

Anacortes Planning Commission Minutes - March 27, 2024

Roll Call

Chairperson Linda Martin called to order the Anacortes Planning Commission meeting of March 27, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Linda Martin, William McCombs, Frank Jeretzky, Paul Ryan and Luke Currier were present. Commissioners Jim Stoneman and Mike Mills were absent.

Minutes

There were no minutes provided for review.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Public Hearings

Other Business

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update - Review of the Draft Public Participation Plan

John Coleman reviewed the Public Participation Plan (PPP) for the Comprehensive Plan update. He stated that we are planning for growth for the 20-year period from 2025-2045. This includes infrastructure to accommodate the anticipated growth and confirming the zoning needed to accommodate growth. This is a GMA mandate for a periodic update. The periodic cycle is when we look at critical areas, UGA, etc. This is due by December 31, 2025.

He reviewed the packet, which includes the draft PPP. He reminded everyone that they can view the current plan on the City's website. He reviewed the mandatory topics that will be reviewed; which include population projections, employment projections, available housing options for new residents by area median income (AMI), climate element, UGA and critical areas. The climate element includes a resiliency sub-element and greenhouse gas emissions sub-element. He reviewed the 20-year population projections. The intent is to plan for growth and not get overwhelmed by it if we don't plan appropriately. He reviewed the housing growth projections in relation to the AMI brackets. There are a lot more units needed below the 100% AMI, which has raised some concerns. John clarified that this takes into account the existing lack of housing for each income bracket.

Mr. Coleman reviewed the housing type slide. In 2016 we updated the Comprehensive Plan to allow for infill, including cottage housing, duplexes, triplexes and townhomes. Then in 2019 the new rules went into effect, which is evident in the various housing types shown in the slide. Anacortes saw a shift in more middle housing being built. This indicated that our zoning codes were holding the builders back from developing the middle housing types that they were ready to build. These changes allowed the development community to build more affordable housing. We are studying the available, developable land in the City. In order to accommodate growth, we need to know how much land we have in each zone. We are performing the land analysis now, which will be brought to the Planning Commission. We need to determine how to accommodate the anticipated housing and new jobs. Some ideas are increasing density, new zoning designations, expanding the UGA or other options.

One component of the Comprehensive Plan update is a PPP to engage with residents, stakeholders, tribes, and state agencies early and often. The PPP is how we plan to do that and includes a schedule for the parts of the Comprehensive Plan that will be addressed and the approximate timeline. He reviewed the roles and responsibilities slide. The City will review the housing based on income bands, plan for equitable outreach, avoid racially disparate impacts (even unintended impacts), reviewing the climate and land use elements.

The Planning Commission will hold public meetings, public hearings, and workshops. We will need to address peoples schedules, access to meetings, access to computers, etc. The City Council will make the final decision on the recommendations. If we determine that the UGA needs to be expanded, we don't make that decision. We will present a report to the board of Skagit County commissioners outlining how we will accomodate that growth in the UGA. That process will include a public meeting process. Skagit County makes that decision because the UGA is beyond our jurisdiction. UGA's are designated as an area planned to accomodate future growth. The County treats these areas a little differently until annexation, which is driven by property owners. Development in the UGA is to City standards; including water, sewer, roads, and sidewalks. Handling it this way ensures that an area already set aside for potential growth is developed at the city standard they were originally pre-planned to be.

The transportation plan also needs to meet regional requirements, so that will go through Skagit Council of Governements. The SKOG steering committee make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners after a public process. Having a Steering Committee ensures that all sides are heard and everyone has a say in how the county-wide planning policies that affect the cities are handled. This adds an extra layer, but it provides more public participation and gives cities a stronger say in future growth.

William McCombs asked how the city accounts for those that live outside the city but use city services. Mr. Coleman clarified that those residents have impacts on city infrastructure, which impacts our transportation plna. We are trying to create policies that assumes 20% of new development will happen in the county. The transportation zones (TAZ's) are used in modeling for road infrastructure. This helps to show where trips are generated and what the impacts are. We are looking at the details of people traveling into the city. There is also a complex water plan that takes into account the potential growth into the UGA. Mr. McCombs said that since we are looking at housing and employment projections for the city only, is staff taking into account the fact that many users of Anacortes's infrastructure may not be city residents. John Coleman clarified that we assume that 20% goes to the county. They are doing the same process with their population projections and how they are going to accommodate housing. Mr. Jeretzky referenced the Haddon Road boundary. He said that Anacortes is more limited in what can be developed in the existing city limits. In his opinion, the Haddon Road area would be a logical area for growth since sewer and water are already in that area. . John Coleman said that the county would protect that area for future urban development instead of larger lots. Once designated as UGA, the property owners have the opportunity to annex into the City. We can't offer services in the UGA. Annexation is not usually beneficial for the city. We want them to annex so that we can manage the infrastructure and ensure that they are built to city standards; including roads, sewer, and water. In order to facilitate development in that area, there's incentive for owners to annex in. Then they can develop to higher standards.

Frank Jeretzky asked if property owners can decline being annexed into the city.

Mr. Coleman clarified that this planning process will determine where we think our UGA boundary should be. Those owners will be notified to determine if they want to be included in the UGA for future aneation. There are logical areas for UGA, but there may be a few owners that don't want to be in the UGA. We try to work with them during this update process. Once you're in the UGA, it's on the owners to want to be annexed so we want people to be for this change as early in the process as possible. We will work to determine the potential new zoning for that new UGA area and talk with the owners. In order to be annexed, the owners submit a petition for annexation which goes to the City Council. The petition needs to be signed by 60% ownership in the area that was selected as potential UGA. Owners that don't sign can end up being included in the annexation, but we try to work with them.

Mr. Jeretzky asked if there are any housing AMI numbers projected for the MJB property to help with infill. John Coleman said that should be in the land capacity analysis that will be coming to Planning Commission soon. The land analysis helps to determine if we need to expand the UGA at all or if we can accomodate the growth within the city's current boundaries.

William McCombs asked if there can be housing costs associated with the AMI brackets.

John Coleman said the Department of Commerce has ranges. He reminded the commissioners that the 0-30% will likely be supported housing, which is usually multi-family. Those units will be subsidized. The 31-50% will be mostly multi-family and subsidized. The units in the 51-80% bracket will also be multi-family, but not supported. The 81-100% range will include more duplex, triplex, and middle housing types. New single-family residences will only fit within the 120% AMI range.

Frank Jeretzky pointed out that Anacortes has unique factors in that we have dramatically higher housing costs, but not necessarily higher incomes.

Mr. Coleman stated that the commissioners have the local knowledge that will assist in the planning. Forty percent of the city population is over age 60. There are all sorts of local factors that will come into play.

Luke Currier asked if there opportunity to push back on the numbers.

John Coleman said the steering committee gave all the communities their numbers and they cannot be negotiated.

Mr. Coleman moved on to the PPP Goals. He reminded everyone that this is a living document. See slide for list of goals. We have to meet the law, but can add goals to meet our needs. He reminded the Planning Commission that we are working to reach out to underrepresented populations to encourage their participation. Our land use policies form the future of our community, so we want a varied input. The PPP audience is everyone; including but not limited to tribal governments, members of the public, residents, workers, students, property & business owners, non-government organizations, counties/cities/towns and Washington State agencies. The important thing is we're thinking about who could be involved and reaching out to them. The Department of Commerce oversees the Comprehensive Plan update. They make sure it's consistent with state and federal laws and the other communities in our county. SEPA is reviewed by the Department of Ecology. In regard to the Federal Government, the Naval Air Station has an impact, as does the Coast Guard, FAA and National Parks service.

John Coleman reviewed the PPP tools on how to get the word out. There's a webpage and subscription email list. The city set up an email for this at compplan@cityofanacortes.org. We are planning to do direct mail, news releases, social media, A-Town publication, public meetings/workshops, student and teacher outreach, open houses, surveys, targeted stakeholder interviews, climate policy advisory team (CPAT), community and civic groups. CPAT will aid in development of the Comprehensive Plan with focused work groups to review goals and policies that will go into the drafts that will come before the Planning Commission. He reviewed the purpose of the surveys. If anyone has other ideas for additional tools, please let us know. We want people to be involved.

Mr. Coleman asked Libby to review the draft PPP schedule. Ms. Grage reviewed the PPP plan and the more detailed schedule for the entire update. We are in the initial project startup stage. Today we published the Comprehensive Plan update webpage. People can go to that in the future for all documents and other project related information. Since early spring, John has been going out to the community to get the word out. The next few months will be focused on outreach and land analysis. This gives us an idea of the changes that will be needed. We're hoping to have workshops May through July. There will be public notices for those. Then until the end of the year, we will be gathering data. We plan to have a draft of the complete Comprehensive Plan document in early 2025. Then there will be Planning Commission public hearings after which you will make recommendations to City Council. We anticipate adoption in fall 2025. This schedule will change, but this is the framework based on the deadline. This will be updated on the website as changes occur.

John Coleman commented that we accepted the \$125K grant for the Comprehensive Plan update. We have a contract with Makers for much of the update. We are waiting for the Department of Commerce to execute the \$500K grant for the climate element. We are also working with Makers for the climate element work. Makers will be facilitating many of the climate element meetings. We will have a Planning Commission

hearing on April 24th for a public hearing on the PPP. There is no April 10th meeting planned at this time.

William McCombs asked if the Health Council includes the medical community and Island Hospital.

John Coleman stated he did not know the details of the makeup of the group.

Mr. McCombs wondered if we seeing input from the medical community.

Mr. Coleman said this is more letting people know that this process is happening, and less reaching out and seeking input from specific people and groups.

William McCombs asked of clarification as to what is meant by "pop up tabling".

John Coleman clarified that staff will set up a table at specific locations and have information available.

They will also be able to answer questions.

Linda Martin asked how citizens can find the website.

Libby Grage clarified that they can google "2025 Comprehensive Plan update Anacortes" and it will be the first result.

Adjournment

7:24