

Housing Study Group Issues and Concepts

1. Identify Issues to Be Addressed

1. Meet the planning target goal of 2,600 new housing units in the next 20 years
2. Provide a variety of housing sizes, types, and price ranges to meet the needs of all segments of the population
3. Increase density while maintaining the "small town character" of Anacortes

2. Identify Possible Concepts to Address Issues

Issue 1: Meet the planning target goal of 2,600 new housing units in the next 20 years

- Current zoning can accommodate this many units through redevelopment, but doing so could significantly change the character of many existing neighborhoods
- Single family homes still predominate in many multifamily and commercial areas which are zoned to allow multifamily units
- High land costs are a significant factor in the inability of developers to build economically viable new multifamily housing
- Small lots in individual ownership make it difficult to assemble larger parcels that are an appropriate size for developing multifamily housing. Many existing houses are too valuable to tear down for redevelopment, and those which are deteriorated enough to tear down are not on contiguous lots.
- Some new single family homes are being built in multifamily zones, thus not achieving the density potential of the zone
- Many areas of town are currently unavailable for increased development or changes in density (i.e. property owned by City, Port, School District, Hospital, Tribal land, etc., and subdivisions with deed restrictions that limit the uses of property)
- There is potential for added housing in a mixed-use development on MJB property

Issue 2: Provide a variety of housing sizes, types, and price ranges to meet the needs of all segments of the population

- Rental housing as well as home-ownership in all price ranges
- Low-income housing, including subsidized units
- Workforce housing to enable workers in a wide range of jobs to live in Anacortes
- Smaller units for smaller households in all price ranges, including cottage housing, Accessory Dwelling Units, and multifamily units
- Housing close to downtown, employment, and services to encourage walking and biking
- An increasing need for specialized housing, such as assisted living, dementia care, co-housing, group homes (for elderly, disabled, homeless, and those with mental health needs), senior communities
- Additional support services to assist elderly and disabled people so that they can remain in their homes
- Collaborative approaches utilizing public/private partnerships to achieve desired housing goals

Issue 3: Increase density while maintaining the "small town character" of Anacortes

- Encourage developments which incorporate various sizes, types, and prices of housing units, to attract a diverse population with a range of ages, incomes, skills, cultures, and interests, and create a more inclusive community
- Many residents prefer living in traditional neighborhoods composed primarily of single family homes. Seek ways to increase the supply of a diverse range of housing types in such neighborhoods, while maintaining neighborhood character, including design standards that respect the uniqueness of each neighborhood.
- Provide for a variety of multifamily housing options for those who choose not to rent or buy a single family home or cannot afford to do so
- Allow building on smaller lots (perhaps 3,000 s.f. in R3, and 5,000 s.f. in R2) to promote infill with new smaller homes in existing neighborhoods
- Discontinue R1 zoning and change that area to R2 or R3 to enable building of more units
- Re-zone areas to residential zoning where non-residential uses are no longer viable (such as along Fidalgo Bay Road, and east of the State ferry dock)
- Revise the specifics of zoning regulations (height, lot coverage, parking, etc.) to enable more units to be built on a given lot size in multifamily zones, and to facilitate Accessory Dwelling Units and infill housing in single-family zones
- Encourage retention of viable existing smaller and older homes, which provide moderate price housing, have a sense of history, and embody the sustainability principles of reduce, reuse, and repurpose
- Provide areas for multifamily development that creates multifamily neighborhoods with a sense of community and neighborhood identity
- Provide areas for new mixed-use developments where housing, shopping, services, and jobs are integrated in a carefully planned way
- Develop design guidelines for neighborhoods to increase compatibility between new development and existing neighborhood character
- Consider density bonuses for multifamily projects to achieve Comprehensive Plan goals
- Consider targeting specific areas for redevelopment with high-density housing, including re-zoning if needed; specify minimum as well as maximum density in those areas
- Identify preferred areas for future Urban Growth Area expansion to meet unanticipated future needs for annexation to provide additional housing (analyze the pros and cons of the area above Sharpe's Corner, Whistle Lake plateau, and Havecost/Rosario as possible areas for residential expansion)
- Allow a mix of multifamily and single family housing in residential zones if part of an approved Planned Unit Development
- Achieve a balance between increasing density to meet housing needs, and maintaining the existing small town character of Anacortes

Transportation Study Group Issues and Concepts

1. Identify Issues to Be Addressed

1. Reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels, air pollution, greenhouse gases, and cost of road infrastructure
2. Improve traffic flow and safety at Sharpe's Corner
3. Improve traffic flow and safety and aesthetics on south Commercial Avenue
4. Improve traffic flow and safety on Oakes Ave.
5. Eliminate ferry waiting line backup into travel lanes on Oakes Ave.
6. Provide appropriate amounts of parking for various uses
7. Provide and maintain infrastructure for transportation needs

2. Identify Possible Concepts to Address Issues

Issue 1: Reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels, air pollution, greenhouse gases, and cost of road infrastructure

- Encourage bicycle use - provide amenities such as bike racks, and infrastructure such as bike lanes and signage
- Encourage walking - provide amenities such as benches, and infrastructure such as sidewalks and trails, crossing signals, and signage
- Provide options for frequent local public transportation among neighborhoods, and from neighborhoods to city center, services, healthcare, employment, and shopping
- Provide options for frequent public inter-city transportation to city center, services, healthcare, employment, and shopping in nearby cities
- Provide options for frequent public transportation to regional transportation hubs
- Develop in-city housing, services and jobs in locations that enable people to walk, bike, and take public transportation between destinations

Issue 2: Improve traffic flow and safety at Sharpe's Corner

- Provide a dedicated lane for westbound traffic turning south to Whidbey Island including new signage
- Install better timing of traffic lights approaching from the east
- Improve safe crossing of intersection for bicycles and pedestrians
- Improve safe local access for businesses
- Re-route traffic to upper Fidalgo Bay Road to eliminate crossing highway
- Roundabout is a long-term solution - make incremental improvements sooner

Issue 3: Improve traffic flow and safety and aesthetics on south Commercial Ave.

- Create a direct connection from 12th St. directly to the R Ave. truck route where Safeway is now, to reduce truck congestion on south Commercial Ave.
- Install pedestrian-activated lights at intermediate intersections
- Provide pedestrian islands and corner bulb-outs where practical
- Accommodate bicycles with bicycle lanes
- Plant trees and create landscaped areas along south Commercial Ave.
- Encourage businesses to improve site and building appearance

Issue 4: Improve traffic flow and safety on Oakes Ave.

- Provide a continuous bicycle lane from Commercial Ave. to the ferry on both sides
- Provide a continuous left turn lane from Commercial Ave. to the ferry
- Provide continuous sidewalks from Commercial Ave. to the ferry on both sides
- Improve the D Ave. - 32nd St. intersection (possible traffic light) and encourage local residents to use this route
- Complete W. 2nd St. between Baltimore Ave. and Erie Ave. to provide an alternate route for emergency vehicles and local traffic when traffic is backed up on Oakes Ave.

Issue 5: Eliminate ferry waiting line backup into travel lanes on Oakes Ave.

- Increase holding lane capacity at the ferry dock
- Provide a dedicated holding lane farther east on Oakes Ave.
- Provide a wide shoulder lane at least as far as Dakota Ave.
- Provide warning signs suggesting alternate routes when traffic is backed up
- Assign law enforcement or ferry personnel to direct traffic during severe backups, allowing local residents, walk-on passengers, and vehicles with reservations to bypass the holding lane

Issue 6: Provide appropriate amounts of parking for various uses

- Create shared parking lots or structures for downtown businesses
- Optimize on-street parking configurations
- Re-evaluate parking requirements in residential zones to balance the impact of off-street parking costs on housing affordability and impacts of on-street parking on neighborhoods
- Re-evaluate parking requirements for various non-residential uses to achieve a balance between providing adequate parking and reducing impervious surface
- Encourage pervious paving materials

Issue 7: Provide and maintain infrastructure for transportation needs

- Conduct and periodically update studies of future needs for roads, bike lanes, and pedestrian facilities, considering residential and non-residential development, freight movement, emergency response, tourism, and other factors
- Include ferries, boat transport, and airport in transportation planning
- Budget adequate funds for new transportation infrastructure
- Budget adequate funds for maintaining transportation infrastructure
- Require low impact development practices