

Situation Assessment-Community Design

1. Internal Analysis

- *Describe Anacortes' current situation regarding study group subject, with particular interest identifying our strengths and weaknesses.*

Strengths:

1. Historic downtown district
2. 3 mile "spine" road (Commercial Ave) with topographic view from round-about to port
3. Maritime character and theme
4. Small community feel – inviting and friendly
5. Strong marine industry with a leading boat builder
6. Marine trade center
7. Deep roots in fishing, wood processing and canneries
8. Turn of the century architecture
9. Variety of environs: forests, open space, trails, downtown, waterfront, residential/commercial/industrial
10. Island environ suggests independence, a carrying capacity, a limitation imposed by its geography, isolation
11. The old downtown, working marine waterfront, and marinas have an appropriate scale for creating a walkable, livable community
12. Natural and recreational parks and open space
13. Location and access to San Juan Islands, Gulf Islands and Vancouver Island
14. International ferry route and connection
15. A community who is active, well informed, and an advocate for sustainability
16. Desirability of natural beauty and small town feel attractive to retirees with knowledge, talents, treasures and skills that can be utilized through creative opportunities

Weaknesses:

1. Commercial Avenue, SR 20 (from round-about to 12 Street) is an asphalt, hard surface, not-to-scale invitation to the City
2. Under utilized South Commercial Ave development (from round-about to Oakes and East and West from O Street to R Street – prime for redevelopment and an answer to no sprawl)
3. Undeveloped waterfront in key areas for highest and best use
4. "Tired" historic downtown where deferred maintenance to buildings and upgrading of infrastructure (walks, roads, etc.) promotes perception of
5. Strip development along March Point, no unique character (refinery, auto dealers, and mini-storage land uses)
6. First impression to Anacortes and its environs from the east is March Point refinery and strip highway development

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7. No unifying theme, or design standards, the land uses and design/developments is ad hoc at best...an undesirable eclecticism that does not build or strengthen community character.
8. Sign pollution (i.e. lack of a strong signage program) speaks to dated standards.
9. Need a “town” theme – “slow down, stop, and spend some time in Anacortes, the community by the waterfront.....”??? ...”community in a park...”????
10. There is a disconnect between March Point and downtown Anacortes...almost doesn’t feel like the same town.
11. Lack of walkable, livable mixed use development in core of City...and south with opportunity for new development and ability to expand connectivity (i.e. look to a town like Fairhaven for a local example of vitality due to mixed-use supporting existing downtown district...and community character)
12. Port and City need to align their programing goals and priorities for betterment of overall community and quit working in silos.
13. Poor retail message, lack of “welcome-ness” (i.e. storefronts with poor window displays – possibly introduce design guidelines through alliances that “manage” acceptable standards
14. Lack of public access, promenades, trails, and open space connectivity. Publicly sign future construction of known trails (approved) through aesthetic signage and work with new developments and redevelopments to ensure future projects deliver on the vision (required and made known to all parties as part of development process)
15. Arts-in-public places appears tired.
16. Loss of ferry passengers on a schedule don’t patronize retail establishments (loss of revenue)
17. Business and Residential Internet services are subject to extractive economic practices due to current providers’ effective monopoly status.

2. External Analysis

- As it relates to study group subject, describe outside influences impacting Anacortes, with particular interest identifying opportunities & threats.

Opportunities:

1. An asset is its marine waterfront, unlike other communities who may have a waterfront, but not a deep sea port
2. The City could be marketed as a “destination place, or as an escape from everywhere or anyplace USA”
3. The City is not an I-5 community
4. The City offers a historic downtown, working and recreational marine waterfront, and a community with a forest & open space/trails
5. Need a “core” community gathering place – “a town center”. This could be the catalyst for redevelopment and new development downtown and a key driver to residents and guests to visit downtown consistently...a pride of the town.

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6. Position itself to offer services (i.e. tourism, health etc.), housing (a diverse offering) that meets the need for baby boomers seeking a town like Anacortes...away from the hustle and bustle of the “big” city, increasing our tax base (with economic sustainability in mind).
7. Art community could be engaged to develop a new art-in-public places theme and help establish code for future implementation.
8. Look for opportunities to the advantage of our demographics..i.e. Senior community could be encouraged to become more engaged through various platforms to provide wisdom to younger generation and share their wealth of information (not left behind and forgotten) for the betterment of our community
9. Need messaging to greater metropolitan areas to promote the City of Anacortes on a consistent basis (for all seasons) to help sustain year ‘round economic vitality (where stores don’t close their doors in the winter months)
10. Look for opportunities to attract technology companies and work-from-home knowledge workers through superior quality of life and technology infrastructure

Threats:

1. Anacortes is not an easy-off/easy-on I-5 interchange community, its off the beaten path
2. Lacks an identity or “brand,” what makes the City unique?
3. Possibility of decision makers not making decisions and keeping status quo (window of opportunity closing and folks, businesses, etc. seeking other destinations and opportunities)
4. Few tourist related activities
5. WSDOT budget handcuffing beauty of our town with minimal road standards for key portal (Commercial Ave and Oakes) roads into and through Anacortes

3. Issues

- Identify issues which need to be addressed in the 2016 Comp Plan Update.

1. Need design standards to establish character of town (not subject us to developer’s vision)
2. Need architectural review committee, board of adjustment, or hearing examiner to assure compliance and/or grant variances
3. Need code/zoning that reverses negative property and promotes creative developments
4. Place an emphasis on a private/public partnership among the City, the Port, and landowners with significant land holdings and investment expectations.
5. There is a lack of certainty or predictability with the land use development process (see # 3 above)
6. Anacortes has divergent environs: Skyline and the west; historic downtown and the waterfront; March Point; hospital/medical; and, the community forest. Should they be treated as one cohesive community (common thread linking together), or are they separate, unique, and serve different purposes (vision)

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7. Should the City have a new central civic building that offers government and community services?
8. A public/private partnership - development that offers civic services/facilities (city hall & performing arts and theater center), a hotel/convention center, public spaces and art, and retail sales/housing opportunities in a master planned community setting. Could the town be looked at with “districts”...i.e. Arts and Entertainment District, etc.
9. There is a need for a “town center” allowing for community events that build upon our “sense of community”.
10. Non-motorized transportation – bicycling, running, walking – creates a healthy community. Safety is a key issue to the success and use of these trails, paths, etc. (i.e. lighting, barriers from vehicles, striping, signage, etc.)

4. What do we need to know?

- *Identify information needed to effectively assess situation and objectively evaluate concepts*

1. Examples of other communities that successfully incorporate a working marine waterfront including mixed commercial, residential, recreational, tourism and civic uses, and public open space and trails, that when viewed collectively represent a “walkable, livable community”
2. Where are we in the process of identifying an Economic Development person that has the experience to orchestrate the “dance” with developer’s, businesses, extensions, etc. that could help bring many of the needs we have to a “reality”

Situation Assessment-Capital Facilities

1. Internal Analysis

- *Describe Anacortes' current situation regarding study group subject, with particular interest identifying our strengths and weaknesses.*

Strengths:

1. All look good for future – H2O, sewer, natural gas and electric
2. New water plant designed to treat increased water with climate warming
3. Water and sewer facilities have auxiliary pumps in case of power outage

Weaknesses:

1. City Hall and lack of Civic Center
2. Roads need repairs.
3. Storm water system must meet NPDES regulations at all discharge points
4. Overhead wires should be put underground...especially over major traffic roads (clean site lines and reduce repairs to poles, lines (due to wind, trees, etc) and minimize risk of catastrophe during emergency
5. Many street lights too bright, “glary” and inefficient – look to re-fixture (see comment #12 under “Issues” below)
6. Selection of Internet service providers (increase options for cable providers, etc.)
7. Lack of Broadband Strategic Plan
8. Anacortes western shoreline vulnerable to tsunami damage
9. No protection plan for Anacortes shoreline for potential sea level rise
10. Many buildings dangerous as not up to date on seismic code – i.e. City Hall
11. Citizens not informed on disaster plans and what they should do
12. Possible loss of Berenson Bridge – could Army Corps of Engineer bridge building apparatus be stored for implementation in major emergency

2. External Analysis

- *As it relates to study group subject, describe outside influences impacting Anacortes, with particular interest identifying opportunities & threats.*

Opportunities:

1. As we improve roads, improve/adapt storm water collection & disbursement

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2. Adaptation of ordinances/codes (dark skies for example) established and proven in other Cities
3. Preparedness assistance from agencies (refer back to #11 above under “weaknesses”)
4. Implement a “Dig Once” policy which encourages all municipal construction projects to include the addition of conduit for Fiber Optic cable
5. Collaborate with the City of Mt. Vernon, Port of Skagit, and possibly Island County OPALCO on Broadband strategy and capabilities
6. Quality of Life + Quality of Infrastructure: Attract technology firms and “creative class” individuals with high speed Internet options
7. Explore new business models (public/private, CO-OP, small or non-accredited investors) for local Green Energy, Internet, small Manufacturing (3D printing, Makerspaces), Education, Sharing-Economy, Permaculture, etc.

Threats:

1. A possible need to raise taxes to fund road repairs and infrastructure improvements. Could be offset by increased revenue (taxes) gained through development/redevelopment.
2. Disruption of services due to crisis of accident or acts of nature
3. **Public use of cellular in emergency**
4. Natural disasters on several fronts...tsunamis, sea level rise, forests fires, toxic refinery fire, Mt. Baker eruption, massive oil spill, etc.
5. Falling onto the wrong side of the “Digital Divide”

3. Issues

- *Identify issues which need to be addressed in the 2016 Comp Plan Update.*

Issues:

1. Climate change – sea wall to address level rise; tsunamis and earthquakes (and potential landslides)
2. Coordinate County and City efforts to expand the Senior Center & Pool Facility
3. **Reduce CO2 emissions by 20% by 2025**
4. Reduce reliance on oil products
5. Encourage non-fossil fuel transportation public and private
6. Encourage solar panels on all new construction
7. Reduce car trips with bikes, walking trails, etc with connections throughout the city

Situation Assessment-Capital Facilities

8. Encourage “buy local” messaging to reduce trips out of town. Encourage existing retailers, restaurants and tourist activity promoters to “strategically partner” together for greater value to patrons (i.e. buy 2 entrees and receive 1 free movie pass; buy 2 whale watching tours and receive 2 free cups of coffee, etc.)
9. Use “Dark Skies” rules to reduce energy usage and light pollution at night (add to code for future development)
10. Encourage community gardens and private gardens for growing food (implement standards for upkeep and sensitive to our climate (i.e. greenhouses with plots for rent/sale to protect outward appearance “clean” and not unkempt as plots can look over time if not consistently maintained...just plan for this)
11. Local emergency centers located around city and adequately prepared for housing, food & water distribution, etc
12. Public needs to know what to do (education of community for disaster preparedness, i.e. 4 days food, water, meds, etc.)
13. CERT training in all wards or neighborhoods
14. Water (alternative) access points for shipping in supplies in case bridge destroyed
15. Restrict development in areas subject to tsunamis and sea level rise
16. Plan for sea level rise at wastewater plant
17. Pet needs planned for as not allowed in Red Cross facilities
18. All businesses should have evacuation plan
19. Mount Baker eruption - potential air quality crisis dependent on wind direction to the health of people/pets and to air filtration systems, etc.
20. Inclusion of language supporting a Broadband Strategic Plan

4. What do we need to know?

Identify information needed to effectively assess situation and objectively evaluate concepts.

1. Projections/potentials for tsunamis? Landslides?
2. Codes/Guidelines other cities have used for dark skies?
3. State of Washington laws/regulations surrounding municipal Broadband initiatives
4. Mount Vernon and Island County OPALCO municipal Broadband business model information would be very helpful

Situation Assessment-Services & Other Issues

1. Internal Analysis

- *Describe Anacortes' current situation regarding study group subject, with particular interest identifying our strengths and weaknesses.*

Strengths:

1. Good Working waterfront with 5 marinas and multiple repair facilities – (Keep in business!)
2. Hospital
3. Small craft airport
4. Forest Lands and Lakes
5. Senior Center & Pool (promotes healthy community activity)
6. Small craft launch on West side

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of tourist services (i.e. along waterfront, etc.)
2. Large & small craft haul-out.
3. Small craft launch on East side.
4. Bike & Pedestrian safety
5. Fiber optic cable infrastructure limited to ad-hoc runs built by Wavecable to serve schools, hospital, etc.

2. External Analysis

- *As it relates to study group subject, describe outside influences impacting Anacortes, with particular interest identifying opportunities & threats.*

Opportunities:

1. Build upon strong maritime service industry with related services (incentivize good, clean practices to round out and support existing uses)
2. Look to cutting edge ways to improve amenities in our Forest Lands all the while ensuring their long term protection and sustainability
3. Improve Senior Center & Pool for future use - work with County
4. Implement program where City moves to the use of electric vehicles for local city business

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5. Install electric car charging stations in public parking areas
6. Bike rental kiosks (rent-a-bike) around city for tourists use and clear instructions for use and clear marking for parking
7. Install solar panels in public parking areas
8. Invest in Broadband and fiber-optic cable build out as a strategic public utility

Threats:

1. Other Cities offer incentives to draw maritime uses/services away from Anacortes
2. Provision and implementation of services by other cities that draw existing residents away and tip newcomers away
3. Lack of tourism services and continued missed opportunity at revenue as other Cities recognize the opportunity
4. Mount Vernon's Broadband network and I-5 location may attract businesses away from Anacortes

3. Issues

- *Identify issues which need to be addressed in the 2016 Comp Plan Update.*

Issues:

1. Finish trails (i.e. Guemes Channel, etc.) w/supportive facilities such as kiosks, trash receptacles, dog stations, water fountains, etc.
2. Coordination between County and City to expand the Senior Center & Pool Facility
3. Resolve way to capture ferry traffic with services that promote opportunities to shop/stay in Anacortes and still make scheduled departure (i.e. ferry lane, shuttle and/or tram (possibly aside Guemes Channel trail) for experience and ease).
4. Hotel options are marginal, losing potential revenue during promotional events
5. Inclusion of language supporting development of a Broadband Strategic Plan

4. What do we need to know?

- *Identify information needed to effectively assess situation and objectively evaluate concepts.*