

Anacortes Planning Commission Minutes - July 9, 2025

Roll Call

Chairperson Linda Martin called to order the Anacortes Planning Commission meeting of July 9, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Jim Stoneman, Frank Jeretzky, Paul Ryan, Luke Currier, and Mike Mills were present. Jim Stoneman moved to excuse Will McCombs from the meeting. Luke Currier seconded. All ayes.

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes

Minutes of February 12, 2025 and June 11, 2025 were submitted for approval.

The minutes for February 12, 2025 were submitted for approval. Frank Jeretzky moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Luke Currier seconded. All ayes.

The minutes for June 11, 2025 were submitted for approval. Jim Stoneman moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Paul Ryan seconded. All ayes.

Public Comment

Public comment received 7/2/25

No public comment received.

Public Hearings

Other Business

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update: Draft development regulation amendments addressing STEP housing (emergency Shelters, Transitional housing, Emergency housing, and Permanent supportive housing)

Libby Grage said she is presenting the draft code amendments for STEP (emergency Shelters, Transitional housing, Emergency housing, and Permanent supportive housing) housing tonight. She gave the background for STEP housing which is addressed by House Bill 1220 and recommendations in the Housing Action Plan (HAP) on integration. These types of housing are targeted towards addressing unique challenges of people who are at the greatest risk of losing their housing. She provided details on these 4 housing types.

Emergency shelters may include day and warming centers that don't provide overnight accommodations. These serve individuals and families who are currently homeless. There is no length of stay defined by state law. She reviewed the rules and services provided in emergency shelters. Transitional housing provides supportive services to facilitate moving from homelessness to permanent housing. Individuals and families that are currently homeless. The clients usually have up to 2 years for the length of stay. She reviewed the rules and services provided. Emergency housing includes temporary indoor accommodation that is intended to address individuals' basic health, food, clothing and personal hygiene needs. These serve individuals and families who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. The stay is usually up to 60 days.

Permanent supportive housing is subsidized, leased housing with lower barriers to entry that would be typical for other subsidized and unsubsidized rental housing. This is for populations that need comprehensive support services to maintain housing. She moved on to HB 1220 which was passed in 2021 that required the city plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all income levels; assures enough land capacity is available for local housing needs; and specific zoning and development regulations for the 4 different housing types. The city must allow transitional housing or permanent supportive housing in any zone where residential dwelling units or hotels are allowed; it must allow indoor emergency shelters or indoor emergency housing in any zones in which hotels are allowed. The city may impose reasonable occupancy, spacing, and intensity of use requirements to protect public health and safety. She reviewed the projected housing needs by income. Anacortes needs 60 emergency housing units and 339 permanent supportive housing units in the low income bracket. She gave examples of local emergency shelters and

transitional housing in Anacortes.

Ms. Grage stated that the current code does not address STEP housing. The HAP recommends specifically addressing the 4 housing types in code to avoid uncertainty and legal challenges; apply design standards for multi-family uses to each type of STEP housing; and parking, spacing and suggestions on operational plans. Commerce recommends against requiring operational plans as they can be a barrier for development and staff may not have the training to review them for completeness. She reviewed the summary table from the meeting packet. This describes the zones where each type of STEP housing is permitted; the development standards; parking and the review process for modifications. Emergency shelters and emergency housing have to be allowed in any zones where hotels are allowed. Transitional housing and permanent supportive housing need to be permitted in all residential zones along with CBD, C, CM, & MMU. She reviewed the proposed amendments to the permitted uses table (19.41.040) to add STEP housing types. All of these housing types need to comply with our multi-family development standards. Regarding parking, we are proposing that emergency shelters parking requirements are a Director decision. The Director can require a parking study. For the other 3 STEP housing types, staff is proposing that the parking requirement be the same as required for the proposed dwelling type. The applicant can submit a parking study to support a reduction to that requirement.

Libby Grage pointed out that Commerce recommends allowing administrative modifications of certain requirements to facilitate production of STEP housing. These could be modifications to setbacks, density limits, restrictions on supportive spaces inside buildings (ie: childcare), and public noticing (when such notice could compromise the safety of tenants). The review process is proposed to be the same as the underlying permit type. She gave the requirements for the 5 types of review.

Jim Stoneman referenced the parking, suggesting the language for emergency shelter be the same as the other 3. He feels this is basically the same except the applicant can provide parking study to request a modification.

Libby Grage clarified that staff intends to require a parking study for the Director's decision for emergency shelters. In AMC 19.64.040 there is clarifying language to require the parking study. The proposed change removes the option for the applicant to choose what to submit to support their request.

Paul Ryan asked if the Salvation Army provides emergency housing.

John Coleman said they don't. They explored it but their board did not support it. Instead, they provide the cold weather shelter in conjunction with the Anacortes Family Center. They provide vouchers that local motels accept for cold weather shelter.

Mike Mills circled back to parking. He wonders why this says "may be required" instead of "must".

Libby Grage said there could be situations where it doesn't make sense to always require it.

Mr. Mills suggested "may be required unless waived by the Director". Also have a general concern about decreasing parking. He understands that this type of housing would usually be less demand for parking. He expressed concern that once the buildings are built, the use of the buildings could change and it would be difficult to provide additional parking after the fact. Also the proximity of transit and parking to the development should be reviewed. He prefers to allow staff to have some discretion based on the actual proposal.

Ms. Grage stated that the requirements of a parking study may help with that concern.

John Coleman pointed out that we oversee housing affordability in this department. Parking is really expensive and a concern for builders of affordable housing. We don't want to drive those costs up; rather we want to strike a balance.

Libby Grage reviewed AMC 19.64.020 regarding parking studies.

Linda Martin asked if the Director would be able to grant a permit with zero parking requirements for these 4 housing types.

Libby Grage said that is a possibility. It would depend on the type of facility and its location and proximity to transit, with plenty of on-street parking in the area, etc.

Frank Jeretzky stated that the proposal is to have transition housing allowed in all residential zones. He asked what the off-street parking requirement would be if someone converted a 6 bedroom house to

transitional housing.

John Coleman all of the types of housing except emergency housing require that same parking requirements for typical housing for that site.

Mr. Jeretzky wondered if the parking requirement would be based on the new use.

Ms. Grage clarified it would follow the underlying zoning requirements.

John Coleman gave the example of Oxford housing. This is transitional housing for persons leaving a treatment facility. There could be 10 men living in a house. They are self-policing without staff on-site. We can't exclude them and they are allowed by law. That would not require additional parking requirements. If there was an organization wanted to do transitional housing with a caretaker on site, we may have to look at a Director's decision.

Frank Jeretzky pointed out that staff commented that parking limits affordable housing. He expressed his opinion that parking limits all types of housing.

Linda Martin referenced housing needs chart. Given the timeline of this we should have 5 years of current data. She wonders if we're meeting the yearly housing units

Libby Grage said we She clarified that the city is not required to build the housing, just to create the regulations and condition for when a developer wants to built them.

Mrs. Martin said she's always thought that these projections aren't realistic because they were not based on historical data. Back to the 6 unit home conversation. She wonders if the city is notified when an existing structure is switched to transitional housing.

Libby Grage said there's no requirement for notification for that change. We would likely find out about them if they needed permits for a remodel.

John Coleman clarified that the State is the one that provides the shelter info. Shelter providers work with the state. Permanent supportive housing may be difficult to track.

Linda Martin said that with no public notice requirement, she expressed concern about sex offenders, jail release, etc. It doesn't seem safe.

Ms. Grage said there are requirements for sex offenders that would apply.

Paul Ryan asked if transitional housing is considered a rental type of facility. If Anacortes had a rental registration program, we would be able to track them.

Libby Grage said that could be a way to track the rental itself, but not the person.

Linda Martin asked in which zones these 4 types of housing not be allowed.

Ms. Grage reviewed the zoning map. Light Industrial, Heavy Manufacturing and Manufacturing and Shipping are not compatible with residential use, so it's not allowed there.

Mrs. Martin asked what the zoning is for the City's property in Shapes Corner.

Libby Grage stated it is R4 and LM1 in that area.

Linda Martin asked if the affordable housing project is still moving forward in that area.

John Coleman pointed out that the city owns 12 acres there. We may be able to partner with other agencies to provide affordable housing, but did not discuss these 4 types of housing. We are still reviewing the possibilities for that area. There are some constraints in the area.

Linda Martin wondered if Habitat for Humanity is considered permanent supportive housing.

Mr. Coleman said it is not because they do not provide supportive services.

Linda Martin asked for staff to define intensity of use standards.

Ms. Grage clarified it is the density of people, transportation and/or services needed by participants. If the services needed are high, there could be more activity at that location that may impact the surrounding area. She asked the Commissioners if there are any other changes you'd recommend.

Mrs. Martin asked if there is anything in the proposed changes that goes above and beyond the state requirements.

Libby Grage said the state law does not dictate the parking requirements. It doesn't specify that the city has to allow for the applicant to request modifications to the standards; nor does it identify the review process. Staff's recommendations are based on Department of Commerce guidelines to help reduce barriers since we have a need in our community. The draft regulations have been modeled after that guidance.

Linda Martin pointed out that parking requirements is one barrier to this type of housing. The second barrier is onsite recreation and open space requirements. She was not sure that was modified.

Libby Grage stated that there are proposed changes to open space requirements. She reviewed the proposed changes

Mrs. Martin said the 3rd barrier is restrictions on support space, which is addressed via the Director discretion. The 4th barrier is clarifying where these types of housing are allowed, which was addressed also. Libby Grage- agreed.

Libby Grage provided an update on other projects. The full updated draft Comprehensive Plan will be published by July 16th. This will be all the elements, policies & goals. Notices will be mailed to all residents and property owners in the city. There will be a 30+ day comment period and then public hearings. In August and September, the development regulation amendments draft will be published; SEPA issued and public hearings. In October, the PC will make a recommendation and then City Council will begin the review. The deadline for adoption is December 31, 2025. We are canceling the July 23rd PC meeting.

Ms. Grage stated subsequent to the Planning Commission discussion on the future land use map (FLUM), there are a few more properties that staff will recommend changing the FLUM and zoning Staff is recommending changing the Olson building from MS to CBD; and the Anacortes Museum from OT to P. There will also be updated language to the goals and policies for FLUM designations to clarify. The Parks, Recreation and Open Space element will have an updated open space map along with the level of service for parks and recreation facilities. Staff will highlight those changes when they are presented. There was Planning Commission discussion to change the Climate element policies, so those will be integrated. Staff is also cross referencing Climate policies throughout the other elements.

Planning Department Update

John Coleman said once the Comprehensive Plan is released, staff will be working on the development regulations, so there is a possibility for additional Planning Commission meetings. On Monday I'll be presenting to the City Council on the economic development strategic plan. Thai is available in the City Council packet.

Adjournment

Linda Martin adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.