specific opportunities and share resources such as case studies, best practices, property maintenance standards, and property tax resources
- Monitor changes to the Growth Management Act and related state laws on housing

Qualifications for the position should include:

- Bachelor's degree in planning, real estate, public administration, finance, economics, business, or other fields where the knowledge and skills can translate to the responsibilities of the position.
- Considerable (3-5 years) experience in program management, affordable housing policy, community planning, public policy, real estate finance or development, business administration, or economic development.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office and other software related to planning operations.

The ideal candidate will:

- Have a creative, open-minded, and pragmatic attitude.
- Thrive in a fast-paced, team-based environment while also being able to work independently.
- Clearly communicate ideas and concepts.
- Have strong organizational and data analysis skills.

4.2 – Housing Element Updates

Action: In the next Comprehensive Plan update, update the Housing Element to support the actions of this Housing Action Plan and integrate new provisions required by state law.

Recent updates to the Growth Management Act require some updates on data and goals/policies for the Comprehensive Plan's Housing element. Many of these required updates overlap with the data and objectives provided in this Housing Action Plan, though some additional work may be needed.

In addition to statements of goals, policies, objectives, and mandatory provisions for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing, updated [RCW 36.70A.070\(2\)](#) (2021) now requires:

- An inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs that identifies the number of housing units necessary to manage projected growth including:
 - Units for moderate, low, very low, and extremely low-income households
 - Emergency housing, emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing
- Goals and policies for moderate density housing options including, but not limited to, duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes
- Identify sufficient capacity of land for housing including, but not limited to, government-assisted housing, housing for moderate, low, very low, and extremely low-income households, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, group homes, foster care facilities, emergency housing, emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing, and consideration of duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes
- Makes adequate provisions for all economic segments of the community, including:
 - Low, very low, extremely low, and moderate-income households
 - Documenting programs and actions needed to achieve housing availability including gaps in local funding, barriers such as development regulations, and other limitations
 - Consideration of housing locations in relation to employment location
 - Consideration of the role of accessory dwelling units in meeting housing needs
- Identify local policies and regulations that result in racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion in housing, including:
 - Zoning that may have a discriminatory effect
 - Disinvestment
 - Infrastructure availability
- Identify and implement policies and regulations to address and begin to undo racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion in housing caused by local policies, plans, and actions
- Identify areas that may be at higher risk of displacement from market forces that occur with changes to zoning development regulations and capital investments; and
- Establish anti-displacement policies, with consideration given to the preservation of historical and cultural communities as well as investments in low, very low, extremely low, and moderate-income housing; equitable development initiatives; inclusionary

zoning; community planning requirements; tenant protections; land disposition policies; and consideration of land that may be used for affordable housing.

In the annual amendment cycle or the next major update (due in 2025), the Housing Element could be updated with specific policies relating to the many strategies and actions of this Housing Action Plan. Relevant HAP actions to acknowledge at the comprehensive planning level may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Development regulation streamlining that provides more housing options
- Guidance on homelessness reduction and prevention
- Support for a multifamily tax exemption program, tax increment financing for infrastructure and affordable housing, and transit funding to support housing and economic development
- Policies for the acquisition and disposition of surplus public land for affordable housing (see Strategy 4.4), especially City-owned land in downtown and at Sharpe's Corner
- Support for new anti-displacement policies

4.3 – Land Use Element Updates

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use element should be reviewed for potential updates on these issues.

4.3.1 – Old Town Zone

Action: In the next major Comprehensive Plan Update, reexamine the boundaries of the Old Town zone and its allowed housing types, and potential new design guidelines.

Given Old Town’s size and walkable proximity to downtown Anacortes, reconsider allowed housing types and form/intensity standards here in the next Comprehensive Plan update. This is proposed to be pushed to the Comprehensive Plan process because Old Town is a historically significant area with special land use characteristics and design qualities, and so merits a dedicated policy discussion with the community and decision-makers. It’s possible an additional but limited set of historic design guidelines would be appropriate for new housing types such as cottages, duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes.

Also in the Comprehensive Plan, consider redesignating the eastern area of Old Town to facilitate high-density residential and/or mixed-use development. This area is the closest part of Old Town to downtown, contains the library, and has excellent access to public parks and an elementary school. The area is mostly built out and redevelopment would be slow in coming, but in a 20-year planning horizon creating more housing capacity here could equitably provide affordable housing and access to commercial and public services.

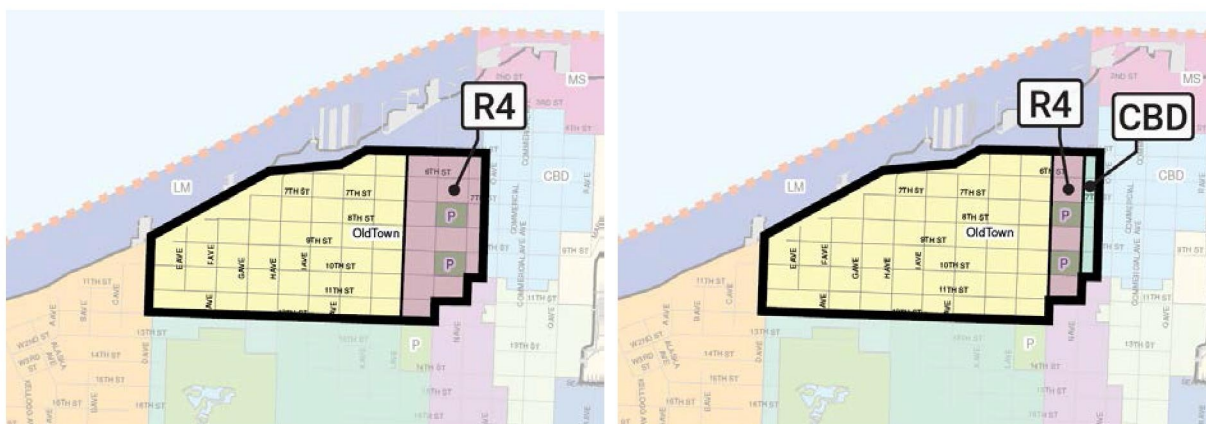


Figure 19. Two options for future consideration of zoning changes in the Old Town zone adjacent to downtown



Figure 20. Existing middle housing in Old Town (sources for left image: Sightline; right image: Google Maps)

4.3.2 – R1 Zone

Action: In the next major Comprehensive Plan Update, reexamine the purpose, priorities, and development regulations for the R1 zone.

With a 15,000 square feet minimum lot size and only allowing single-family development, the R1 zone is highly exclusionary. The zone is also home to an elementary school and ample park space that would benefit from improved access for more people.

Given growth management goals and the findings of the HAP Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report, it is recommended that the next Comprehensive Plan examine the purpose and priorities for this zone more closely. The review will need to also account for the benefits of open space and wildlife corridors since the R1 zone acts as a moderate “buffer” between the city and the unincorporated Skagit County. The review will also need to examine the infrastructure implications of any zoning change, particularly the lack of pedestrian and bike routes and transit service (see the discussion of tax increment financing in Strategy 5.3).

The current limitation requiring a special review process to increase the density limit should also be re-evaluated (see Strategy 2.1.1).

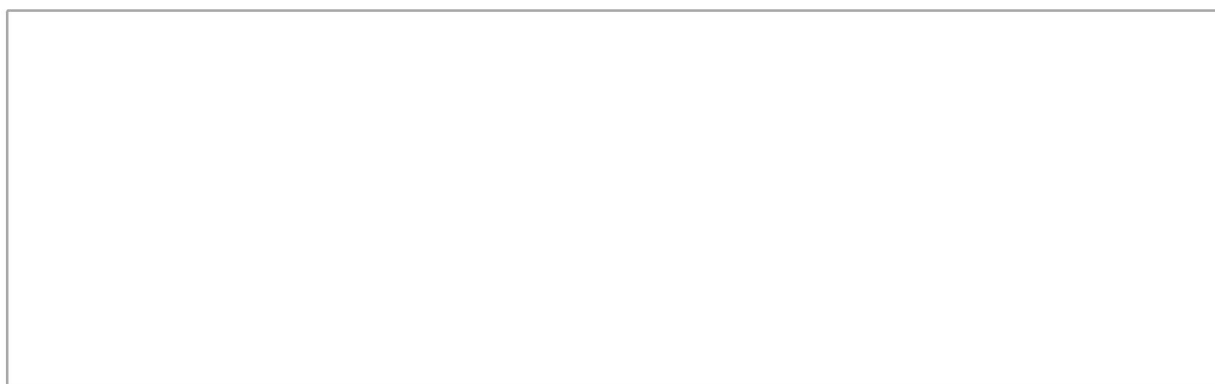


Figure 21. Excerpt of the zoning map showing the R1 zone.

4.3.3 – Multifamily and Mixed-Use Zone Height Limits

Action: In the next major Comprehensive Plan Update, reexamine the height limits in the CBD and C zones.

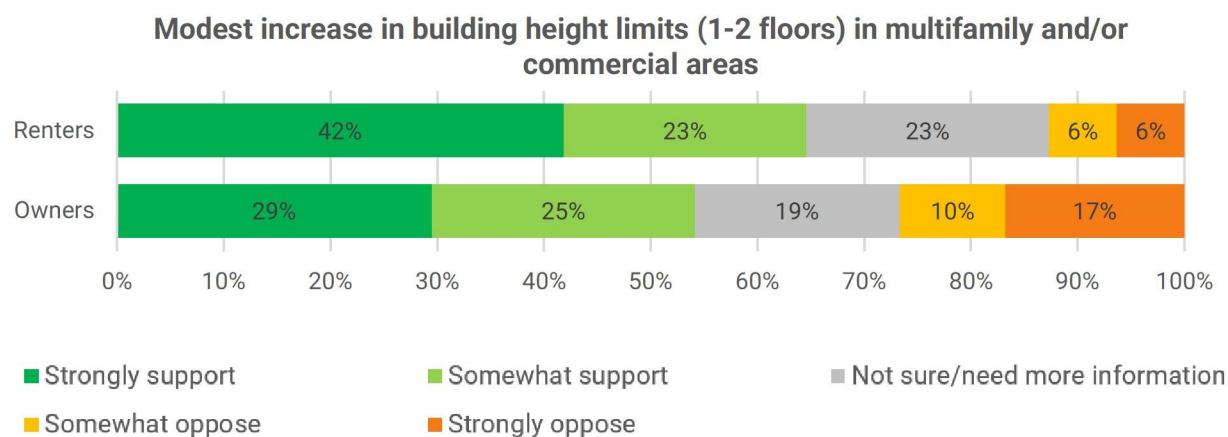
The areas zoned Central Business District (CBD) and Commercial (C) are desirable areas for new development because they offer the best access to the jobs, services, and transit. More housing options and diversity are needed in this area, but it has seen limited residential development activity in recent years.

Height Limits (feet)	CBD	C
Height, maximum	50	40
Height, maximum with bonus	65	55

Figure 22. CBD and C zone height limits

The next Comprehensive Plan update should consider if building height increases in the CBD and C zones are needed to enable feasible multifamily and mixed-use development. This is proposed to be pushed to the Comprehensive Plan process because there are still several years left until the next Plan update to see if the current height limits are enough to attract investment that produces substantial housing.

The HAP community survey found 55% of total respondents strongly or somewhat support a “Modest increase in building height limits (1-2 floors) in multifamily and/or commercial areas”.



Particularly in the C zone (along the Commercial Avenue corridor), 40 feet is a relatively low base height limit. This zone consists of a strong set of streets and alleys with relatively large lots and many opportunities to reinvest in aging single-story commercial properties and parking lots. However, relatively low land values and increasing construction costs likely make mixed-use development here infeasible without a greater chance of return on investment with a larger number of dwelling units. One alternative is to increase the height limits only in certain areas, such as north of 22nd Street.

4.3.4 – Industrial Zones

Action: In the next major Comprehensive Plan Update, review the long-term demand and supply of land needed for industrial purposes and workforce housing.

Anacortes takes pride in its culture and history as a working class maritime community. However, over time, some maritime uses and other industrial businesses have reduced or ceased their operations. With limited uses allowed by zoning, some industrially-zoned lands have been sitting vacant for many years. This most notably includes the Industrial (I) zone, and to a lesser extent the Light Manufacturing 1 (LM1) zone.

The next Comprehensive Plan update should include a review on the specific demand and supply of industrial lands needed, and if and how any long-term rezoning should be implemented. This land remains valuable to support employment and commerce. Consider the integration of workforce housing in these areas as part of mixed-use industrial or commercial developments.

4.3.5 – Parking

Action: In the next major Comprehensive Plan Update, review the need for minimum parking requirements citywide and review national case studies for best practices.

Parking is an issue that should be revisited in the next Comprehensive Plan update. Consider policy support for removing minimum requirements entirely, as is increasingly being done in cities and states across the country and called for by professional planning and engineering organizations.^{46, 47}

Removing parking requirements does not have any immediate effect on housing supply or prices or neighborhood design. Over time, it gives the power of parking design back to property owners and businesses to decide how much parking they need to attract tenants and customers.⁴⁸ New development will still include parking spaces, but the number of spaces will be decided based on what owners need based on their experience and budget rather than government rules.⁴⁹

Removing the minimum requirement can also ease the renovation of older vacant buildings and allow new small businesses to open in commercial spaces where they couldn't before. Removing parking requirements significantly reduces the red tape and studies that are required to justify modifications, reductions, or cooperative parking agreements, the costs of which may exceed the budgets of local property owners or small investors. Starter homes like townhomes and condos may become easier to build and improve homeownership opportunities.

Removing parking standards would complement increased transit service, as discussed in Strategy 5.6.

The costs of building and maintaining parking are a major factor in housing costs. Parking costs are passed on to renters, homeowners, and business tenants. A recent Anacortes multifamily development paid \$30,000 per surface parking stall. A structured parking stall can cost \$50,000 or more. Studies have shown this can add \$200-500 per month to new apartment rents.

⁴⁶ "Parking Reform Network." <https://parkingreform.org/resources/mandates-map/>

⁴⁷ "Rethinking Parking Minimums." Institute of Transportation Engineers. February 2019. <https://www.dropbox.com/s/1becvgm8ebznwj2/ITE%20journal.pdf?dl=0>

⁴⁸ "End Parking Mandates & Subsidies." Strong Towns. <https://www.strongtowns.org/parking>

⁴⁹ "Save Anchorage from Parking Mandates." Sightline. September 2022. <https://www.sightline.org/2022/09/30/save-anchorage-from-parking-mandates/>

4.4 – Public Land for Affordable Housing

Actions: Consider rezonings, environmental assessments, pre-development activities, and partnerships to promote use of surplus public land for affordable housing.

The City and other public agencies have some surplus publicly-owned land. Some of it is well-located or positioned to merit consideration for housing development.

4.4.1 – Disposition Policy

Formally adopt a surplus land disposition policy that gives the right-of-first-refusal to affordable housing developers or other community-determined uses, consistent with the allowances of [RCW 39.33.015](#) (2018). This could be adopted by City Council resolution or embedded within the Comprehensive Plan’s Housing Element (also see Strategy 4.2).

4.4.2 – Sharpe’s Corner (City)

The City’s Sharpe’s Corner property is a large 42-acre site zoned both LM1 and R4. It is partially encumbered by wetlands and streams. The LM1 zone conditionally allows multifamily and could be considered for a rezone given the vicinity’s lack of existing industrial development; for instance, a rezone to R4 would offer considerable housing capacity and flexibility.

A development proposal and rezoning could also involve private land in the area. Market the property and identify a private or non-profit developer that is interested in a partnership. Consider rezones, environmental assessments, and other pre-development activities to position this site for sale or for lease.

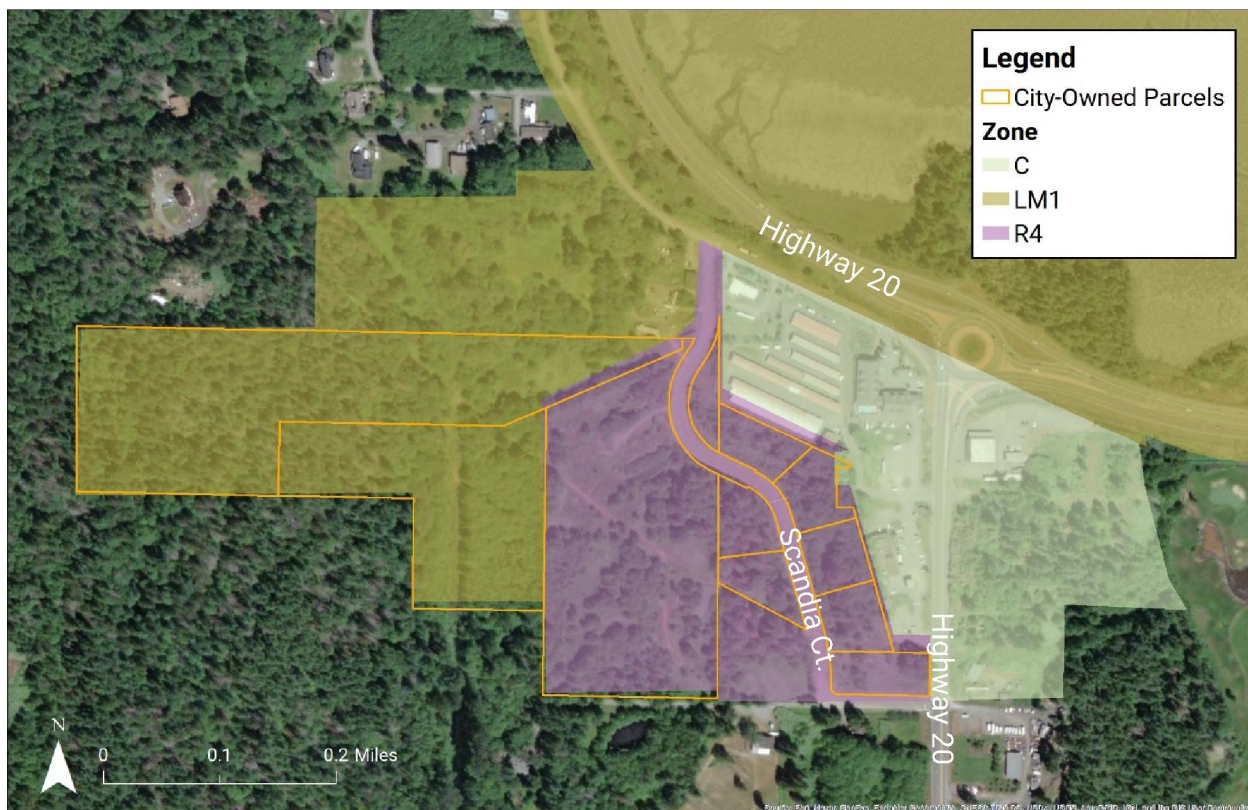


Figure 23. Aerial map and zoning of the City-owned Sharpe’s Corner property

4.4.3 – Parcel P116633 and P58211 (City)

These two sites are similar infill housing opportunities in the R2A zone. Confirm the land is surplus, and then find a housing partner (such as Habitat for Humanity or Anacortes Housing Authority) to develop the land for affordable housing. Both sites are alley-loaded and preliminarily appear viable for compatible infill development like cottage housing and townhouses (dependent on implementation of recommendations in Strategy 2.1.3).

4.4.4 – Parcel P31678 (Port of Anacortes)

This is an infill housing opportunity. Determine the Port's use and plans for the land. If it is indeed surplus, encourage the Port to lease or sell the property for affordable housing development. Any development will most likely require a rezone to allow residential uses. The site appears large enough for a variety of greenfield development types, ranging from duplexes to multifamily, and may need to contend with a slope.

4.4.5 – Public Parking Lots

The City owns a number of parking lots in and around the downtown and central waterfront areas. These include the parking lots at the Municipal Building, parking lots on Q Avenue, and the parking lot north of Anacortes Cinemas.

The Port of Anacortes also owns a significant amount of parking around its marina facilities which could potentially be consolidated. Skagit County also owns parking lots at the Guemes Ferry terminal which could potentially be redeveloped.

Consider long-term opportunities to create partnerships with private or non-profit developers to redevelop these public parking lots with affordable multifamily housing and perhaps other civic and commercial uses. Parking would ideally be structured and some could still be shared for public use. As noted elsewhere in this HAP, real estate economics and land value in Anacortes are such that structured parking may be difficult to achieve without subsidies and public funding.

In the short-term, an interim use of public parking lots could be “tiny home villages” to help shelter homeless individuals (see Strategy 3.3.3).

4.4.6 – Co-Location

Co-location is a tactic to maximize the use of limited public land holdings, especially when a capital facility is being redeveloped or newly built in central locations near urban services. It involves building housing above or adjacent to ground-level community facilities such as administrative offices, daycares, libraries, recreation or community centers on the same property. There are many examples of co-location across the Pacific Northwest.^{50, 51}

This strategy takes advantage of land and infrastructure already planned for the main public use. It requires that the zoning allow for mixed-use development and have adequate building height limits.

⁵⁰ “A New Chapter: Cities Are Tackling the Housing Crunch—by Building Above the Library.” September 2019. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolnst.edu/publications/articles/new-chapter>

⁵¹ Domingo Vernes Apartments. SCIDpda. <https://dva.rentcafewebsite.com/>

4.4.7 – Land Acquisition

The cost of land can be a major cost for any housing development, and providing a discounted land lease or sale can help some projects become economically viable. Since the City does not have much surplus land, the City can identify and purchase underutilized or vacant properties that can be developed as affordable housing. Land assembly can be a powerful tool for putting together larger sites that can be redeveloped at a more economically feasible scale.

This strategy could be focused on close-in locations (e.g. the Commercial Avenue corridor) where land ownership is fragmented. Anacortes may also focus on vacant, abandoned, or tax-delinquent properties. These sites usually have negative impacts on surrounding properties and the City's role would include resolving ownership issues and/or addressing tax liens or land encumbrances that otherwise deter developers from pursuing these properties.⁵²

Once acquired and assembled, Anacortes would lease or sell the land for affordable housing. [RCW 39.33.015](#) allows local governments to transfer, lease, or dispose of surplus property at low or no cost to developers for affordable housing projects. See the related need for a land disposition policy in Strategy 4.4.1

⁵² "Support the Reuse of Abandoned, Vacant, & Delinquent Properties." Family Housing Fund. <https://www.fhfund.org/report/reuse-of-abandoned-properties/>

5 – Funding Strategies

These actions relate to the financing and funding of affordable housing and related issues like taxes, fees, and state law.

5.1 – Multifamily Tax Exemption Program

Action: Re-adopt an MFTE program with more flexibility than the previous version to promote market-rate and affordable housing development in central locations.

A multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program is authorized by a 1995 state law, [RCW 84.14](#). Cities can grant an 8-year property tax exemption for any multifamily development, or a 12-year exemption for multifamily developments that reserve at least 20 percent of units for low- and moderate-income households. A MFTE program can be used for new buildings or existing buildings that require major rehabilitation. Affordability covenants expire after 12 years and cannot be renewed.

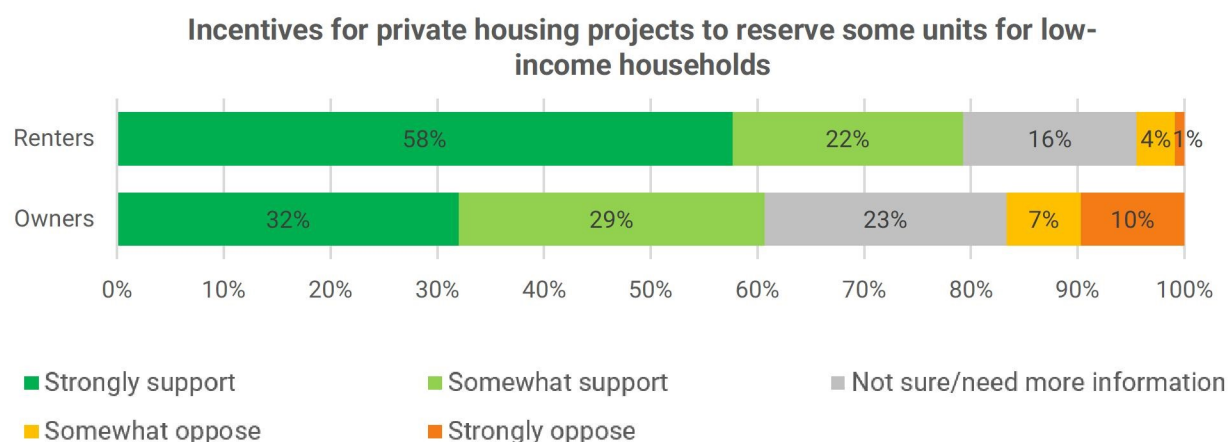
Starting in 2021, cities may also offer a 20-year tax exemption if at least 25 percent of condominium units are sold as permanently affordable ownership housing.⁵³ For cities under 20,000 residents, the 20-year program requires the development to be in a zone that allows at least 15 dwelling units per acre.

The 2017 Affordable Housing Strategic Plan suggested offering only the 12-year option, but it is recommended to offer multiple programs to provide flexibility and to recognize that the production of housing at all affordability levels helps ease pricing pressures across the entire market.

Land, existing site improvements, and non-residential improvements are not exempt and are subject to normal property taxes. At the local government's discretion, the exemption's basis may be limited to the value of affordable units or other criteria. The local government has latitude in many aspects. It can require certain public benefits, change what types of development apply, and can map specific areas where the exemption is available. Cities can also set lower maximum rent prices than the statute allows and other lease stipulations, like requiring the participating units to be pet-friendly.

In the HAP community survey, incentives like MFTE were the most popular policy and program concept polled. 64% of total respondents and 80% of renters are supportive of "incentives for private housing projects to reserve some units for low-income households". On the other hand, *mandatory requirements* for low-income housing were the least favorable but still received majority support.

⁵³ "Overview of 2021 Changes to the Multifamily Housing Tax Exemption Program." Washington State Department of Commerce. <https://deptofcommerce.box.com/shared/static/7k5p88yv41m8ot882gbtzafwzlofkf05.pdf>



MFTE programs require ongoing monitoring, especially for any buildings with affordable units, to ensure that rental rates and resident incomes are meeting the criteria. The Anacortes Housing Authority has indicated openness to assisting with screening and monitoring, as they already have systems in place to administer income-based housing.

Anacortes had an MFTE program previously. It started in the late 2000's at the time of the housing recession and was only available for the CBD zone (downtown). Eligible projects were required to be mixed-use developments with structured parking and a green building certification. No projects applied and the City withdrew the program in 2015.

The past few years have seen unprecedented increases in construction costs which have a major impact on development feasibility. Today there is renewed interest in the program among City officials and stakeholders. If tailored well to match the real estate economics in Anacortes, it would likely be attractive since no other cities in Skagit County have adopted an MFTE program.⁵⁴

City staff have preliminarily drafted an ordinance to restart the MFTE program. The following table contains recommendations on program characteristics.

Program Characteristic	Recommendation
Exemption duration offered	Offer the 8-, 12-, and 20-year exemptions to provide flexibility and meet a range of housing needs.
Residential target area	8-year program: CBD, C, R4, and R3A zones 12-year program: CBD, C, R4, and R3A zones 20-year program: CBD, C, and R4 zones
Qualifying improvements	The exemption applies to the share of the property value derived from housing-related improvements. The exemption does not apply to the value of non-residential floor area, land, and other non-qualifying improvements. In the case of rehabilitation of existing buildings, the exemption does not include the value of existing improvements.

⁵⁴ "19-08 Final Report: 2019 Tax Preference Performance Reviews." Washington Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, December 2019. https://leg.wa.gov/jlarc/taxReports/2019/MFTE/f_ii/default.html

Program Characteristic	Recommendation
Eligible properties	Development with a minimum of four dwelling units. The 8-year or 12-year program may be used for both new development and existing development. Existing development using the 8-year program are only eligible if they need to undergo rehabilitation as defined by state law.
Definitions	"Affordable housing" means residential housing that is rented by a person or household whose monthly housing costs, including utilities other than telephone, do not exceed 30 percent of the household's monthly income. "High Cost Area" means a county where the third quarter median house price for the previous year as reported by the Washington Center for Real Estate Research at Washington State University is equal to or greater than 130 percent of the statewide median house price published during the same time period. "Low-income household" means a single person, family, or unrelated persons living together whose adjusted income is at or below 80 percent of the median family income adjusted for family size, for the county where the project is located, as reported by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. For cities located in high-cost areas "low-income household" means a household that has an income at or below 100 percent of the median family income adjusted for family size, for the county where the project is located. "Moderate-income household" means a single person, family, or unrelated persons living together whose adjusted income is more than 80 percent but is at or below 115 percent of the median family income adjusted for family size, for the county where the project is located, as reported by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. For cities located in high-cost areas, "moderate income household" means a household that has an income that is more than 100 percent, but at or below 150 percent, of the median family income adjusted for family size, for the county where the project is located.
Affordable housing criteria	• In the 8-year exemption, there is no affordability requirement and at least 20% of units must have 650 square feet or less of floor area. • In the 12-year exemption, 20% of units must be rented or sold at prices affordable to low-income or moderate-income households. • In the 20-year exemption, at least 25% of units must be sold at prices affordable to low-income or moderate-income households. Clarify that rental rates must be capped based on the county's relevant low or moderate median family income (adjusted for family size), and rents do not need to be regularly based on changes in the income of individual tenants.
Design requirements	• Affordable units must be distributed throughout the development. In a multi-building or multi-phase development, the tax exemption does not apply until a building containing designated affordable units receives a certificate of occupancy. • In new developments with 20 units or more, no more than 80 percent of total units may be studios or one-bedroom units
Other characteristics	Follow the other standards of state law regarding definitions, application review and procedures, issuance of certificates, annual compliance review, and cancellations.

Figure 24. MFTE program recommendations

5.2 – Development Fee Adjustments

Action: Continue best practices in fee structures and reductions for low-income housing and consider retaining ADU impact fee exemption when lots are subdivided.

Anacortes, like many municipalities, levies impact and development fees on new construction to fund improvements in infrastructure for schools, parks, and other services. In Anacortes, General Facilities Charges (GFCs) fund sewer and water services and are based on the capacity and type of unit. Impact Fees fund transportation improvements, fire services, and parks, and are also based on the type and number of units being developed.

The table below shows the GFC rates in Anacortes for water and sewer connections. Charging less for multifamily per unit and for manufactured homes helps encourage housing affordability and reduce construction costs.

Figure 26 shows Anacortes's impact fees for parks, transportation, fire, and schools. This is compared with nearby municipalities for regional context and fee structures differ significantly by jurisdiction. Anacortes's parks and fire fees are higher than the comparison cities, but the transportation fees are about average. Anacortes has a more nuanced pricing of transportation impacts based on development size, bringing down the costs of multifamily development and helping to incentivize more density and housing production, compared with cities like Burlington and Oak Harbor which charge the same impact fees per unit regardless of building size.

Water		Sewer	
Meter Size	GFC	Housing Type	GFC
5/8 x 3/4 & 3/4	\$ 8,885	Single-family	\$ 9,942
1	\$ 22,213	Multifamily	\$ 7,953
1.5	\$ 44,426	Manufactured Home In Park	\$ 6,462
2	\$ 71,082		
3	\$ 142,163		
4	\$ 222,130		

Figure 25. Anacortes General Facility Charges (GFCs). Source: City of Anacortes

Housing Type	Anacortes	Mount Vernon	Burlington	Oak Harbor
Parks				
Single-Family	\$ 1,471.70	\$ 855.00	\$ 655.00	\$ 1,673.00
Multifamily	\$ 1,060.33	\$ 789.00	\$ 655.00	\$ 1,344.00
Transportation				
Single-Family	\$ 3,043.58	\$ 5,714.00	\$ 2,665.00	\$ 907.00
Multifamily			\$ 2,665.00	\$ 907.00
Duplex	\$ 1,887.02	\$ 5,714.00		
Cottage	\$ 1,887.02			
Apartment (low-rise 1-2 levels)	\$ 1,187.00			
Apartment (mid-rise 3-10 levels)	\$ 1,065.25			
Apartment (high-rise 10+ levels)	\$ 1,582.66			
Condo/Townhome (low-rise)	\$ 1,156.56			
Condo/Townhome (high-rise)	\$ 1,795.71			
Multifamily (50 units or less)		\$ 5,714.00		
Multifamily (51 units and more)		\$ 3,507.00		
Senior Housing (50 units or less)		\$ 1,471.00		
Senior Housing (51 units and more)		\$ 621.00		
Fire				
Single-Family	\$ 503.67	\$ 152.00	\$ 253.73	\$ 0
Multifamily	\$ 426.85	\$ 152.00	\$ 253.73	\$ 0
School				
Single-Family	\$ 0	\$ 9,421.00	\$ 0	\$ 0
Duplex	\$ 0	\$ 9,421.00	\$ 0	\$ 0
Multifamily	\$ 0	\$ 1,134.00	\$ 0	\$ 0

Figure 26. Anacortes Impact Fees (per unit) with Regional Comparisons, 2022. Source: City of Anacortes, City of Mount Vernon, City of Burlington, City of Oak Harbor, Leland Consulting Group

Waiving or reducing impact and development fees for certain types of housing, such as affordable housing projects and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), are valuable tools to enhance financial viability of these projects and encourage new housing development. Anacortes has already adopted best practices in waiving or reducing development fees as follows:

Impact Fees

Accessory Dwelling Units are normally exempt from all impact fees per AMC 3.93.030(D)(1)(b). However, under current regulations, if a lot with an ADU is subdivided then impact fees must be collected. This should be revised to retain the exemption no matter how the ADU is owned.

Per [AMC 3.93.060](#), low-income housing provided for residents earning less than 80% of the Skagit County Area Median Income (AMI) receives a partial discount of 80% on impact fees, as

outlined by [RCW 82.02.060](#). The property owner must record an affordable housing covenant on the property prohibiting any use other than low-income housing.

General Facilities Charges

Per [Chapter 13.44 AMC](#), sewer, stormwater, and water GFCs for low-income housing provided for residents earning 80 percent of the Skagit County AMI or less may be waived as outlined in [RCW 35.92.380](#). The property owner must record an affordable housing covenant on the property prohibiting any use other than low-income housing.

5.3 – Tax Increment Financing

Action: Explore the potential to use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) on the MJB site and the R1 zone at the southern city limits to streamline development, finance infrastructure improvements, and/or fund affordable housing on these sites.

In 2021, Washington State granted new powers of tax increment financing (TIF) to the state's cities, counties, and port districts.⁵⁵ This funding mechanism allows municipalities to establish a geographic district (called the increment area) that is expected to benefit the most from a proposed new infrastructure investment. Typically, bonds are issued at the outset and the additional tax revenue resulting from the increased land and property values are then captured to pay for the new infrastructure and pay off the bonds.

TIF is widely used in other states across the country but Washington's new program has some specific guidelines which differ from other states. In Washington, the state school levy and some other local taxes used to repay general obligation bonds are exempt. Additionally, TIF financing can only be used for specific authorized public improvements which are expected to encourage private development and increased assessed valuation which would not otherwise happen without the improvements. These improvements may be located inside or outside the increment area and include streets, water and sewer systems, sidewalks, streetlights, parking facilities, parks and recreational areas, broadband service, or brownfield mitigation. TIF can also be used to pay for long-term affordable housing, childcare service, providing maintenance and security for public improvements, and acquiring property for historic preservation. Unlike in other states, TIF funding in Washington can only be used for the specified projects or improvements set forth in the initial application, and project lists cannot be modified later. The TIF district must have a maximum sunset date of 25 years and not have an assessed valuation greater than \$20 million, and each city may not have more than two districts.⁵⁶

Explore the potential to use TIF on the MJB site and the R1 zone at the southern city limits. The MJB site in the east-central waterfront is currently vacant and is zoned MMU. Grading, road, and utility construction is currently underway, with future plans for mixed use development.⁵⁷ Establishing a TIF district could help streamline the development process and provide upfront funding for infrastructure and/or affordable housing on the site. The R1 zone near the southern city limits has limited capacity and large minimum lot sizes compared to other areas in the city. Establishing a TIF district in this area could help finance road, sidewalk, water, and sewer improvements necessary to increase development capacity in this zone if desired.

⁵⁵ "Tax Increment Financing (TIF)". Municipal Research Service Center. <https://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Economic-Development/Financing-Economic-Development/Tax-Increment-Financing.aspx>

⁵⁶ "Washington State's Expanded TIF Authority Creates Powerful Catalyst for Public-Private Partnerships." Denis Wright Tremaine. May 2022. <https://www.dwt.com/insights/2021/05/washington-state-tax-increment-financing-law>

⁵⁷ "Site work begins on downtown waterfront." Anacortes Today. February 2022. <https://www.anacortestoday.com/activities-journal/2022/02/14/site-work-begins-on-downtown-waterfront/>

5.4 – Funding for ADU Development

Action: Explore the possibility of partially financing or streamlining ADU development and permitting processes, particularly for lower-income homeowners.

Cities across the U.S. have adopted a variety of programs designed to subsidize the cost of ADU development for homeowners.⁵⁸ As discussed in Strategy 5.2, Anacortes has already waived General Facilities Charges (GFCs) for ADU construction, a best practice implemented by many cities to lower barriers to ADU development.

Numerous municipalities including Boston, Los Angeles, Montpelier, VT, and Santa Cruz County, CA have established programs which incorporate equity and loan assistance as well as technical assistance and simplified permitting processes.⁵⁹ Funding sources for these programs include Community Development Block Grants, cities, philanthropists, and partnerships with nonprofits such as Habitat for Humanity. Many of these programs are targeted at lower-income renters, requiring either that the ADU be made available to households earning 80% AMI or lower, or to households using Housing Choice (Section 8) Vouchers. Onerous income reporting requirements can be a disincentive.

In some cases, these programs have been targeted at lower-income homeowners as well, such as the Small Homes Northwest community ADU demonstration project implemented by Hacienda CDC in Portland and funded by the Oregon legislature, which helps income eligible homeowners develop ADUs in neighborhoods at risk of gentrification.

See related ADU regulatory actions in HAP Strategy 2.3.

⁵⁸ Chapple, Karen, Wegmann, Jake, Mashood Farzad, and Coleman, Rebecca. "Jumpstarting the Market for Accessory Dwelling Units." Urban land Institute. https://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/Jumpstarting_the_Market_-_ULI.pdf

⁵⁹ ADU Aid Programs Across the U.S." Villa. <https://villahomes.com/blog/adu-aid-programs/>

5.5 – Inclusionary Zoning and Fee-in-Lieu

Action: In the short-term, focus on the MFTE program and housing vouchers to increase affordable housing stock. Explore Inclusionary Zoning in conjunction with future upzoning and/or a significant uptick in multifamily housing construction.

Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) is a term used to describe requirements for developers to set aside a certain number or percentage of units in new multifamily developments to be affordable to low-income households earning below a specified income threshold (usually 80%, 60%, or 50% of the AMI). The intention of these policies, which are found in nearly 900 jurisdictions nationally, is to increase the supply of units for low-income households which otherwise would not be created and, in many cases, to provide for “workforce housing” for middle-income residents. Some programs offer other incentives to developers to offset the cost of providing below-market rate units, including density bonuses, zoning variances, or fee reductions. In all cases, IZ policies are tightly intertwined with market economics and should be reviewed annually to ensure that the restrictions and incentives are properly calibrated with current local market factors such as construction costs, land prices, rents, and interest rates.

The effectiveness of IZ has been studied by a number of researchers in recent years. Although a large number of affordable units have been created nationwide through these programs, the effects on property markets are not always positive. Several studies in California found that cities with IZ requirements have higher market-rate housing prices and did not appreciably increase housing production.⁶⁰ Another recent study found similar results in the Washington D.C. area as well as finding that optional bonus programs provided for developers under IZ programs were often ineffective and underutilized.⁶¹

In Anacortes, it is likely that an IZ policy would reduce or not significantly increase housing production due the lack of significant multifamily development occurring in the city. Instead, direct subsidies such as Housing Choice (known as “Section 8”) vouchers and bonus programs such as the Multifamily Tax Exemption program will likely be more effective at producing affordable housing in Anacortes than an IZ policy at this time.

If multifamily development activity significantly increased in the future, along with significant upzoning within the city, such a program may be more feasible to consider. In the current market, deeply affordable units at 60% AMI or below will be economically unfeasible to provide through an IZ program. If one were to be implemented in the future, it would need to be targeted to middle-income households earning 80-120% AMI.

In the HAP Community Survey, opinions on IZ were generally positive from renters, with almost three-quarters in favor of such a program, and less popular with homeowners with about half in favor. However, this program was still less popular as a whole than other incentive programs proposed in the survey, such as the Multifamily Tax Exemption (see Strategy 5.1).

⁶⁰ Ramakrishnana, Kriti, Mark Treskon and Solomon Greene. “Inclusionary Zoning: What Does the Research Tell Us about the Effectiveness of Local Action?” Urban Institute, January 2019.

⁶¹ Hamilton, Emily. “Inclusionary Zoning and Housing Market Outcomes.” Cityscape, Vol. 23, No. 1, Regulatory Reform and Affordable Housing (2021).

5.6 – Transit and Sidewalk Funding

Action: Evaluate and issue an expansion of the transportation benefit district to increase funding for local transit service and sidewalks.

As documented in the HAP Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report, transit service in Anacortes is poor. It has limited destinations, frequency, and span of service. This not only affects the ability of the general population to get around without a car. It also hampers the ability of people with mobility disabilities to meet daily needs and for homeless people and others in need of human services to access care in the far-flung cities of Mount Vernon and Burlington, according to stakeholder interviews.

As Anacortes continues to grow and address its human service needs, more transit service can provide a foundation for a more equitable transportation system and affordable housing. A recent multifamily project in Anacortes provided surface parking spaces for about \$30,000 per space, a high cost that is translated directly into rents so the project can remain profitable. More and better transit service at all times of the day and week could help residents downsize the number of cars they own and facilitate less off-street parking in new housing development, significantly reducing the costs of construction and the cost of living.

Skagit Transit provides bus public transit service in Anacortes. Anacortes does not have direct control over transit service but it can contribute funding to improve service for its local constituents. The primary mechanism for cities to do so is a Transportation Benefit District (TBD), authorized under [RCW 36.73](#). TBD's may be used for everything from roads and transit service to sidewalks and transportation demand management.

Anacortes has had a TBD in place since 2014. It was originally funded by a \$20 vehicle license fee and was replaced with a voter-approved 0.2% sales tax in 2018. At the time, the ballot statement estimated revenues of approximately \$900,000 per year with the 0.2% sales tax. Effective July 2022, the state now allows the maximum sales tax rate to be 0.3% (per RCW 36.73.065.3.e). Funding sources for TBD's are as follows:⁶²

Funding Source	Description
Vehicle License Fee	Up to \$20-50 annually without voter approval (with conditions on phasing in higher fees). Above \$50 and up to \$100 with voter approval.
Sales Tax	Up to 0.3% with voter approval. May be in effect up to 10 years
Impact Fees	Anacortes already has impact fees in place, separate from a TBD.
General Obligation Bonds	Rarely used
Vehicle Tolls	Rarely used
Excess Property Taxes	Rarely used

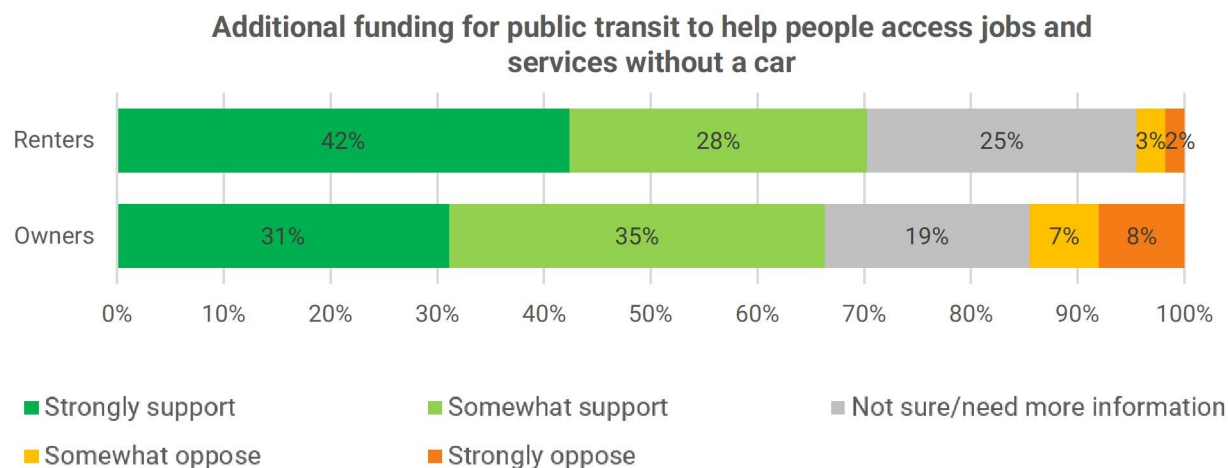
It is the recommendation of this HAP to increase the revenue of the Anacortes Transportation Benefit District. Most of the additional funding would bolster Skagit Transit service through an interlocal agreement. Improved transit should be focused on connecting Anacortes's multifamily areas to commercial services and to job centers elsewhere inside and outside the

⁶² "Transportation Benefit Districts." Municipal Research Service Center. <https://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Finance/Special-Topics/Transportation-Benefit-Districts.aspx>

county (such as single-seat service to Mount Vernon, Burlington, and Oak Harbor). Funding could also be used for priority sidewalk additions, especially in areas zoned R3, R3A, R4, and C to support increased housing development in these areas. Sidewalks are vital infrastructure for seniors and people with disabilities.

Revenue targets must first be identified for transit and sidewalks. This should be informed by a collaboration between the City Council, Skagit Transit, the Planning, Community & Economic Development Department, the Public Works Department, and the community at large. Planned projects and transit level of service should be adopted in a formal plan or statement of intent.

The funding sources could include increasing the sales tax, re-imposing a vehicle license fee, or a combination. There is likely local approval for any approach. The 2018 sales tax update to the TBD was approved by 59% of Anacortes voters.⁶³ Further, the HAP Public Engagement Report found a total of 66% of the 648 respondents supported “additional funding for public transit to help people access jobs and services without a car.” Statewide in recent years, voters have approved the vast majority of all proposed TBD sales taxes.



In addition, Skagit Transit imposes a 0.4% sales tax of its own. State law ([RCW 82.14.045](#)) allows transit agencies to have a sales tax up to 0.9%. As a supplement to its local TBD, Anacortes could work with its fellow cities and the county to request a ballot measure to increase the agency’s revenues and countywide transit service.

⁶³ “Ballot Measure Details.” Municipal Research Service Center. <https://mrsc.org/Ballot-Details.aspx?bid=1528>

5.7 – State Advocacy

Action: Advocate for additional state investment in the Housing Trust Fund, condominium law reform, and Growth Management Act updates.

Surveying done for this HAP found strong community support for “City advocacy for more county, state, or federal funding for affordable housing projects.” Primarily, this should involve lobbying the Legislature for more funds in the state’s Housing Trust Fund, which provides capital funding.⁶⁴ The trust has helped build or preserve more than 50,000 affordable housing units statewide since 1986. The Legislature appropriates funding to the trust every biennium. More money in the trust would help smaller communities like Anacortes (and the affordable housing providers who work in Anacortes) have a greater chance of receiving funding.

Anacortes could also update its legislative agenda with condominium legislation reform. Condos are a highly in-demand type of ownership housing, especially for first-time homebuyers and seniors seeking to downgrade, but they are rarely built in Washington State due to the liabilities placed on developers under state law.^{65, 66} The main barriers are a requirement for a 10-year warranty against construction defects and additional building code and inspection requirements that do not apply to rental apartments.

The City may comment on reform to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), which can add significant delay and complications to approval of residential development. Advocacy might involve exempting all residential development from SEPA review if the development intensity is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

In addition, the City may comment on updates to state law that affect land use, housing, zoning, and transportation. As noted in Section 1.4, zoning preemptions and other changes to the Growth Management Act are likely to be proposed and debated by the Legislature in the coming years. The City should provide input on proposals that affect the implementation of the Housing Action Plan, either independently or through its involvement in statewide organizations like the Association of Washington Cities.

Continued coordination and involvement with regional partners (such as Skagit County) and the federal government is also recommended to promote and fund affordable housing.

⁶⁴ “Housing Trust Fund.” Washington State Department of Commerce. <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/housing/housing-trust-fund/>

⁶⁵ “Washington state’s condo law changes could ease restrictions.” Spokane Journal of Business, November 2021. <https://www.spokanejournal.com/special-report/washington-states-condo-law-changes-could-ease-restrictions/>

⁶⁶ “As Gen X and Boomers Age, They Confront Living Alone.” The New York Times. November 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/27/us/living-alone-aging.html>

6 – Implementation

The planning matrix below organizes the actions of this Housing Action Plan. The City Council and Mayor will be involved in most or all action implementation through ordinances, resolutions, budgeting, and partnerships with other agencies. This matrix should be used as a framework for regular progress reports on implementation and could be a live document on the City website.

#	Description	Priority	Lead Department	Time	Method
Regulatory Strategies					
2.1	Allow more housing types in more zones	High	Planning Services	0-6 months	Development regulations ordinances
2.2	Map the R3A zone and update its standards	High	Planning Services	0-6 months	Development regulations ordinances
2.3	Streamline ADU regulations	High	Planning Services	0-6 months	Development regulations ordinances
2.4	Adjust form and intensity standards	High	Planning Services	0-6 months	Development regulations ordinances
2.5	Adjust definitions and design standards	High	Planning Services	0-6 months	Development regulations ordinances
2.6	Adjust parking standards	High	Planning Services	0-6 months	Development regulations ordinances
2.7	Building code amendments	Medium	Planning Services (with Building Services and Fire)	6-12 months	Building code ordinance
Programmatic Strategies					
3.1	Short-term rental regulations	Medium	Planning Services	0-6 months	Code update ordinance with future amendments as needed
3.2	Anti-displacement strategies	Medium	City Council	Ongoing	Tenant Protection Ordinance and future amendments as needed Other strategies: Further study, City budget, and future ordinances
3.3	Homelessness strategies	High	City Council	Ongoing	Intermediate actions Other actions: Further study and City budget
Citywide Planning Strategies					
4.1	Hire a housing coordinator	High	City Council	0-6 months	City budget
4.2	Housing Element updates	Medium	Planning Services	12-24 months	Comprehensive Plan annual amendment and major periodic update

#	Description	Priority	Lead Department	Time	Method
4.3	Land Use Element updates	Medium	Planning Services	12-24 months	Comprehensive Plan annual amendment and major periodic update
4.4	Public land for affordable housing	Medium	City Council (with Planning Services)	Ongoing	Partnerships, City budget, policy in resolution or Comprehensive Plan, and future ordinances
Funding Strategies					
5.1	Multifamily tax exemption program	High	Planning Services (with City Treasurer and City Council)	0-6 months	MFTE Ordinance
5.2	Development fee adjustments	Low	Planning Services	0-6 months	Fee schedule update
5.3	Tax increment financing	Low	Planning Services (with City Treasurer)	6-12 months	Further study and future ordinance
5.4	Funding for ADU development	Medium	Planning Services (with City Treasurer)	6-12 months	City budget
5.5	Inclusionary zoning and fee-in-lieu	Low	Planning Services	Long term	Monitor multifamily housing production for need and feasibility
5.6	Transit and sidewalk funding	Medium	Planning Services (with Public Works and City Treasurer)	6-12 months	Transportation planning, ballot measure, interlocal agreement with Skagit Transit
5.7	State advocacy	Low	City Council	Ongoing	Legislative agenda and engagement with American Planning Association WA and Association of Washington Cities

6.1 – High Priority Implementation

Given the limited resources of government, it is important to set priorities. The following items are high priority for implementation within the next 12 months.

Development Regulations Ordinances

In 2023, implement the Title 19 code amendments specified in Strategy 2. This will involve a variety of changes intended to increase housing options and decrease construction costs, consistent with the support of housing stakeholders and the HAP community survey results. This ordinance could also include some minor short-term rental regulations (Strategy 3.1).

The 2023 updates could fall into two categories:

1) Quick updates by April 1, 2023 (leveraging a legal safe harbor under [RCW 36.70A.700](#)) focused on the following Strategies:

- 2.1.2 – Residential Low Density 2 (R2) Zone
- 2.1.4 – Residential Medium Density 3 (R3) Zone
- 2.1.6 – Adult Family Homes
- 2.1.7 – Prohibit New Large-Lot Single-Family Uses in Medium and High Density Zones
- 2.1.8 – Duplex Cottages
- 2.3 – ADU Regulations
- 2.4.5 – Setbacks
- 2.4.6 – Height Bonus Program
- 2.4.7 – Elevator Penthouse
- 2.5 – Adjust Definitions and Design Standards
- 2.6 – Adjust Parking Standards

2) Updates for further consideration by June 2023, focused on the following Strategies where options were presented or where additional community engagement and analysis is needed:

- 2.1.1 – Residential Low Density 1 (R1) Zone
- 2.1.3 – Residential Low Density 2A (R2A) Zone
- 2.1.5 – Group Living
- 2.1.9 – Single Room Occupancy Housing
- 2.1.10 – Supportive Housing
- 2.1.11 – Tiny Homes
- 2.2 – Implement the R3A Zone
- 2.4.1 – Minimum Lot Sizes
- 2.4.2 – Maximum Lot Coverage
- 2.4.3 – Maximum Size of Single-Family Homes
- 2.4.4 – Density
- 2.4.8 – Religiously-Owned Land Density Bonus

MFTE Ordinance

Implement the recommendations of Strategy 5.1 and re-adopt a multifamily property tax exemption ordinance in targeted areas in exchange for certain conditions. Because it is recommended to make MFTE participation eligible for a building bonus in some zones, those two ordinances should be adopted as close together as possible.

Housing Coordinator

Create and recruit a new housing coordinator staff position as soon as possible. Purpose, qualifications, and responsibilities are listed in Strategy 4.1.

Tenant Protection Ordinance

The priority tenant protections are requiring longer rent increase notice time, move-in fee caps, and economic/physical relocation assistance. A number of other tenant protection options could be bundled into a single ordinance and amended or expanded over time as needed. See considerations in Strategy 3.2.1 and example ordinances from Burien and Kenmore.

6.2 – Market Anacortes’s Housing Incentives

Anacortes has already adopted measures to encourage a great supply, diversity, and affordability of housing, and is poised to do more in the implementation of this Housing Action Plan. The next step is to advertise Anacortes’s housing opportunities and incentives to developers and property owners. Marketing work is ideally led by a new Housing Coordinator (see Strategy 4.1) or could be managed by an outside marketing firm.

A website and storymap are good ways to collect all of the relevant information, such as:

- Newly streamlined zoning standards, relaxed ADU standards, bonus heights programs, and other housing-friendly regulations
- The multifamily tax exemption program (if implemented)
- Monitoring data on number of permitted and constructed units and median housing and rental prices (to help the public keep track of the housing challenge and real estate market trends)
- Case studies showing drawings, photos, and financial data for recent and high-quality development in Anacortes and nearby cities, especially multifamily housing and middle housing like cottages and townhomes
- Location of vacant or underutilized land that is available for development
- Recent and ongoing infrastructure investments, such as the Commercial Avenue redesign and municipal internet service
- This HAP and its related housing reports should be summarized and linked.

Printed brochures with similar information could be mailed to all property owners.

Active networking and connections with private and non-profit developers, co-ops, land trusts, and other housing creators should also be made. This will involve sharing information about the ease of working with Anacortes’s regulations and housing programs. This would start by providing basic education to developers already working in Anacortes and bringing them up to speed on recent changes. Further connections to regional developers not yet working in Anacortes would help bring new business and potentially greater housing production.

All marketing should communicate the City’s desires and intentions for new and innovative affordable housing, define the benefits and development potential within the community, and tell the story of Anacortes. Marketing should promote the qualities of Anacortes, the friendly regulatory environment, and financial incentives.

6.3 – Other Implementation Considerations

Funding Strategies

The values of a City are best demonstrated by its budget. Direct housing investment and support from the City can be one of the most effective ways to support affordable housing and prevent resident displacement. Anacortes’s public tax dollars are limited, but the scale and urgency of the housing challenge require more resources to be dedicated to housing initiatives. Funding could come from re-prioritization of existing revenues, reframing of existing categories (e.g. affordable and homeless transitional housing becomes a component of public safety), or

an increase in revenues and grant awards. Additional construction and development over time also generally increases Anacortes's tax base, and growth in revenues should be directed towards housing as much as possible.

Specific housing actions relying on the City budget include:

- Strategic acquisition of existing multifamily housing (3.2.2)
- Rental and foreclosure assistance (3.2.2)
- Housing rehabilitation (3.2.2)
- Childcare and early education subsidies (3.2.2)
- Creating legal and organized lots for homeless people to congregate and receive services (3.3.3)
- Contribute funding toward permanent supportive housing (3.3.4)
- Hiring a housing coordinator staff position (4.1)
- Acquire and/or sell/lease public land for affordable housing (4.4 and 4.4.7)
- Funding for ADU development, particularly for low-income homeowners (5.4)
- Funding for transit and sidewalk expansions (5.6)

Comprehensive Plan Updates

Major regulatory changes, such as removing parking minimums and expanding the intentions for low-density residential zones and industrial zones, need to have policy support at the Comprehensive Plan level. Typically, these types of changes would wait for the next major periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan which is due in June 2025. Due to the urgency of Anacortes's housing challenges, the City can also consider the annual amendment process to implement Strategy 4.2 and 4.3.

Public Land

The Sharpe's Corner property is the most immediate and promising opportunity to develop affordable housing at scale on public land. Market the property and identify a private or non-profit developer that is interested in a partnership. Identify opportunities to expand the site by acquiring adjacent private land. Consider rezones, environmental assessments, and other pre-development activities to position this site for sale or for lease.

See Strategy 4.4.2 for other public properties that may be viable for affordable housing development and co-location, including some owned by Skagit County and the Port of Anacortes.

6.4 – Monitoring

The only way to know if housing actions are successful is to measure and report on outcomes. By developing a monitoring program, Anacortes can track progress toward achieving housing goals and identify where more work or changes are needed. Interviews with housing developers one year after HAP adoption (or at other regular intervals) can also be helpful to get feedback on what HAP actions are working well and where there may still be barriers.

Monitoring will be a key role of the new Housing Coordinator staff position. Even so, integrating monitoring into existing work and activities could help preserve limited staff time. Monitoring the HAP implementation could be merged into:

- PCED's annual or monthly reports to the City Council
- Monitoring of population growth and development permits
- Comprehensive plan monitoring
- Buildable lands reports

Potential performance metrics based on the HAP Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report are listed below.

HAP Objective	Performance Metric	Target
Support the local economy and workforce with more rental homes.	Number of duplex, triplex, multifamily, and other rental units permitted	
	Vacancy rate	Rental unit vacancy rates are greater than regional rates
Create a greater variety of homeownership opportunities.	Number of small-lot single-family, cottage housing, townhouse, condominium, and other ownership units permitted	
Slow down and stabilize the rise in housing prices.	Home price increases	Annual median home price increases are lower than regional, state, or national increases
	Rental price increases	Annual median rental price increases are lower than regional, state, or national increases
Refine regulatory standards to reduce barriers to housing development.	Housing production	Net increase of 100-150 housing units per year
	Housing diversity	50% or less of new housing units are detached single-family dwellings
	Number of ADUs permitted	
	Number of senior, assisted living, and nursing home units permitted	
	Number of permanent support housing and transitional housing units permitted	
Adopt new financial tools to support and promote development and maintenance of housing.	Affordable housing for cost-burdened low-income households (80% AMI and below)	Construction or preservation of 20-50 affordable housing units per year
	MFTE program participation	One development per year

Libby Grage

From: CityClerk <cityclerk@cityofanacortes.org>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2024 8:41 PM
To: pced
Subject: FW: Comment for planning commission meeting on Tuesday March 26

Hello,

Please see below written comment from Bill Turner.

Best,

Greg Francioch
Legal Assistant
Assistant to the City Clerk
City of Anacortes
P.O. Box 547
Anacortes, WA 98221
360-299-1960

Visit the City of Anacortes public records document center today!

NOTE: Public documents and records are available to the public as provided under the Washington State Public Records Act (RCW 42.56). This e-mail may be considered subject to the Public Records Act and may be disclosed to a third-party requestor.

-----Original Message-----

From: William Turner <bill.h.turner@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2024 4:26 PM
To: CityClerk <cityclerk@cityofanacortes.org>
Cc: Doyle John <jdoyle9991@yahoo.com>; turner sally <sallycturner@gmail.com>
Subject: Comment for planning commission meeting on Tuesday March 26

***** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. *****

Dear Planning Commission,

I am pleased that you are assessing public participation plan for our work on the 2025 Comp Plan on Tuesday. This will aid the public and the City in creating a comp plan that works for Anacortes.

I am still disappointed by the City Council ignoring your recent request for more public participation for new rules for ADUs and multi housing projects. The new state mandates for affordable housing can be complex and are essential for our future. But if we don't reach out for public participation, how will our citizens know how they can promote affordable housing? Developers will know but the public may not.

The 2016 Comp plan has a number of provisions for enhancing our efforts for affordable housing, but not one thing has been done by the City to do their part, except a number of fruitless committees meetings.

I was a member of Skagit Habitat for Humanity, and recent President for 2 years, and started lobbying to City to begin the necessary work that the State mandated and our Comp plan promotes, starting in 2018. Nothing yet!

Housing is a serious issue. Let's get going and find housing for workers, the people who take care of us.

WE NEED OUR WORKERS HERE!

Sincerely Bill Turner

2012 I Ave, Anacortes

Sent from my iPad

Libby Grage

From: Chris MacKenzie <chrismacknz@outlook.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 4, 2024 2:29 PM
To: Comp Plan
Subject: draft ppp

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Hi Libby,

I learned about your Public Participation Plan for the 2025 Comp Plan update in the Legals column of yesterday's Anacortes American. I'm not sure how many other folks saw it, few I'd guess. How else do you currently reach out to the public?

I hope you'll consider using social media. PCED actually has a FaceBook page. It has 545 followers and last posted something on July 12, 2022. Posting there will give to those of us who care the opportunity to share with other community groups. The Anacortes Community group, for example has 19,000 followers, The Port of Anacortes has 3,600 followers, Downtown Anacortes has 1,400 and there are many other local pages with significant followings. Subsequent conversations on NextDoor for example could broaden your reach your reach even further. I hope you'll consider allocating some funding to your social media presence!

The Comprehensive Plan is the fundamental base for the work of the Downtown Anacortes Alliance. Extensive outreach deep into the community is crucial to the outcome we all hope to achieve. We're consistently and increasingly engaged with residents in many ways. How can we help?

Chris MacKenzie
1302 7th Street, Anacortes, WA 98221
chrismacknz@outlook.com
206-295-7336

Libby Grage

From: John Coleman
Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2024 6:04 PM
To: Crystle Stidham
Cc: Libby Grage
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Invitation to Participate in the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan Update

Thanks for your comments Crystle,
We will include them in the record and see about getting Skagit Transit and the disabled population added to the final draft as well as review the rest of your comments. Thanks again!



John Coleman, AICP
Director of Planning, Community and
Economic Development
City of Anacortes
360-293-1901

From: Crystle Stidham <cstidham@skagittransit.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 7:48 PM
To: John Coleman <johnc@cityofanacortes.org>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Invitation to Participate in the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan Update

***** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. *****

Good evening, John,

Thank you so much for sending this to me. The Public Participation Plan looks a lot like ours! I really appreciate the opportunity to participate in the development of the Comprehensive Plan as a voice for those who use (or could use) public transportation. I noticed that Skagit Transit is not listed as a “partner” in the development of the plan. As I mentioned in my presentation yesterday, I feel like public transportation is a crucial part of the growth in the County (to include the City of Anacortes), and I wish that we would have been listed as one of the stakeholders, especially since the plan targets underrepresented populations such as youth, people of color, and low-income individuals. I extracted this list of “underrepresented populations” from bullet #3 under the header Public Participation Goals. I know this is not an all-inclusive list, but I think the consultant should have added the disabled population as well.

Also, I noticed that the Anacortes Housing Authority was listed as a partner. Should the Skagit County Housing Authority be listed as well? What about North Star?

I signed up for email notifications for updates on the project and plan to attend the public hearing on April 24th. I will be flying back from a conference that day so my attendance may be virtual, but I will be there.

Thanks again for sending this information to me. I’m looking forward to the collaboration.

Respectfully,

Crystle

From: John Coleman <johnnc@cityofanacortes.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 3:50 PM
To: Crystle Stidham <cstidham@skagittransit.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Invitation to Participate in the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan Update

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Crystle,

The City of Anacortes is beginning the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan to make sure we are planning to accommodate the next 20 years of growth. Because your organization is an important part of the community, we encourage your participation in the update process! The Planning Department has created a webpage dedicated to the 2025-2045 Comp Plan update: <https://www.anacorteswa.gov/1650/2025-Comprehensive-Plan-Update>.

On that page, you will find our draft Public Participation Plan, which identifies how the City will provide for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations implementing the plan, as required by the Growth Management Act. In other words, it describes how we plan to seek engagement from as many members of the public as possible. While we plan to use multiple methods of outreach, much of the outreach will be held at the Planning Commission meetings.

The Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing on the proposed Public Participation Plan at its April 24 meeting (6PM in the city Council Chambers), here is a link to the meeting documents page, just look for April 24: <https://www.anacorteswa.gov/700/Meeting-Documents-and-Video>. More materials will be available as we get closer to that date.

In the coming months we will be reviewing our projected population and employment growth, determining how much land is available in the city limits, then working on way to make sure we have the necessary land, infrastructure and regulations to accommodate the growth in a way that matches the community's values. Those values are largely written as goals in the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission will be working on updates to the various elements of the update continuously throughout the process. The City is also working to create a brand-new Climate Element.

You can sign up for email notifications about the update, including project news, notices of public meetings and other opportunities for involvement and document availability here: <https://www.cityofanacortes.org/list.aspx?ListID=343> . We hope you will be a part of the process of envisioning the future of Anacortes!



John Coleman, AICP
Director of Planning, Community and
Economic Development
City of Anacortes
360-293-1901

WARNING EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be vigilant in making sure this email is legitimate.

Libby Grage

From: CityClerk
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 4:42 PM
To: City Council
Cc: John Coleman; Libby Grage; Steve Hoglund; Darcy Swetnam
Subject: FW: Land Capacity Analysis

Mayor and Councilmembers,

Please find below the public comment submitted by Ian Munce regarding item 7.c. Land Capacity Analysis (Discussion) on the [June 10th agenda](#).

Best regards,

Greg Francioch
Legal Assistant
Assistant to the City Clerk
City of Anacortes
P.O. Box 547
Anacortes, WA 98221
360-299-1960

[Visit the City of Anacortes public records document center today!](#)

*NOTE: Public documents and records are available to the public as provided under the Washington State Public Records Act (RCW 42.56).
This e-mail may be considered subject to the Public Records Act and may be disclosed to a third-party requestor.*

-----Original Message-----

From: Ian Munce <ianmunce@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 4:31 PM
To: CityClerk <cityclerk@cityofanacortes.org>
Subject: Land Capacity Analysis

***** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. *****

Good day,

I respectfully submit that a new land capacity analysis needs to be conducted citywide with new calculations based on the new Critical Area Ordinance. In my R1 neighborhood this will result in many fewer potential development sites.

I would also take this opportunity to point out that the City's Fidalgo North Basin Stormwater Plan incorrectly identifies the basin as 500 acres in size when in fact it is 2400 acres in size. This plan describes the basin as 'substantially developed' when this description does not fit the 300 acre R1 zone where most of the acreage is wetlands or wetland buffers. I apologize if these corrections have already been made.

Ian Munce

Libby Grage

From: Martine Felts <mcfelts1@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 6, 2024 1:18 PM
To: Comp Plan
Subject: Meeting

***** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. *****

I thought last nite's meeting went well. Off to a good start. I do appreciate that you are informing the public about issues along the way.

One of the things I am curious about is how you came about that Anacortes does have the land space for the 3,000 people and jobs that are suppose to come about by 2045???

Also I would just like to say we bought a condo here in 2010. Retired in 2015 and moved her because it is a small town. I would hate to see that come to an end. With more buildings and less trees comes more pollution from cars. Would need more grocery stores and the list is non ending.

Thank you,
Martine Felts

Libby Grage

From: Alan Johnson <deannaalan@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2024 10:59 AM
To: Comp Plan
Subject: Temporary Housing Units - Medical Situations

**** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. ****

This is a request that the City of Anacortes codify RCW 19.35.040 (D),(E) & (F), as part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan.

Although RCW's allow this type of Temporary Housing, I do not believe the City has an administrative framework to help those citizens in need of Temporary housing for their caregivers.

I feel the City should develop such a framework for those citizens that need this type of Temporary Housing for their caregivers.

The applicable RCW provides a wonderful blueprint. The one change that would improve the usage of this rule would be eliminating the 20 foot minimum of E (4).

If the City already recognizes this rule and/or has an administrative framework developed, I apologize. My concern is some elderly friends have contacted the City and been told, there is no such program.

I leave the decision to the City, whether a Temporary Housing segment should be incorporated in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan or whether we just need to clarify, improve, promote and use the existing rule.

Thanks,

Alan Johnson
1201 4th St.
Anacortes

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Libby Grage

From: Chris MacKenzie <chrismacknz@outlook.com>
Sent: Monday, July 1, 2024 11:28 AM
To: Comp Plan
Subject: Climate Change adaptation in the plan

**** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. ****

[Made By All: How to Engage Communities in Climate Adaptation | Events — Project for Public Spaces \(pps.org\)](#)-One hour seminar

*"While many communities may support the idea of climate impact mitigation efforts, adaptation can radically impact people's homes, neighborhoods, and public places. **Due to the technical nature of these projects, local decision-makers sometimes also sidestep community input and defer to 'experts who know best'.** All of these can lead to contentious public debates and heightened distrust of decision-makers, given the long history of environmental injustice in the US."*

Please help us avoid deferring to the consultants as we navigate this climate part of the planning process. How can the public best learn and influence our plan in this area?

Chris MacKenzie
1302 7th Street
206-295-7336
chrismacknz@outlook.com



P.O. Box 223
Anacortes, WA 98221
July 5, 2024



TO: City of Anacortes Planning, Community and Economic Development Department
FROM: Evergreen Islands
SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update 2025

These comments are submitted on behalf of Evergreen Islands, a local nonprofit which serves to protect and defend the unique ecosystems of the saltwater islands and environs in Skagit County. For over 4 decades, Evergreen Islands has worked to ensure that the natural and built environment remains healthy for future generations.

The City of Anacortes' Comprehensive Plan Update presents an opportunity to add goals and policies to reduce greenhouse gas and prepare for and adapt to hazards associated with a changing climate. Toward this goal and more, Evergreen Islands submits the following comments.

The City of Anacortes 2016 Comprehensive Plan as amended contains encouraging, thoughtful goals to protect the environment and provide for needs of current and future residents - unfortunately **some of the existing goals and policies have not been implemented through City code, monitoring or enforcement.** For example:

Multimodal transportation, bike, and pedestrian and complete streets.

Please answer the following questions in order to assess the effectiveness of current Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies:

How many pedestrian, bicycle, multi-modal transportation and complete street improvements have been made since 2016 that actually promote safe, multimodal transportation?

Are we meeting the intentions of these goals and policies and if not, why not?

Many of the policies in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan will reduce greenhouse gas **if they are implemented.** In most cases, we do not need a bigger, better plan but rather we need to follow through on the vision that was outlined in 2016.

Protect trees, complete inventory and mapping and preserve heritage trees.
Preserve tree cover. (blue indicates recommended changes)

Policy EC-7.3. Consider ~~Development~~ **Development** of a permitting process to consider requests for removal of trees.

The language in City of Anacortes municipal code (AMC 16.50.010) is excellent – however we don't see its implementation. Examples of existing AMC include:



- A. Promote the preservation and growth of healthy, vigorous trees in the city of Anacortes. The known benefits associated with trees and tree cover include, but are not limited to: the filtration of groundwater; the reduction of surface water runoff; flood control; the provision of fish and wildlife habitat; the maintenance of water quality; the cleansing of the air; the abatement of noise; and the conservation of energy.
- B. Recognize that healthy older trees provide substantially more canopy and benefits than newly planted trees.

The municipal code calls for a “tree commission” and a “tree conservation permit”. Please follow through with these goals to help realize benefits for the climate, the public, and environmental health.

Without implementation and enforcement, protecting trees is only an empty wish. Trees are vital in reducing greenhouse gases as they sequester carbon and convert carbon dioxide into oxygen during photosynthesis. The shade and structure of trees and tree canopies keep areas cooler in the summer and shelter wildlife in the winter.

(International Society of Arboriculture, www.isa-arbor.com)

Protect Water quality and reduce harmful algal blooms.

Goal EC- 4 Water Quality, includes goals to monitor and report water quality and prevent harmful algal blooms.

Volunteers work in partnership with the City to monitor water quality in some of the ACFL lakes but more needs to be done to identify the source(s) contributing to algal blooms and prevent harmful algal blooms in the future. Improved public notification of harmful algal blooms will help protect the public and pets accessing local lakes.

Implementing Stormwater Management Plans and aligning with Comp Plan. The Fidalgo North Stormwater Management Action Plan (SMAP March 2023) was prepared to meet the requirements of the Municipal Stormwater Permit - section S5.C.1.d.iii, states: ... (d) *If applicable, identification of changes needed to local long-range plans, to address SMAP priorities.*

The purpose of the Fidalgo North Stormwater Management Action Plan (SMAP) is to provide a framework for water quality improvement in the Fidalgo North stormwater catchment area. One of the recommendations in the SMAP includes improvements along Happy Valley Stream, in which Evergreen Islands is looking forward to partnering with the City. The following is an excerpt from the Fidalgo North SMAP:

EVERGREEN ISLANDS

Happy Valley stormwater park	3800 block of Commercial Avenue	Restoration of Happy Valley Stream and construction of a stormwater park with water quality treatment prior to discharge.
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Please consider the following edits and additions to meet the Anacortes Municipal Stormwater Permit as stipulated in section S5.C.1.d.iii:

Goal EC-4. Water quality. Protect and enhance water quality. (blue indicates suggested edits and additions)

Policy EC-4.1. Work with neighboring jurisdictions, citizens, and other partners to maintain and restore natural hydrological functions on a drainage basin level through projects that ~~providing education on and~~ incorporate requirements that encourage Low Impact Development Techniques to facilitate mimicking the natural site drainage, such as daylighting creeks and streams.

Policy EC-4.2. Promote the sustainable use of water resources, including conservation efforts.

Policy EC-4.3. Reduce pollution of surface and groundwater resources through regulations, programs, projects and public education.

Policy EC-4.4. Conduct regular inspections and maintenance of City sewer and stormwater infrastructure according to public works policies to minimize negative impacts to surface and groundwater.

Policy EC-4.5. Require new and redevelopment to utilize stormwater best management practices, such as Low Impact Development and other natural drainage techniques.

Policy EC-4.10. Build stormwater parks as recommended in the Stormwater Management Program Plan.

Consider the environmental impacts of recreation projects before pursuing plans and permits.

There has been a practice of proposing recreation developments in the ACFL and along shorelines that is not environmentally sensitive. For example: a multi-modal trail through Ship Harbor Interpretive Preserve, a bike park on the closed A Ave landfill in the ACFL and a kayak launch on Little Cranberry Lake. This history of project concepts do not contribute to the City's goal to "serve as a leader in environmental stewardship" (**Goal EC-1**). The City can improve by notifying the public and preparing environmental analyses prior to pursuing plans and permits. Evergreen Islands recognizes some improvement in this area.

There are policies in the current Comprehensive Plan that are inconsistent with goals.

For example, **Policy LU-8:** "Maintain and Extend Guemes Channel Trail" is inconsistent with the **Environmental Conservation Goals (EC goals)** unless the project is fully analyzed, carefully sited, and designed and constructed in a



way that is environmentally sensitive, maintaining the ecological values along the shoreline, including fish and wildlife habitat. The City's outyear budget includes \$3,500,000 in the 2027 Transportation budget for Guemes Channel Trail (GCT) Phases II, III and VI - yet the Environmental Impact Statement for the GCT budgeted for 2024 has not been started.

This Comprehensive Plan Update presents opportunities to meet current and future needs, reduce uses that contribute to greenhouse gas and avoid, prepare for and reduce the harm from climate impacts.

We recommend these necessary additions:

The future of March Point. The two refineries at March Point face an uncertain future. Exposure to volatile oil and gas markets, changes in ownership of both facilities, and the state-level push towards cleaner fuels may create more pressure and interest from these companies to change their products and/or expand their production.

Other Washington jurisdictions including Whatcom County, King County, Tacoma, and Vancouver all enacted landmark legislation that prohibits new fossil fuel industries and establishes protective conditions for permitting existing refineries and terminals with bolstered environmental review and public processes. Still, the March Point zone has no such restrictions. As other locations enact limitations, March Point becomes more attractive for siting undesirable, environmentally harmful uses.

The following additions (in blue) are recommended:

Policy LU-9.7. New or additional industrial and manufacturing development should comply with the following criteria:

- A. Sewer, water, and communications services should be available or planned for the industrial site area.
- B. New sites designated for industrial use should have convenient access to existing or planned highways or major arterials.
- C. Consistent with the Environment and Conservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
- [D. Consistent with the Fidalgo Bay-wide Plan](#)
- [E. Consistent with the Climate Element of the Comprehensive Plan and the Climate Action Plan.](#)
- [F. Site facilities responsibly with conditions to protect wildlife habitats and watershed health.](#)
- [G. Facilities shall utilize best available technology and procedures to protect public health & safety from industrial hazards, and to limit and mitigate potential impacts to/on:](#)
 - [Vessel Traffic](#)
 - [Fisheries, shoreline habitat, critical areas](#)
 - [Toxic Air Pollution](#)



- [Lifecycle Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#)
- [Water Consumption & Contamination](#)
- [Land Disturbance](#)
- [Public Safety, Risk & Hazard \(fires, spills etc\)](#)
- [Nuisances, Noise, Traffic](#)

The policy sections below already exist in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan – and we commend these.

Policy ED-4.7. Anticipate and plan for potential future desired uses at the March Point refineries as product types, manufacturing processes, economic competitiveness, and transportation methods change.

Policy EC-2.3. Identify unique and sensitive shoreline areas and actively work with partner agencies and private property owners to enhance, restore and achieve permanent protection.

The above policies need to be **strengthened with public processes and conditions**, such as **requiring conditional use permits** via the Anacortes Land use code (AMC 19.36).

Expansion or conversion of existing fossil fuel facilities **need specific requirements** that:

- 1) ensure robust public processes, notification and comment periods;
- 2) support Tribal consultation and respect sovereignty;
- 3) restrict existing refinery terminals from being utilized for bulk transshipment;
- 4) hold alternative fuel or chemical projects to the same conditions as fossil fuel projects;
- 5) ensure upgrades result in net reductions in pollution impacts, risks and hazards;
- 6) set permitted capacity limits to receive/load vessels, trains, pipelines and trucks;
- 7) restrict authorized uses for new or modified equipment to prevent piecemeal permitting;
- 8) affirm labor protections i.e. apprenticeship, workforce agreements and process safety; and
- 9) and make tribal consultation and consent a prerequisite for project authorization.

Speaking of greenhouse gas reduction: According to the Sightline Institute (www.sightline.org), Washington's four largest refineries are among the top 8 sources of industrial carbon pollution in the state, emitting over 6 million metric tons of carbon/year. Washington refineries regularly exceed air pollution regulations and have been fined for Clean Air Act violations in 2005, 2011, twice in 2016, and 2020. Studies show that people living within 10 miles of a refinery are at higher risk of developing a wide range of health issues, including asthma, cancers, neurological and cardiovascular damage, and blood disorders. The City of Anacortes needs specific regulations to guide the future uses at March Point – to protect the environment and for public health and safety.



The future of the MJB property as related to the Comprehensive Plan.

Residents of Anacortes care about the future of the MJB property along the City's waterfront. On September 27, 2023, the City of Anacortes posted notice that MJB applied for approval to subdivide their property along Fidalgo Bay and add fill, install jetties, and repair and replace shoreline armoring. The City concluded that the project is not likely to cause significant, adverse impacts and so was not requiring additional environmental review. The applicant considers this the first phase of the overall development, which will include commercial and residential development across the 59 acre property. This project appears to be included in the City's assessment for meeting future residential needs. Evergreen Islands continues to be concerned about the environmental impacts of the first phase proposal, including the covering of beach-spawning fish habitat and eel grass as well as the impacts from permanently obstructing the natural shoreline from slowly eroding landward as sea level rises.

The Comprehensive Plan Update requires goals and policies that address residents' concerns about sea level rise and coastal erosion. These goals and policies shall apply to the development of the MJB property.

Adopt the Shoreline Master Program Update and incorporate the changes into the Comprehensive Plan Update.

"As the mechanism for regulating shoreline development, SMPs are a key lever for incorporating climate resilience in land use planning. Ecology recommends that local governments include SMPs as part of their overall climate resilience planning effort by ensuring that topics and participants focused on shorelines are included." (Department of Ecology, April 2024, Publication 24-06-004 *Interim Climate Resilience Guidance for SMPs*, <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2406004.pdf>)

Adopt and implement development regulations to mitigate sea level rise impacts. Include goals and policies in the Comp Plan to address sea level rise by promoting new development and reconstruction that will not be adversely affected by sea level rise.

For example, implement sea level rise policies, including policies that lot designation, structure location, and elevation requirements should be based on 2100 sea level rise projections. Consider the vulnerability of some roads and utilities to flooding and make plans to reduce risk of inundation and erosion from sea level rise, stronger storms and king tides. Consider relocating vulnerability transportation infrastructure and utilities. Include these policies in transportation element of the Comp Plan.



Community Wildfire Resilience and need for a wildfire vulnerability assessment and environmentally sensitive risk reduction strategies.

Last year there were more wildfires west of the Cascades than- for the first time on record according to Washington Public Lands Commissioner, Hilary Franz (Seattle Times June 15, 2024). Anacortes needs a plan to prepare for wildfires. With a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), the community is better prepared to reduce risks and to respond in the event of a wildfire. The Washington Department of Natural Resources offers grants for completing CWPPs. Wildfire and wildfire smoke can have devastating impacts on humans and the environment. Western Washington is no longer immune to wildfire.

Plan for Landslides. Goal EC-3. Natural hazards. Reduce exposure to landslides, tsunamis and earthquakes.

There is a need to strengthen policies, implementing regulations, and incentives to prohibit new development on areas prone to landslide risk and monitor existing uses. With a future forecast of heavier, short-duration rainfall events and sea level rise, there is an increase in probability of landslides.

Policy EC-3.1. Protect, and where feasible, enhance or restore existing shoreline and other flood-prone areas.

Policy EC-3.2. When development occurs within the 100-year floodplain, seek to minimize risk to people, property and the environment.

Policy EC-3.3. Promote soil stability through retention of existing vegetation. (removal of vegetation in landslide prone areas is not being monitored, even when vegetation removal and resulting erosion is impacting City facilities such as the Guemes Channel Trail).

Policy EC-3.4. Manage development in erosion hazard areas to minimize erosion

Policy EC-3.5. Avoid potential impacts to life and property by strictly limiting land disturbance and development in landslide prone areas. (this does not appear to have been done along the existing Guemes Channel Trail)

.....

Policy EC-3.7. Integrate regulatory standards such as buffers and setbacks with hazard avoidance measures. (this policy does not appear to implemented consistently)

Policy EC-3.8. Coordinate hazard vulnerability assessments with programs for purchase or preservation of open space.

Policy EC-3.9. Update hazard mitigation and disaster plans a minimum of every five years as a joint effort with Skagit County in coordination with local agencies.

Policy EC-3.10. Coordinate related activities of City departments with the County, State, and Federal agencies. (Was this policy followed for the permit application to triple the size of the Lake Erie Gravel Pit on South Fidalgo? – The



City does not appear to have been consulted nor involved in Skagit County's permitting process)

Encourage green infrastructure, such as free flowing streams with intact riparian shorelines, open space and healthy forests **and urban design that contributes positively to thermal regulation.**

As the population and development of Anacortes increases, we have a window of opportunity to assure that the urban environment is designed to minimize radiant heat, while reducing greenhouse gases and slowing stormwater runoff by capitalizing on ecosystem benefits.

Green infrastructure elements can be woven into a community at several scales. At the urban scale, a row of trees along a major city street, greening an alleyway or creating a pollinator corridor along a city right of way are examples. Neighborhood scale green infrastructure can include acres of open park space outside a city center or planting and maintaining a stormwater park. At the landscape or watershed scale, examples could include protecting large open natural spaces, riparian areas, wetlands or protecting vegetation on steep hillsides. When green infrastructure systems are installed throughout a community, city or across a regional watershed, they can provide cleaner air and water as well as significant values for the community with flood protection, diverse habitat, cooling summer temperatures and beautiful green spaces. (United States Environmental Protection Agency EPA.gov) Green infrastructure can help buffer and slow the impacts of a changing climate.

Protect and expand the Anacortes Community Forestlands (ACFL). Create a plan for ACFL acquisitions, utilize endowment fund for acquisitions and advertise the availability of conservation easements.

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan provides some policy direction on land acquisition and funding, but **we do not see current implementation.** The following existing policies address this goal but Evergreen Islands would like to see **more definitive policy advocating the protection and expansion of the ACFL.**

Existing Comp Plan language:

Policy EC-1.4. Actively work with local, regional, and state agencies and private entities, to acquire and preserve larger tracts of key open space lands in the region, including through such programs as transfer of development rights (TDR).

Policy PR-8.4. Continue to work towards the placement of conservation easements on all lands either currently in or added to the ACFL.



Policy PR-9.3. Funding the protection of open space required for habitat, wildlife movement, public access, non-motorized recreational corridors, and similar purposes shall continue to be a City priority.

Policy PR-9.5. Consider methods to preserve areas with open space value adjacent to Anacortes Community Forestlands, including native growth protection easements and building setbacks.

Some Anacortes residents report that when they have asked the City about contributing for conservation easements over the last couple years, their donations for additional conservation easements have been declined.

Conclusion

In many respects, Anacortes is a leader in environmental stewardship (Goal EC-1), for example 1) the new Critical Area Ordinance to protect streams and buffers based on site potential tree height as recommended in the best available science, 2) protecting habitat under the designated Fish and Wildlife Habitat Areas (FWHA) and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas, 3) adopting the Stormwater Management Plan and Fidalgo North Stormwater Management Action Plan (SMAP), 4) the visionary tree protection codes adopted around 2006 and 5) the establishment of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands are some of many examples of our community's environmental foresight and stewardship. Now it is time to focus on the next 20 years and beyond as a changing climate and other stressors threatened our environment, community, homes and health.

Evergreen Islands' comments reflect the community **Values** we share and embrace in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan:

Pursue Environmental Sustainability

- Embrace a conservation ethic.
 - Develop and maintain healthy land and marine ecosystems.
 - Prepare for natural disasters and climate change.
 - Embrace and promote green energy and technology opportunities.
 - Adopt innovative and environmentally sensitive development practices.
- (City of Anacortes Comprehensive Plan 2016)



Looking ahead, we anticipate learning more from the consultants about climate vulnerability and recommendations to reduce greenhouse gas. We will be involved in the Comprehensive Plan Update 2025 as an advocate for a healthy natural and built environment. Evergreen Islands seeks a community plan for a sustainable future reflecting environmental stewardship.

Respectfully,

/s/ Marlene Finley

Board President
Evergreen Islands

cc: Evergreen Islands Board of Directors, City Councilmembers and Mayor

Libby Grage

From: Ian Munce <ianmunce@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 10, 2024 1:19 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Matt Miller; Darcy Swetnam; Libby Grage; Lexine Long
Subject: Objection to a five minute time limit total for my 11 proposals

Good day, Councilmembers

I adhered to your truncated 2025 periodic comprehensive plan and development review process and put quite a bit of time and effort into submitting eleven separate proposals. I have also carefully prepared a power point presentation for Monday's meeting.

However, as you will see below, the City Administration is taking the position that I am limited to five minutes total for all eleven proposals. The City Council can be relied upon to read and review these proposals but those attending or watching the meeting will be deprived of the opportunity to hear my summary. My hope is that it will encourage a more open public dialogue of what many consider to be issues worthy of consideration as part of the 2025 periodic review.

This clearly violates the GMA's mandate of 'early and continuous public participation' and will open the City up to appeal(s) once you think your work is completed.

As you will see below, I just asked for twenty minutes and not fifty five minutes, but have been denied.

Please vote Monday night to reverse this five minute rule.

Ian Munce, JD, AICP

P.S. I write solely on my own behalf. I am retired and have no clients and will not take on clients.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Libby Grage <libbyb@anacorteswa.gov>
Date: July 10, 2024 at 12:48:30 PM PDT
To: Ian Munce <ianmunce@gmail.com>
Subject: RE: Help Please

Hi Ian,

You will have a total of 5 minutes within which to present all your proposals. The council received a link to all petition application materials last week so they can see all the details.

Thank you,

Libby

Libby Grage | City of Anacortes
Planning, Community & Economic Development Department
Planning Manager
P.O. Box 547 | 904 6th Street | Anacortes, WA 98221
360.299.1986 (work) | 360-661-3505 (work cell)
libbyb@anacorteswa.gov | www.anacorteswa.gov

Please note that the city email domain has changed.
My new email address is LibbyB@anacorteswa.gov.

My incoming and outgoing email messages are subject to public disclosure requirements per RCW 42.56.

From: Ian Munce <ianmunce@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 10, 2024 11:52 AM
To: Libby Grage <libbyb@anacorteswa.gov>
Subject: Re: Help Please

Thanks, Libby

I would like to forward my slide deck to you Thursday or Friday and make sure then that they got loaded and I know how to advance. them. I have had bad experiences with last minute loadings.

Separately, may I assume that I have five minutes for each of my 11 proposals? I would like approval to combine my time and then I can get through my entire set in 20 minutes. Or will council questions come at the end of each five minute set?

Please advise.

Ian

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 10, 2024, at 10:50 AM, Libby Grage <libbyb@anacorteswa.gov> wrote:

Good morning, Ian,

If you would like to email your presentation to me, or drop off a thumb drive (directed to me) at the City Hall permit counter, I can load it onto the Council chambers computer before the meeting on Monday.

Alternatively, you could bring a thumb drive to Monday's meeting and we can get it loaded onto the computer then. Arriving a bit before 5pm to test it out might be a good idea in that case.

Each petitioner will have 5 minutes to present their amendment requests to City Council.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Libby Grage | City of Anacortes
Planning, Community & Economic Development Department
Planning Manager
P.O. Box 547 | 904 6th Street | Anacortes, WA 98221
360.299.1986 (work) | 360-661-3505 (work cell)
libbyb@anacorteswa.gov | www.anacorteswa.gov

Please note that the city email domain has changed.
My new email address is LibbyB@anacorteswa.gov.

My incoming and outgoing email messages are subject to public disclosure requirements per RCW 42.56.

From: John Coleman <johnc@anacorteswa.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 10, 2024 10:30 AM
To: Libby Grage <libbyb@anacorteswa.gov>
Subject: FW: Help Please

<image001.png> *John Coleman, AICP*
Director of Planning, Community and
Economic Development
City of Anacortes
360-293-1901

Please note that the city email domain has changed.
My new email address is johnc@anacorteswa.gov

From: Emily Schuh <emilys@anacorteswa.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 10, 2024 10:26 AM
To: Ian Munce <ianmunce@gmail.com>; Greg Francioch
<gregoryf@cityofanacortes.org>; John Coleman <johnc@anacorteswa.gov>
Cc: Emily Schuh <emilys@cityofanacortes.org>
Subject: Re: Help Please

Good morning,

Please follow up with Ian.

Thank you,

Emily

From: Ian Munce <ianmunce@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, July 10, 2024 8:04 AM

To: Greg Francioch <gregoryf@cityofanacortes.org>

Cc: Emily Schuh <emilys@cityofanacortes.org>

Subject: Help Please

***** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. *****

Good day, Greg

I asked Emily for advise as to how I could set up a PowerPoint for next Monday's 5pm City Council meeting and she referred me to you.

If possible I would like to arrange things by the end of this week.

Please let me know if this can happen.

Thank you.

Ian Munce

Libby Grage

From: John Coleman
Sent: Monday, July 15, 2024 1:22 PM
To: Libby Grage
Subject: FW: Docketing of Comp Plan amendment requests



*John Coleman, AICP
Director of Planning, Community and
Economic Development
City of Anacortes
360-293-1901*

Please note that the city email domain has changed.
My new email address is johnc@anacorteswa.gov

From: richrson315@gmail.com <richrson315@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 15, 2024 10:08 AM
To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofanacortes.org>; John Coleman <johnc@anacorteswa.gov>; pced <pced@cityofanacortes.org>; Darcy Swetnam <darcys@cityofanacortes.org>
Subject: Docketing of Comp Plan amendment requests

***** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. *****

To: City Council
PCED staff
City Attorney

From: Cynthia Richardson

I have read the various proposed amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan. In my opinion, all of them rise to the level of deserving to be reviewed as part of the public process, whether or not I personally agree with the proposal.

However, the proposals submitted by MJB are confusing because they are submitted as a single application, even though there are numerous very diverse modifications to Comp Plan language and development regulations included. Some apply as blanket changes to an entire zone, while others are specific to one small issue in one zone.

This lumping together of many issues makes it difficult for staff, councilmembers, and citizens to keep track of all of the proposals. MJB should probably have been directed to submit the various topics as separate proposals at the beginning of the process, but that may not be possible at this time.

I encourage you to docket this application, but SEPARATE THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS INTO SUB-CATEGORIES, which can move through the public process as discrete issues to be dealt with.

For example, there are several changes proposed to apply to the entire Industrial zone (workforce housing, indoor recreation, daycare, community center, heavy service, etc.). Some of these might be appropriate for a specific site or area, but applying them to the entire zone opens up many opportunities to dilute the primary purposes of the zone or create conflicts. Please consider each of these proposals separately. Each is very different and they should not be lumped together. They should also be considered cumulatively for their IMPACTS ON THE INDUSTRIAL ZONE.

There are also a variety of smaller changes requested that apply primarily to specifics of MJB developments in the MMU zone, although they could affect other properties as well (such as public park, building width, setbacks, driveway widths, roof decks, temporary signs, etc.). These should be considered individually, not lumped together under one proposal (driveway widths have nothing to do with public parks or window signs).

One way to make this process more effective would be to docket the various proposals as discrete topics, giving each its own number and path through the public review. Or at least separate the various topics into sub-categories and give them discrete identifying numbers, such as I, II, III, or A, B, C. That way, when someone is referring to the workforce housing issue, for example, it could be identified by its number and it would be easy for staff to sort comments according to topics. And when that topic comes up for public discussion folks would know by the number which topics will be discussed as each meeting.

Thank you for your work on this important periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Cynthia Richardson
315 v Avenue
Anacortes, WA 98221

richrson315@gmail.com

Libby Grage

From: Paul W <hpywndrr@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, July 15, 2024 3:17 PM
To: Comp Plan
Subject: Comp Plan input?

**** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. ****

Hello city council

From your outreach I've understood the 2025 Comp Plan update process will take a year to complete, and you are just getting underway. I took that to mean there was time since the Open House of July 5th to get neighbors organized to submit a petition to better guide growth in our neighborhood.

From reading the agenda and attachments of upcoming Council meeting, it appears the window is CLOSED for Comp Plan petitions already!!!
And it was closed even before the Open House.
What's with that? Am I understanding correctly?

Keep in mind as an electrical engineer I don't speak your language, nor do I expect you to speak my professional jargon... I'm now reading of "dockets" etc and had no clue of the implications, and I doubt most regular citizens do either.

I see your media everywhere saying to "get involved", but in reality it's no small matter for non-professionals to do that.
By non-professionals, I mean non-city staff, non-attorney, non-developers... just citizens who aren't already versed in the myriad city rules, jargon and procedures.

Please let me know just what formal input can be considered for incorporating into the Comp Plan at this point. I was hoping for more than simply inputting a "comment".

PS. From reading Ian Munce's email of July 11th I couldn't agree more, seems he understands the situation and said it much better than I could.

sincerely,
Paul Wittrock
Depot neighborhood

From: [William Turner](#)
To: [John Coleman](#)
Cc: [pced](#)
Subject: Fwd: Fee for comp plan amendments
Date: Monday, July 22, 2024 1:05:39 PM

Good day,

I write to ask that you place the attached communication from the Planning Department into the record.

It documents that just days before the deadline for Comprehensive Plan amendment proposals staff were still telling members of the public that \$3,000 filing fees were required. I thought that this was ridiculous and filed anyway. My filing was accepted and processed without fees. However, how many folks were discouraged?

Standard public participation practice and due process mandated new public notices should have been issued (saying no fees required) and 'early and continuous public participation' be encouraged, not discouraged. I suspect that any reviewing body will require you to start again. Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Libby Grage <libbyb@cityofanacortes.org>
Date: June 27, 2024 at 2:42:11 PM PDT
To: William Turner <bill.h.turner@gmail.com>
Cc: turner sally <sallycturner@gmail.com>, John Coleman <johnc@cityofanacortes.org>
Subject: Fee for comp plan amendments

Hi Bill,

Thank you for your email. To clarify, comments on the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update may be submitted to the city by anyone, at any time, at no cost.

Per [AMC 19.16.040](#), a petition for an amendment to the comprehensive plan policies, the comprehensive plan land use map, or the development regulations must be filed with the PCED department on forms provided by the department, along with all fees required by the adopted fee schedule. The fee schedule adopted by City Council via [Resolution 3140](#) shows that the comprehensive plan "amendment petition submittal" fee is \$960, with an additional fee of \$1,870 paid within 14 days of the docketing Ordinance adoption, if docketed. I do not find anything in the code or fee schedule providing a different fee for amendment petitions submitted for docketing during a periodic update. As outlined in the [Public Participation Plan](#) adopted by City Council in Resolution 3156, the 2024 annual docket submittal deadline was extended to June 30 to allow more time for submittal of petitions. Those petitions received by June 30 will

be considered for docketing as part of the 2025 periodic update. Petitions received for the 2025 annual docket will likely be deferred to 2026.

The petition submittal fee is intended to defray the costs of city staff time to process comprehensive plan amendment requests, including making a docket recommendation to city council based on the criteria outlined in [AMC 19.16.050\(B\)](#). These criteria include a consideration of whether the petition, in light of all proposed amendments being considered for inclusion the year's docket, can be reasonably reviewed within the staffing and operational budget allocated to the department by City Council. As the periodic update includes many mandatory updates due to new state legislation, it is important to have an understanding of the number and scope of amendment petitions submitted by the public early in the update process to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to complete the mandatory update on time.

Sincerely,

Libby Grage | City of Anacortes
Planning, Community & Economic Development Department
Planning Manager
P.O. Box 547 | 904 6th Street | Anacortes, WA 98221
360.299.1986 (work) | 360-661-3505 (work cell)
libbyb@cityofanacortes.org | www.cityofanacortes.org

My incoming and outgoing email messages are subject to public disclosure requirements per RCW 42.56.

-----Original Message-----

From: William Turner <bill.h.turner@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 25, 2024 2:08 PM
To: John Coleman <johnc@cityofanacortes.org>; Libby Grage <LibbyB@cityofanacortes.org>
Cc: turner sally <sallycturner@gmail.com>
Subject: Fee for comp plan amendments

***** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. *****

As I said by phone yesterday, it is my belief the online fee structure is intended for requested specific changes to comp plan "between" the required 2016 and 2025 state required review. You will get very few comments or requests for changes with these fees. Your consultant, Makers, will agree.

I suggest you modify the requirements for comp plan changes, alert the public to this change and extend deadline after doing so. The State mandates public participation. This is not "pay to play." This is a democracy. It is difficult to get participation sometimes, but this will be extremely negative to any outcome.

Sincerely, Bill Turner
Sent from my iPad

Libby Grage

From: Ron Lindsay <rwllindsay0@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 28, 2024 6:18 PM
To: Comp Plan
Subject: Comprehensive plan concerns

**** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. ****

I would like to make several suggestions regarding the plan. I am not sure if any or all have a place in the plan, but here goes, in no particular order.

- There is a need for greater tree canopy coverage on many streets in the city. The plan might call for a set number of new street trees planted each year...maybe 100?
- There is also need for more sidewalks. Some new sidewalks end at a corner well before the cross street. Why is this allowed?
- There is need for better public transportation. In particular good and frequent direct bus transport to Mount Vernon without the need to transfer at March's Point. We also need more covered bus stops along 12th or Oaks.
- The Guemes Channel Trail needs to finally be built.
- More affordable housing. Has the city considered establishing a Housing Trust that would provide for property easements that would require the owners be full time residents and work within or near the city? Part time residents or retirees purchasing the house would not be allowed. The city could purchase such an easement from willing land owners and maybe offer a tax break. See the Methow Housing Trust for ideas, but there are many others. It is an idea worth exploring.
- Maintain all of the Community Forest Lands as a natural area and keep Cranberry Lake a natural area. Do not add docks or other infrastructure to the lake.
- Pass a strong noise ordinance that would restrict the volume and time of construction and light industry noise. There is currently no limit on the volume of construction noise allowed. There is some limits on the timing but they are very loose. Very loud, even deafening, jack hammer noise can disrupt an entire neighborhood for weeks on end. We pay the price but the contractor alone profits.
- Work to have a new city pool constructed. Ours is very old and needs to be replaced.

So there are my ideas for the compressive plan. I hope at least some can be implemented. Thank you for considering them.

Ron Lindsay
1319 Dakota Ave

Libby Grage

From: pced
Sent: Friday, August 9, 2024 5:33 PM
To: Comp Plan
Subject: FW: Critical Area Ordinance Ecology Guidance on Wetlands

From: Atkins, Emily (ECY) <eatk461@ECY.WA.GOV>
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 5:15 PM
Subject: Critical Area Ordinance Ecology Guidance on Wetlands

**** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. ****

Greetings,

You are receiving this email because your jurisdiction is required under the Growth Management Act (Ch. 36.70A RCW) to conduct a periodic review of your Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) by December 31, 2025.

The Department of Ecology would like to assist you with the review and update of the CAO chapters for wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, and frequently flooded areas. Most of this information will focus on wetland guidance. In our role of providing technical assistance to local governments during this process, we would like to call your attention to some important and, hopefully, useful information:

[Wetland Guidance for Critical Areas Ordinance \(CAO\) Updates](#)

In October 2022, Ecology published a document providing guidance and example language for updating the wetland chapter of your Critical Area Ordinance. It includes:

- An updated and expanded minimization measures table for use with the buffer tables Improved correlation between the discussion and the sample regulations.
- A new section on functionally disconnected buffers.
- Clarification on corridor requirements and expanded applicability.
- Recommendations from the 2021 interagency wetland mitigation guidance document.

[Wetland Delineation Manual](#)

The US Army Corps of Engineers has updated and expanded their delineation manual with regional supplements. To maintain consistency between the state and federal delineations of wetlands, Ecology has repealed [WAC 173-22-080](#) (the state delineation manual) and replaced it with a revision of [WAC 173-22-035](#) that states delineations should be done according to the currently approved federal manual and supplements. We recommend using the following language:

Identification of wetlands and delineation of their boundaries pursuant to this Chapter shall be done in accordance with the approved federal wetland delineation manual and applicable regional supplements.

All areas within the [City or County] meeting the wetland designation criteria in that procedure are hereby designated critical areas and are subject to the provisions of this Chapter.

Washington State Rating Systems

Ecology has updated the Washington State Wetland Rating Systems for western Washington. The western Washington rating system was amended in 2023. The eastern Washington rating system is currently undergoing an update, which should be completed by the end of 2024. The current version of the eastern Washington rating system remains valid. These amendments provide a more accurate characterization of wetland functions based on the most recent science.

If your CAO requires the use of the 2004 rating systems, you may want to consider updating your CAO to require the use of the 2014 version as revised. If citing the Ecology document publication number for western Washington's rating system, please use Ecology Publication #23-06-009.

Determining Wetland Buffers

For the 2024-2027 GMA update cycle, we are not proposing any changes to the recommended wetland buffer widths but have clarified some suggested criteria such as habitat corridors and minimization measures associated with buffer reductions. Buffer tables can be found in our most current CAO guidance document:

<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2206014.pdf>

Mitigation Tools

- In coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency, Ecology has recently updated Part 1 of Wetland Mitigation in Washington State (insert publication number). Ecology has also developed a number of mitigation tools since the first publication of Wetland Mitigation in Washington State Parts 1 and 2 in 2006. Ecology has developed a credit-debit tool for calculating when a proposed wetland mitigation project adequately replaces the functions and values lost when wetlands are impacted. This optional tool is designed to provide an objective method for assessing mitigation adequacy for both regulators and applicants during the mitigation process. You may want to include language that allows the use of the credit-debit method in your CAO.
- The federal rule on compensatory mitigation requires that some type of watershed approach be used in siting mitigation. Ecology, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the Environmental Protection Agency have developed guidance to help applicants select potential off-site mitigation sites. To download a copy of Selecting Wetland Mitigation Sites Using a Watershed Approach (Western Washington), (Ecology Publication #09-06-032, December 2009), please see <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/0906032.html>. Referring to this guidance in your CAO would assist applicants proposing mitigation for development projects.
- You should consider including language in your CAO that allows the use of wetland banks and in-lieu fee (ILF) programs as compensation for unavoidable wetland impacts. To learn more about these approaches to mitigation, see Ecology's website at <https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/wetlands/mitigation>.
- Ecology, WDFW, and the US Army Corps of Engineers have developed guidance to help applicants develop advance mitigation proposals. Advance mitigation is used only by a single applicant to compensate for a specific project (or projects) with pre-identified impacts to wetlands. To download a copy of Interagency Regulatory Guide: Advance Permittee-Responsible Mitigation (Ecology Publication #12-06-015, December 2012), please see <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/SummaryPages/1206015.html>. Your CAO could reference this guidance to assist applicants who are considering this option.

Small Cities Option to Adopt County CAO

In 2023 SB 5374 was passed, which allows cities with populations under 25,000 to adopt the county's critical area ordinance by reference as long as the CAO is not under appeal. Once adopted by reference, the city is not required

to take further action during future GMA periodic updates. Counties are entitled to a portion of the city's grant funding that otherwise would have been used to update their CAOs. The cities must still submit their adoption by reference through Department of Commerce for 60-day review.

Small Cities Guidance

In the past, Ecology provided a separate guidance for wetland CAO's in small cities. This guidance was incorporated into our 2022 [Wetland Guidance for Critical Areas Ordinance \(CAO\) Updates](#).

Frequently Flooded Areas

Ecology's regional floodplain specialists are available to provide assistance to local governments with Frequently Flooded Areas (FFAs). The attached PDF shows a map of the state with the names, contact information, and county assignments for each of our five regional floodplain specialists. Please reach out to your assigned specialist if you have any questions regarding FFAs.

Critical Aquifer Recharge Area

Ecology provides guidance for cities and counties to meet the Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements to protect public groundwater drinking supplies. [The Critical Aquifer Recharge \(CARA\) guidance](#) helps local jurisdictions and the public understand what is required for the protection of local groundwater resources under the GMA. It includes guidance for planning, ordinances, and for including the Best Available Science (BAS) as these relate to CARAs.

If you have any questions regarding wetlands as you're updating your CAO please contact me. We would be happy to explain our guidance or review your draft language.

Thank you,

Emily Atkins

She/Her

Critical Areas Ordinance Coordinator

Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program

WA State Dept of Ecology

emily.atkins@ecy.wa.gov | 360-628-6680

Libby Grage

From: pced
Sent: Friday, August 9, 2024 5:33 PM
To: Comp Plan
Subject: FW: 2025 Comp Plan docket

From: Cynthia Richardson <richrson@cnw.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 10:10 PM
To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofanacortes.org>; pced <pced@cityofanacortes.org>
Subject: 2025 Comp Plan docket

***** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. *****

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the various proposals submitted for docketing this year. As you noted, most of the proposals are worthy of more thorough consideration as the Comp Plan public process proceeds. Some may be revised or even rejected as a result of that process. That's how it works.

I am pleased that you deleted MJB's request to allow multifamily "workforce" housing in the Industrial zone. Besides setting up likely safety conflicts and lifestyle incompatibilities, such a change would potentially result in loss of job opportunities to the extent that industrial land is converted into housing.

What is the sense in providing more "workforce" housing if doing so reduces the available "work" for those folks?

Yes, we need more workforce housing, and the zoning changes made in the current development regulations provide many ways to increase such units within the existing residential zones. There is no need to put housing in the Industrial zone. That land must be preserved for its intended purpose - for businesses where those people can go to work.

Cynthia Richardson
315 V Avenue
Anacortes, WA 98221

August 2, 2024

To: Anacortes City Council
Cc: Mayor Matt Miller
Planning Services
Planning Commission

Re: **2025 Comp Plan Docketing**

Honorable Councilmembers,

This round of Comprehensive Plan updates is especially consequential. As you know, for the first time municipalities throughout Washington state must incorporate climate resilience and greenhouse gas mitigation measures into Comprehensive Plans. As the causes and effects of climate change already involve all the planning elements — land use, transportation, utilities, economic development, natural resources, etc. — municipal governments must face challenging decisions. Local laws and planning policies, or lack thereof, could make or break the course of development and decarbonization.

In Anacortes, urban planning jurisdiction happens to include the designated Industrial & Heavy Manufacturing area of March Point, which is one of the largest sources of pollution in the Pacific Northwest. Though it falls outside city limits, development there is indeed shaped by Anacortes Comprehensive Plan policies and Anacortes Municipal Code.

Policy ED-4.7 in the (2016) adopted Comprehensive Plan states:

Anticipate and plan for potential future desired uses at the March Point refineries as product types, manufacturing processes, economic competitiveness, and transportation methods change.

In keeping with this prudent policy, members of the Anacortes community have called to update the policies and development regulations guiding future growth and changing uses at March Point. In support of docketing this particular item, I will offer some contextual information and insights.

Opportunities abound for industrial development that will secure Anacortes' economic future. No matter the direction of the energy sector, March Point is uniquely positioned to attract investments, given its geographic position, zoning, and existing infrastructure for high-volume marine shipping and industrial utilities services.

For instance, March Point could become a central *node* for the *Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Hub* (PNWH2 Hub), an infrastructure plan drawing over a billion dollars of federal investment (and billions more of private capital) into Washington state. We can anticipate proposals to produce *green hydrogen* through water electrolysis, alongside the fossil-fuel-based *gray hydrogen* currently produced at March Point for both oil refineries processes. In addition to expanded production, we may see proposals to develop hydrogen fueling facilities to fuel marine vessels. March Point could also plausibly site Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) storage, distribution, and/or transshipment facilities.

Any such development of alternative fuels could induce vessel traffic through Usual & Accustomed tribal fishing areas and critical habitat for endangered Southern Resident Orca pods. Such projects could face many challenges in the environmental review process, moreover because the current rules governing development at March Point are vague and broadly construed. Consequently, the complex set of risks and impacts for alternative fuel projects at Anacortes spells uncertainty for permitting outcomes that burden us all.

Several municipalities in our region, including Whatcom County and the City of Tacoma, have enacted laws that prohibit new fossil fuel industries outright and set conditions for permitting modifications to existing oil refineries and terminals. Yet Anacortes has no such restrictions, leaving the door open to riskier projects.

Anacortes can be proactive by initiating a process for public participation now to formulate specific policies and regulations in 2025 that determine conditions for industrial growth. With clearer statutes defining parameters for development, concerned parties (i.e. tribes, environmental groups, neighbors) could be better assured of conditions upfront, while project applicants would gain more predictable and expeditious outcomes. All involved — businesses, government administrators and concerned stakeholders alike — should benefit from transparent rules and guidelines that clarify expectations.

Thank you for your diligent service and thoughtful consideration of public input to shape our shared future. We look forward to engaging in this process through next year.

Sincerely,

Eddy Ury

Climate & Energy Policy Manager
RE Sources

Libby Grage

From: Molly Doran <mollyd@skagitlandtrust.org>
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2024 9:11 PM
To: Comp Plan
Subject: Anacortes 2025 Comprehensive Plan Comments

***** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. *****

To: City of Anacortes Planning, Community & Economic Development Department,
From: Skagit Land Trust
Re: 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update

As you work on the required 2025 update of the Anacortes Comprehensive Plan, we urge you to amend Policy ED 4.7 to provide better protection to the March Point marine ecosystems, nearshore habitat, and neighboring communities. Skagit Land Trust protects 85% of the March Point Heronry nesting site as part of our March Point Conservation Area.

Anacortes' 2016 adopted and codified Critical Areas Regulations (CARs) give excellent protection to the March Point heronry, recognizing its unique status as the largest breeding colony of Great Blue Herons in the Salish Sea and as a "habitat and species of local importance". The CARs as written protect the heronry and breeding season foraging habitat. Underscoring the importance of the foraging habitat are the studies conducted over the past 10 years by Ann Eissinger, an internationally recognized heron biologist, that document the use of Padilla and Fidalgo Bays by Great Blue Herons for feeding during the nesting season.

Anacortes' 2016 updated Comprehensive Plan's Shoreline Management Plan recognizes the unique and highly sensitive marine ecosystems and nearshore habitat of Padilla and Fidalgo Bays.

Since 1999, Skagit Land Trust has played a key role in the preservation and protection of Fidalgo Bay. We negotiated the purchase of over 500 acres of private tidal property in south Fidalgo Bay. In a joint project, we arranged for the Department of Natural Resources to own these tidelands while we protect them with a permanent conservation easement. Our conservation easement protects Fidalgo Bay's unique tidal flats, salt marshes, sand and gravel beaches and expansive native eelgrass beds. These habitats are vital to the reproductive, foraging and rearing success of many fish and bird species. These tidelands are now managed by DNR as part of the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve. We continue to support the aquatic reserve through the protection and restoration of Fidalgo Bay shoreline and streams that flow into the Bay.

The 2025 comprehensive plan update provides an opportunity to further increase the protection of Padilla and Fidalgo Bays' extraordinary marine ecosystems and nearshore habitat, including March Point's Great Blue Herons, and the health of neighboring communities.

Anacortes' updated 2016 Comprehensive Plan, Policy ED-4.7, states that Anacortes will "Anticipate and plan for potential future desired uses at the March Point refineries as product types, manufacturing processes, economic competitiveness, and transportation methods change."

We appreciate that Anacortes is forward-looking, particularly as we face an energy transition. Future energy must be less polluting. Refineries such as those located adjacent to Padilla and Fidalgo Bays have come a long way in controlling pollutants but are still noted as top sources of air, carbon and water pollution in the USA. We therefore hope that in your 2025 update of the comprehensive plan, you will adopt specific regulations about allowed product types, manufacturing processes and transportation methods. We encourage adoption of regulations similar to legislation adopted by Whatcom County (ordinance 2021-046), King County (ordinance 19042), Tacoma

and Vancouver , that prohibit new fossil fuel industries and establish protective conditions for permitting existing refineries and terminals, requiring extensive environmental review and public participation processes.

Molly Doran, Executive Director
Skagit Land Trust

August 20, 2024

Long Range Planning Division
City of Anacortes
P.O. Box 547
Anacortes, WA 98221

RE: CRITICAL AREAS ORDINANCE and/or COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE

Dear Long Range Planning Division,

On behalf of the Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) Ecosystem Coordination Board (ECB), we submit this letter with respect to your jurisdiction's current periodic update process, and associated updates to development regulations. The Puget Sound Partnership's Ecosystem Coordination Board supports the Leadership Council in carrying out its duties, including the development and implementation of the [Action Agenda](#). The ECB is made up of 33 members, representing local, state, federal, and tribal governments, environmental and business interests. This broad representation supports the ECB to provide cross-caucus reporting and dialogue on priority issues, such as how to ensure the protection and restoration of habitat for ecologically sustainable watersheds for the future of all species through local periodic updates. This letter provides background on the priorities described in the Action Agenda and the resources available to support Comprehensive Plans and Critical Areas Ordinances to align with those priorities. While this letter does not respond to materials produced as part of your comprehensive plan update, it does offer many specific recommendations and resources that we believe will support the protection and recovery of the Puget Sound.

The recovery of Puget Sound is vital to human wellbeing in the region, to sustain threatened salmon, orcas, and numerous other species, and to preserve Puget Sound's ecosystem functions and values for current and future generations. But the Puget Sound ecosystem is under increasing threats from the development of ecologically important habitats, forests, farmlands, and other working lands, especially outside of urban growth areas. The [smart growth strategy](#) in the [2022-2026 Action Agenda](#) identifies a key opportunity to "improve the implementation of the Growth Management Act within local jurisdictions land use planning and decisions, and across jurisdictions to include the protection of natural areas and working lands."

New planning requirements, updated science, and learning from the past ~8 years of Growth Management Act (GMA) implementation make this round of Comprehensive Plan updates a critical juncture and inspiring opportunity in our region's collective work to recover Puget Sound. As you know, the Comprehensive Plan sets the stage for development activities and decisions which all have an impact on how well we achieve our goals to protect and restore Puget Sound. To support recovery of the Puget Sound, we recommend

that jurisdictions in the Puget Sound region make use of the many science-based resources available to support development of Comprehensive Plan and Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) amendments that protect natural areas and working lands.

Our collective understanding of the complex relationships between land cover, development, and ecosystem health improves over time, and this is why cities and counties must include current, best available science and information in their local land use planning amendments during the periodic update. Fortunately, our state Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, Natural Resources, and Commerce have been busy updating and distributing science-based guidance to support local governments in this process. Cities and counties should leverage these resources below, and other science-based resources, to effectively amend their Comprehensive Plans and Critical Areas Ordinances:

- [Local Integrating Organizations \(LIOs\) and LIO Ecosystem Recovery Plans](#)
- [Local Salmon Recovery Watershed Chapters](#)
- [Department of Fish and Wildlife's current Priority Habitats and Species information](#)
 - [Riparian Management Zone Checklist for Critical Areas Ordinances](#)
- [Ecology's Wetland Guidance for Critical Areas Ordinance \(CAO\) Updates](#)
- [Ecology's Climate Resilience and Shoreline Management webpage](#)
- Commerce's Critical Areas [Handbook](#) and [Checklist](#)

To ensure smart growth in the Puget Sound region, the ECB recommends that jurisdictions consider and take action on the following:

- 1) **At key points in the Comprehensive Plan update process, review and apply the [Sound Choices Implementation Checklist](#).** The checklist was developed by the Puget Sound recovery community and is intended to help local jurisdictions make updates to their comprehensive plans that align with Puget Sound recovery strategies and actions.
- 2) **Ensure your local planning department takes advantage of funding for additional staff resources to incorporate salmon and Puget Sound recovery into local planning by applying for the [Salmon Recovery through Local Planning Grant Program](#).** Depending on funding availability, Washington State Department of Commerce will hold a fall 2024 round of funding. For more information contact angela.sanfilippo@commerce.wa.gov.
- 3) **Understand how your local land use decisions will support region-wide efforts to achieve positive trends in [Regional Land Use Indicators](#).** The Puget Sound Partnership assesses the status and trends of threats through a set of regional land use indicators.
- 4) **Reach out to and involve local experts in Puget Sound recovery** including Local Integrating Organization members, Salmon Recovery Lead Entities, as well as your [local representative](#) on the [Ecosystem Coordination Board](#). For additional support in facilitating connections with these local experts please reach out to Laura.Rivas@psp.wa.gov.

As you help shape the future of the City of Anacortes at this pivotal moment in time, the ECB requests that you take advantage of the valuable tools and resources included in this letter to ensure we are doing all we can to support our local communities and Puget Sound recovery. Thank you for considering our recommendations, tools, and resources.

Sincerely,



Julie Watson, Chair

Cc:

Bill Dewey, co-Vice Chair Ecosystem Coordination Board
Ellen Southard, co-Vice Chair Ecosystem Coordination Board
Ron Wesen, Whidbey Action Area representative
Bill Blake, Whidbey Action Area alternate

Libby Grage

From: John R Wilkinson <wilkinson.johnr@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 3:16 PM
To: Comp Plan
Subject: 2025 comp plan update

***** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. *****

Thank you for the ongoing updates to the plan.

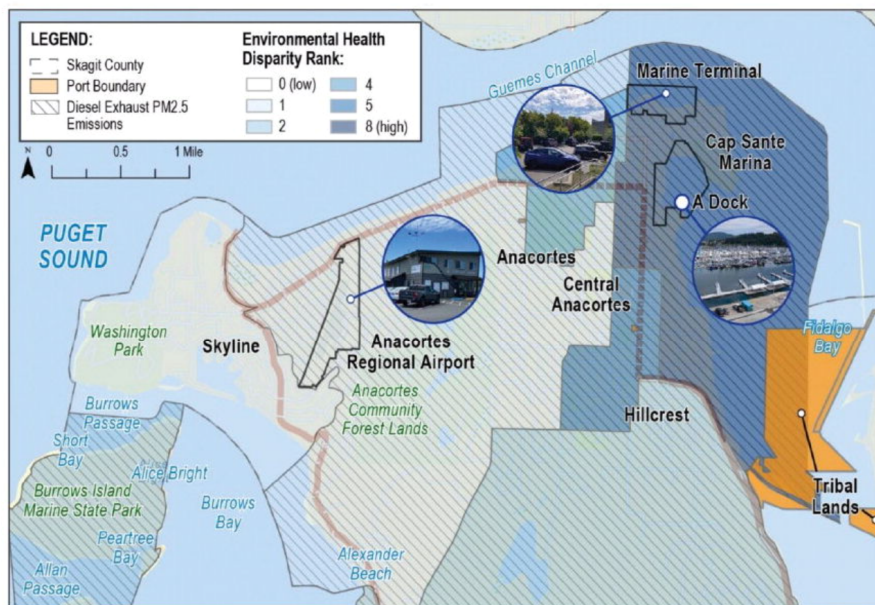
Question:

Will the plan address the interface between industrial (i.e. POA) activity and the community with respect to both air and noise pollution?

These factors are impacting the ability of residents to live near to Port facilities.

As an example, the POA issued the following map in support of a recent electrification grant. It shows significant diesel emissions impact over large parts of the City.

Pollution and noise impact the willingness of new residents to move into Anacortes vs living in cleaner environments outside of the City.



Port vicinity/location map created by the Port of Anacortes for its electrification grant proposal showing the environmental health disparity ranks throughout Anacortes.

thx
John Wilkinson

Libby Grage

From: Ian Munce <ianmunce@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 31, 2024 1:07 PM
To: Libby Grage
Subject: Comments on August 28 Planning Commission Meeting
Attachments: Attachments A and B.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

***** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. *****

Good day, Libby

Will you please transmit the communication below to the Planning Commission and include it in the webpage/2025 Documents list

Thank you

Ian

Dear Planning Commissioners,

I respectfully submit the following comments on City staff and Makers presentation to you on August 28.

Public Participation

1. I understand the usefulness of a PowerPoint presentation, but typically this is a summary of a written report prepared by City staff: background, specific proposal(s), analysis, alternatives, and recommendations. I only received the expanded PowerPoint at 4pm on the day of the meeting, with no opportunity to submit timely written comments and then limited in the extent of my oral public comments. I submit that your five day cut-off for new materials is not just to give the Commissioners time to review and prepare but also to make sure that the public has an opportunity to do the same/submit timely written comments/craft their three minute oral presentation.

2. Continual reference is made to a 'Housing Action Plan' but this document is simply not ready for prime time. The 'Housing Guidance Document' was developed by real estate and development stakeholders and did not include neighborhood and environmental stakeholders and the survey results were not the result of a random survey sample but simply represent comments from those who were aware of issue and chose to comment. The public notice for the City Council public hearing on this Document pointed out that the next step was to balance housing issues against other Comprehensive Plan goals and policies, e.g. environmental protections (Attachment A) before moving on to consider code language. I submit that this preparatory step has been skipped over because it does make the housing challenges a level of magnitude more difficult, but not insurmountably so.

3. I am participating in your process because I can envision the dramatic changes proposed by certain City Council members, changes that will be wildly unpopular once our fellow residents realize what is going on. The items that the City Council are bringing to your attention are the most significant changes to

our delightful neighborhoods, natural environment, and our spectacular views since zoning was first introduced fifty years ago. Yet, few residents have any awareness of this upcoming train wreck. People bought into their home setting and invested themselves into this community based on decades of reliance on current code provisions. It is simply irresponsible for City leadership not to bring these issues directly to our residents, neighborhood by neighborhood, residential zoning district by residential zoning district, and individual Homeowners Associations.

4. The West 5th project push-back and its associated demand for details is just one recent example of how much our residents appreciate their current neighborhood and a similar reaction can be anticipated across the City if even some of the “Middle Housing” proposals are enacted.

5. It does not help that these “middle housing” proposals are being presented as somehow State mandated when, in fact, the State Legislature categorically exempted cities under 25,000. Somehow linking Anacortes to State requirements that apply to counties over 270,000 is comparing apples to oranges.

6. Under questions and answers, the consultant did opine that a demonstration trial period regarding middle housing followed by a phase in/ monitoring approach was conceivable. The consultant referred to Tacoma as a good example of such an approach, an approach that seeks to carefully and thoughtfully move forward with “middle housing”. I have included an extract from Tacoma’s webpage as Attachment B. They have made the progress that they have by directing engaging residents in neighbor meetings, with much of their budget going towards staff outreach. Across the country successful “Middle Housing” infill has been a result of City officials and staff securing neighborhood buy-in with carefully crafted standards. In Tacoma’s case infill projects also require Administrative Conditional Use approval(s).

Agenda Bill

7. The Agenda Bill states “Public Participation, including the sharing of ideas and viewpoints, is an integral part of the periodic update”. And so it should be. But the reality is very different. City leadership feels that they know where the real estate and development industry wants to go and is determined to get there one way or another. Regrettably, real initiatives to secure and maintain affordable housing as set forth in the Housing Guidance Document are not moving. See e.g. Multifamily Tax Credits.

8. The Agenda Bill’s reference to the City Comprehensive Plan update webpage is a great start but the document list appears to be only a partial record of documents submitted for consideration for inclusion the City Council ‘docket’. Do petitioners need to resubmit their materials? And, it would help all concerned if these Exhibits were numbered and dated.

9. The Agenda Bill might have referenced the upcoming need to undertake a SEPA Review of any proposals that the City Council may adopt and that the scale of the environmental review will depend on the environmental impacts, i.e. DNS, MDNS, or EIS. Would it not be better to balance housing and environmental aspirations now rather than at the very end of the process?

PP Slide (with page references to agenda package numbering)

10. Again, it is really not helpful to fail to recognize that the City’s of Anacortes’ population of 18,000 or so has been entirely exempted from the State’s “Middle Housing” mandates, thus allowing the City to set its own design and density standards. AP. 15. Perhaps with some set-asides, either physically or financially, for affordable housing? Perhaps bring back conditional use permits for smaller projects, with notice to neighbors and decision by the City Hearing Examiner? Perhaps bring back Planned Unit Development (PUD) subdivision provisions so that critical areas are protected in perpetuity and allocated density is clustered outside our vitally important critical areas and opportunistic encroachments are penalized by mandatory fines (appealable to the City Hearing Examiner).

11. The City Council’s three member Planning Committee’s Discussion Items “Notes” without any explanation that “cottages are likely to be especially appropriate for the R1 zone”. AP.11. Of course, they know that all they need is one more vote to make doubling the density in the R1 zone a reality without addressing the fact that most or nearly all of this 300 acre zone is: streams and stream buffers, critical habitat, aquifer recharge areas for individual wells, wetlands and wetland buffers (aka critical areas). Reinstating a PUD ordinance would allow these natural areas to be protected in perpetuity and property

owners to secure the current zoning of two units an acre without mowing/landscaping these critical areas out of existence.

I have found nothing in the record to date to suggest that, as mandated, they have consulted the State Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, and Commerce on this or other issues relating to the R1 zone. Nor is it at all apparent how the increased density will be consistent with either the City's State Stormwater permit and will deal with on-site stormwater treatment and detention under the City's stormwater Plan. With a PUD process, cottages might fit with the Comprehensive Plan's protective designation for this zone, CP.1-6, but with design standards for buildings that actually look like cottages and integrate into the natural environment.

12. As to ADU regulations, the City Council Planning Committee "Notes": "Partially completed already, remainder is required by State law". AP.11. Mr. Turner has pointed out to you in a written submission to you specific, complicated issues that need to be analyzed, discussed, and vetted by our entire community. Unlike the "Middle Housing" issue, ADU provisions are mandated for Anacortes. What are the appropriate standards and approval process? Of particular concern is whether they can be located in critical areas and under what conditions, e.g. Commerce has guided that the exclusion of ADUs from critical areas is legitimate.

13. As to Expected Growth Through 2045, AP.12, the City has for decades made it very clear that the need for a major sewer plant expansion, and associated major utility rate increases, will limit the City's projected growth. Fortunately, a Sewer Plan update is underway and will address sewer needs for the unincorporated UGA, expansion of the UGA, MJB, and housing infill possibilities.

14. The statement on AP.15 that "Duplexes must be allowed by right in ALL residential zones", presumably in Anacortes, is simply wrong and the record corrected accordingly.

15. The statement in AP.17 that "Allowing cottage housing in R1 zone" is addressed in Comment 11 above. The reason that the "certain circumstances/special review process" have not been defined is that it would involve major undertakings to map the extensive and overlapping critical areas in the R1 zone and somehow address stormwater mandates as to quantity and quality.

16. As to "Allowing More Housing Types", AP.18-28, in order to allow for input from neighbors these all need to be conditional uses requiring City Hearing Examiner approval with neighborhood sensitive conditions.

17. As to "ADU Regulations", AP.29, these are addressed in Comment 12.

18. As to "Updating Minimum Lot Sizes for Duplexes" in single family zones, AP.30, for full disclosure the verb should be "lowering". Further, when the City Council recently approved duplexes in the R2A zone it was explained that there would be few lots that met the current 9,000 square lot size requirement. And now this is proposed to be lowered to 6,000 square feet. This is consistent with the City Council Planning Committee's expressed desire to increase densities in our community year by year.

19. As to "Incremental Implementation", AP.34, if that is the desire then there needs to be provisions in place to ensure that certain single family blocks do not get entirely converted to duplexes.

20. As to the notion that Neighborhood Grocery stores, AP. 37-42, be changed from a conditional use to a use permitted outright is just not what our community will accept.

Conclusion

I respectfully submit that the Materials presented at the Planning Commission's August 28 meeting are food for thought but need to be balanced against environmental protection, stormwater management, sewer capacity, and the need to fully address neighbors concerns on a project by project basis.

Ian S. Munce, J.D., AICP
1711 Quail Drive

From: Ian Munce ianmunce@gmail.com
Subject: Vision, Goals, and Policies
Date: Jun 20, 2024 at 12:24:57 PM
To: Ian Munce ianmunce@gmail.com

ATTACHMENT A

1. The Comprehensive Plan's (CP) "Vision Statement" includes the following: "... protects our natural environment ... for future generations". CP, p 1-9. The CP "Values Statements" includes the following: "Embrace a conservation ethic ... Adopt innovative and environmentally sensitive development practices ... Utilize residents extensive knowledge and experience ... Preserve our historic places and natural surroundings". CP, p. 1-9.
2. The "Environment and Conservation" element of the CP includes the following: "... natural features as defining features of the City. Preservation of these natural features is identified by the community as an important priority. This policy is expressed through the goals and policies that support environmental stewardship, protection of critical areas, and protection of surface and groundwater quality". CP, p. 1-40.
3. The "Environment and Conservation" Goals and Policies include the following as Goal EC-1: "Serve as a leader in environmental stewardship of the natural environment for current and future generations". CP, p.1-40. The policies to implement this goal include the following as Policy EC-1.2: "Work cooperatively with ... state governments and community organizations to protect and enhance the environment". And, the following under Policy EC-1.3(F): "Publish and make available information about ... cluster development and transferable development rights". CP, p.1-41.
4. This same element includes the following as Policy EC-1.5: "identify and inventory areas of ... biological significance ... regulate development which would cause significant deterioration of these qualities". CP, p.1-41. And, Policies EC-1.7 and EC-1.8: "Work cooperatively with Skagit County in development of land use plans and review development proposals to identify and protect habitat networks and critical areas on an interjurisdictional basis ... use best available science to preserve or enhance the function and values of critical areas through regulations,

programs, and incentives". CP, p.1-41.

5. The "Environment and Conservation" Goals and Policies include the following as Goal EC-4: "Protect and enhance water quality". CP, p.1-43. And, Policy EC-4.8: "Protect and preserve areas that are critical for aquifer recharge , such as wetlands, streams, and water bodies". CP, p.1-43.

6. The "Environment and Conservation" Goals and Policies include the following as Goal EC-5: "Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat". CP, p.1-43. And Policy EC-5.1: " Identify, plan for, and preserve habitat areas, including wildlife corridors and areas with healthy ecosystems through development regulations ...". CP, p.1-43.

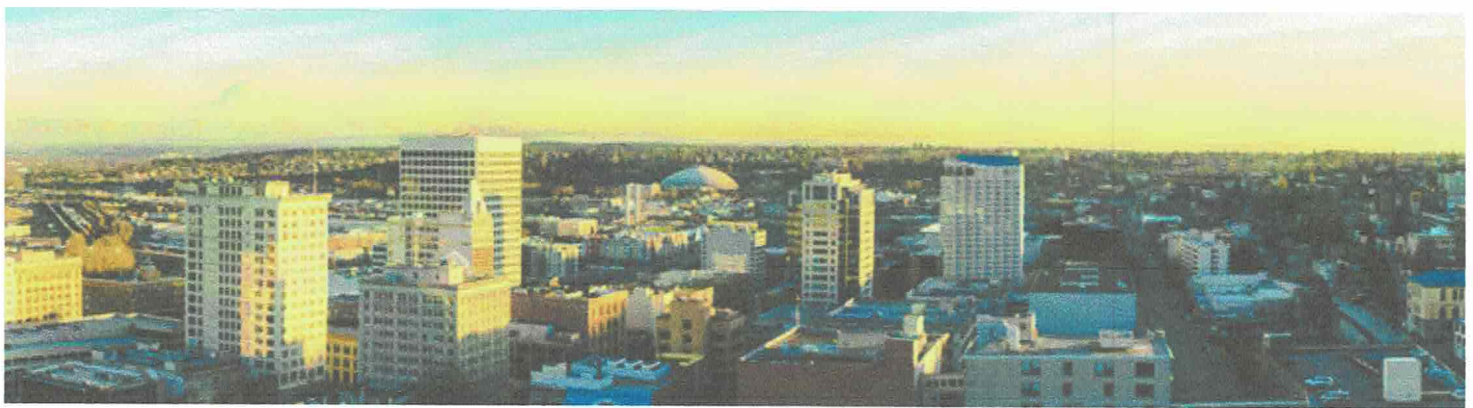
7. The "Environment and Conservation " Goals and Policies include the following as Goal EC-6: "maintain or improve the functional integrity of watercourses, wetlands, bodies of water and their shores". CP, p. 1-44.And, Policies EC-6.2 and EC-6.5: "Streams and wetlands should be maintained in their existing natural condition, or restored where appropriate ... place appropriate restrictions on land surface modifications ... hydrology modifications ... including ... clearing". CP, p.1-44.



ATTACHMENT B



City of Tacoma
WASHINGTON



Print Friendly



The intent of the Residential Infill Pilot Program (RIPP) is to promote innovative

residential infill while ensuring that such infill demonstrates high quality building and site design that is responsive to and harmonious with neighborhood patterns and character. The City hopes to see successful and well-regarded examples of these housing types built, as a way to inform future Council decisions on Tacoma's regulatory approach to these housing types, including [Home In Tacoma](#).

RIPP and Home in Tacoma

The Home in Tacoma project consists of a package of zoning code amendments that will allow a range of middle housing development types to be built citywide without special review processes. The project is currently in the public review process and is expected to be completed sometime in 2024. The Home in Tacoma amendments will largely render the RIPP unnecessary, and the program is expected to be retired once they go into effect. However, the date at which applications will no longer be accepted remains to be determined at this time. For more information about the Home in Tacoma project and its current status, please visit the project webpage [here](#).

Program Overview

The RIPP permits four different housing types: Two-Family, Small Multi-Family, Cottage, and Planned Infill. A maximum of six developments for each of the housing types are permitted within each of the City's five Council Districts for a maximum 120 developments possible citywide. A table indicating how many slots remain for each housing type and Council District is provided below.

Development proposals require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application and approval.

RIPP applications also require input from an Advisory Review Board, which provides advisory comments to the Director prior to the final decision.

In addition to satisfying general CUP criteria, developments must demonstrate the following specific RIPP criteria:

- Responsiveness to existing neighborhood patterns
- Pedestrian-friendly design
- De-emphasized parking
- Sensitivity to changes in scale
- Provision of usable outdoor space
- Sustainability features (Multi-Family and Cottage only)

More information about these criteria is provided in the [RIPP Handbook](#).

Housing Types Permitted

Below are overviews of the four different types of housing permitted through the RIPP along with some notable development standards for each. See the RIPP Handbook (linked below) for more detailed information.

Two-Family Housing

Two-family Housing allows the development of either a duplex (two dwelling units in a single building) or two townhouses (attached one dwelling buildings) on a single development site – though townhouses are ultimately divided into separate lots.

Development standards include:

- Eligible Zones: R-2
- Minimum Lot Size: 6,000 sq. ft.
- Each unit is directly accessed from the street
- Allowance to convert an existing single-family home

Small Multi-Family Housing

Small Multi-Family Housing allows up to six dwellings to be developed on a single development site. These typically consist of a single building but could be arranged to include multiple buildings so long as the development criteria are met. Development within the R-2 zone are limited to conversions of existing structures.

Development standards include:

- Eligible Zones: R-2, R-3
- Minimum Lot Size: 7,000 sq. ft.
- Buildings are designed to minimize bulk and scale to fit with established neighborhood patterns
- Access to dwellings is provided through a shared primary entrance
- Parking is located at the rear of the site and view from the street is obscured

Cottage Housing

Cottage Housing consists of a grouping of small dwellings clustered around a common open space area. This type of housing provides a number of benefits including: expanded housing choice that responds to changing needs and lifestyles of Tacoma residents, introduces additional density in a manner that is highly compatible with single-family housing neighborhoods, better utilizes existing infrastructure, and

supports nearby community and commercial services.

Development standards include:

- Eligible Zones: All Residential Zones (except HMR-SRD)
- Minimum Lot Size: 7,000 sq. ft.
- Maximum number of units is double the base zone's density (max. 24 units)
- Allows for a variety of housing types from single to three-unit buildings
- Common open space size based on the number of units

Planned Infill Housing

Planned Infill Housing is a flexible, density-based type of development. It allows a wide range of housing types and arrangements so long as it conforms to the site's One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan land use designation density range. It is the most flexible of the housing types and promotes creative approaches to housing development while ensuring the project is responsive to specific site conditions and compatible with the surrounding area.

Development standards include:

- Eligible Zones: All Residential Zones (except HMR-SRD)
- Minimum Lot Size: R-3 - 3,500 sq. ft.; Other Residential Zones – 7,000 sq. ft.
- Determining the maximum number of units uses a weighted calculation that encourages more affordable housing types such as attached units and ADUs
- Allows for a variety of housing types including single unit detached, duplex, townhouses, small multifamily, and ADUs
- Buildings are oriented to the street
- Parking is located at the rear of the site and view from the street is obscured

Available Infill Housing Type Spaces by Council District

Council District	2-Family	Multi-Family	Cottage	Planned Infill
1	6	6	6	6
2	5	6	6	5
3	3	6	6	4
4	4	6	6	5
5	3	6	6	3

Updated 04/01/2024

Map of Council Districts

Residential Infill Pilot Program

- [Tacoma Infill Pilot Program Handbook](#)
- [Affordable Housing \(project web page\)](#)

Active Applications

Past Applications

Program Background Information

[Infill Pilot Program Handbook 2.0](#)

Staff Contacts

For questions regarding the RIPP program and the Conditional Use Permit process, [please email Land Use Planning staff](#) or call (253) 591-5030 (option 6).

Carl Metz
 Senior Planner, Urban Design Studio
 (253) 290-3946
[Email](#)

]]>

Libby Grage

From: Ian Munce <ianmunce@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 1, 2024 4:06 PM
To: Libby Grage
Subject: Comprehensive Plan Update 2016 Plan Audit-Draft May 20, 2024 (Audit)

***** This email is from outside the City of Anacortes network. Please use caution when clicking on links, opening attachments, or replying. *****

Dear Libby,

Will you please send this to the Planning Commissioners and post a copy on your 2025 Documents page.

Thank you

Ian

Dear Planning Commissioners

I have reviewed the above referenced Audit and submit the following comments.

Funding

1. Given the wide-range and detailed responsibilities assigned to the Planning Department in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan (CP), it is important to note that this Department has been chronically underfunded for years. In several instances in this Audit this underfunding is given as a reason to drop otherwise sound policies. This simply should not be accepted.

2. Policy LU-1.5 “Implement land use designations through a clear regulatory process that ensures transparency, fairness, and predictability in the land development process”. At some point in your 2025 Periodic Update process I will give examples in my neighborhood as to how damaging chronic underfunding can be to our natural environment, not to criticize staff but just to show how underfunding benefits opportunistic real estate and development interests at the expense of the CP’s Environmental Goals and Policies and disadvantages the climate change element that is currently under development.

Land Use - Maintain and enhance Anacortes’ robust environmental stewardship (Goal LU-4)

1. Policy LU-4.1 “Maintain and strengthen regulations to protect sensitive natural areas and pursue strategies/actions to restore degraded natural areas” should not just be expanded to include partnerships but also to include a mandate to reinstate the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process for land development, a process that after 20 years of success was abruptly discontinued in 2016. Clustering homes outside critical areas, protecting critical areas in perpetuity, restoring degraded critical areas, maintaining neighborhood character, and public trails can readily be attained with a PUD process. Examples include Rock Ridge, the cottages at Island View, the Orchards, San Juan passage. City staff has opined in writing that the same objectives can be achieved through current regulations but has yet to explain how.

2. The Audit claims that “the critical areas ordinance (CAO) is mostly used to protect existing such areas” but in multiple instances this is simply not the case. The City has taken the position in Skagit County Superior Court that it has unbridled discretion to apply CAO regulations or not to apply CAO regulations and to enforce or not to enforce against CAO violations. I will provide a summary of this court case at some point, but do not want to let assertions like this go unchallenged. The City basically argued, unsuccessfully, that neighbors had no right to attempt to require the City to enforce its regulations and in any case it was up to these neighbors, and not the City, to somehow establish the presence of critical areas.

3. As to Policy LU-4.6, I agree that transfer of development rights (TDR) programs are challenging to create and implement but are an effective way of encouraging property owners to secure compensation for preserving and enhancing critical areas.

4. As to Policy LU-4.7 (“Establish resource protection and sustainability goals, monitor development to track success in meeting those goals, and refine the implementation strategy as needed to help meet these goals”), the City has recently deleted the implementing regulations for this goal. Rather than asserting ‘we don’t care’, the City should reestablish monitoring regulations and programs, particularly as it is hard to imagine that monitoring will not be a central part of the City’s Climate Change Element.

5. It is interesting to note that the Audit concludes that the following goal, Goal LU-6, is a “Critical goal to retain: **“Preserve and enhance the quality, character, and function of Anacortes’ residential neighborhoods”**”. Yet, in the materials submitted to the Planning Commission on August 28 the same consultant totally fails to address how its “Middle Housing” ideas implement this goal. In fact, they keep asserting that the neighbors should not have a voice through a conditional use process and assume that some cookie cutter approach to design standards will obviate this need.

6. As to Policy LU-6.1, the comment that “...at least two ADUs per lot must be allowed” is contrary to Commerce’s guidance that this mandate need not apply in critical areas.

7. As to policy LU-5.1(C), the Audit notes that the Housing Assistance Guidance Document/Housing Action Plan/“Menu” (HAGD Menu) appears to validate the “new design standards” for “cottages” without recommending a review of standards after the construction of “cottages” at 32nd and D and near The Store. I submit a review is essential and that cottages should look like cottages, e.g. the cottages across from Island View School. The Audit notes that the HDAG Menu recommends “... expanding cottages to the R1 zone (and possibly the Old Town zone) and allowing duplex cottages in more locations”. However, the Audit fails to take note of the fact that the City promised that the HDAG Menu would be reviewed against the other goals of the Comprehensive Plan before being moved forward.

7A. The Audit acknowledges that the HDAG Menu “... recommends further loosening of regulations in residential zones ...” beyond those listed in current policy, but fails to explain how this can be reconciled with Goal LU-6. I believe it can but not through cookie cutter design standards.

8. I do not think that “... falling out of favor in comprehensive plans in Washington ...” is a valid justification for dropping Policy LU-6.2 (“Protect the character of single family neighborhoods by focusing higher intensity land uses close to commercial and community services and transit”. Further, I do not even accept “falling out of favor” characterization when most cities are applying this policy as to an intensity focus around transit.

9. The Audit questions the Land Use Designation of the R1 zone citing the HDAG Menu That apparently includes “Re-examining the purpose, priorities, and development regulations for the R1 zone” but fails to note that adding cottage housing into the R1 development regulations needs to be preceded by an examination of the purposes and priorities of this zone. This examination needs to take into account the Comprehensive Plan’s Environmental Protection Policies, the GMA’s overriding mandate to protect critical areas, and SEPA compliance. It also needs to involve State Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, and Commerce. In the early 1990s the City negotiated the R1 zone parameters with Commerce in particular.

Housing - “Preserve and enhance the quality, character, and function of Anacortes’ residential neighborhoods”. Goal LU-6.

10. Policy H-1.8 (“Provide for flexibility in subdivision development in order to promote environmental protection, encourage infill development, enhance neighborhood character, employ low impact development techniques, and other similar goals”) is generally implemented through a Planned Unit Development Ordinance. For some inexplicable reason the City just eliminated it in 2016. It needs to be reinstated to meet this Housing Policy. Most of the subdivisions approved between 1985 and 2016 were approved through this process, totaling between one and two thousand homesites, and seem to be well accepted.

This brings up the undiscussed issue of the City’s responsibilities to the Homeowners Associations (HOAs) formed to maintain these neighborhoods, responsibilities negotiated between the City and the developer. This is new ground for all concerned.

11. Implementing Policy H-3.6 (“Consider a housing levy to provide ongoing funding for affordable housing”) might be preferable to the anticipated disruption caused by the City’s Middle Housing Initiative, an initiative based on some amorphous trickle down theory.

Economic Development

12. Policy ED 1.1 (“Pursue a balanced economy through the protection and enhancement of the community’s natural, historical, and cultural amenities ...”) is simply a good policy to retain and expand upon as follows:

ADD A NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CP POLICY:

“It is essential that the City protect and enhance its small town character, environmental stewardship responsibilities, and its marine and industrial heritage as these form the basis not just of the City’s tourism industry but also its thriving commercial and residential neighborhoods”.

CONCLUSION

Apparently there will be some information in the next edition of A-Town. It should recognize that there are different views about the course forward, views that differ from those espoused by the City’s Council’s Planning Committee.