Anacortes is

a unique, creative, vibrant and caring maritime waterfront community that supports cultural and economic diversity and vitality, balances sustainable growth with respect for our history, and protects our natural environment and public lands for future generations.
Acknowledgments

Mayor
Laurie Gere

City Council
Ryan Walters
Brad Adams
Eric Johnson
Matt Miller
John Archibald
Liz Lovelett
Erica Pickett

Planning Commission
Adam Farnsworth
Christina Hansen
Grace Pollard
Curt Oppel
Marty Laumbattus
Jeremy McNett
Christine Cleland-McGrath

City Staff
Don Measamer, Planning, Community & Economic Development Director
Libby Grage, Planning Manager
Fred Buckenmeyer, Public Works Director
Eric Shjarback, City Engineer
Rob Hoxie, GIS Coordinator
Gary Robinson, Parks & Recreation Director
Steve Hoglund, Finance Director

Citizen Advisory Committee
Lin Folsom
Nick Rennis
Cynthia Richardson
James Taylor
Walter Guterbock
Vernon Lauridsen
Bruce McDougal
Andy Stewart
Gary Christensen
Adrian Fewing
Wayne Huseby
Tal Jackson
Kirk Kennedy

Consultant Team
Bob Bengford AICP, MAKERS
Rachel Miller, MAKERS
Julie Bassuk AICP, MAKERS
Deborah Munkberg AICP, Three Square Blocks
Casey Bradfield, Three Square Blocks
Greg Easton, Property Counselors
Victor Saleman, TSINW
David Markley, TSINW
Contents: Vol. 1

Goals & Policies

INTRODUCTION .........................................................................................................................................................................I-6
Overview
Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan
Elements of the Plan
The Anacortes Community
Vision and Values Statement
Community Engagement Process
Implementation
Amending the Plan

LAND USE ...........................................................................................................................................................................I-13
Introduction
Goals and Policies
Subarea Plans

HOUSING ...............................................................................................................................................................................I-29
Introduction
Goals and Policies

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ................................................................................................................................................I-33
Introduction
Goals and Policies

ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION .......................................................................................................................................I-38
Introduction
Goals and Policies

PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE ...............................................................................................................................I-45
Introduction
Goals and Policies

TRANSPORTATION ...............................................................................................................................................................I-51
Introduction
Goals and Policies

CAPITAL FACILITIES ............................................................................................................................................................I-52
Introduction
Goals and Policies

UTILITIES ..............................................................................................................................................................................I-57
Introduction
Goals and Policies

ANACORTES 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – FIRST DRAFT

MAKERS architecture and urban design
Contents: Vol. 2

Background Information

LAND USE ..................................................................................................................................................................II-2
  Background information

HOUSING .................................................................................................................................................................II-11
  Background information

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT .................................................................................................................................II-24
  Background information

ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION .....................................................................................................................II-50
  Background information

TRANSPORTATION ......................................................................................................................................................II-57
  Background information

CAPITAL FACILITIES ................................................................................................................................................II-58
  Background information

UTILITIES ..................................................................................................................................................................II-80
  Background information
Introduction & Vision

Overview

The Anacortes Comprehensive Plan looks forward to 2036, provides a vision for the future, identifies goals and policies to achieve that vision, creates a basis for the City’s regulations and guides future decision-making.

This plan builds on the City’s existing Comprehensive Plan, responds to community needs and fulfills the Washington Growth Management (GMA) requirements for periodic review. It also conforms to Skagit County’s Countywide Planning Policies.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a broad statement of the community’s values and vision for its future. It is a policy road map that directs the orderly and coordinated physical development of the City for the next 20 years. It anticipates change and provides guidance for action to address and manage that change. The Anacortes Comprehensive Plan is specifically intended to sustain the city’s unique and vibrant maritime waterfront character and identity.

The Plan encompasses topics that address the physical, social and economic health of the City. A comprehensive plan takes a long-range perspective. For this reason, guidance is intentionally general, providing broad direction, but not prescribing specific implementation measures or regulatory actions. A plan is also a living document, adaptable to evolving conditions and offering a framework for the consideration of policy changes.

What’s Inside the Plan?

As established by the GMA, the City is required to include chapters that address land use, housing, transportation, capital facilities and utilities. The City may also include chapters on other topics of local importance. In this case, the City of Anacortes has opted to include chapters on economic development, parks, and the environment.

In addition to this introduction, the Anacortes Comprehensive Plan contains seven chapters, or elements, with goals and policies identified for each element. The goals and policies are numbered and labeled according to their respective elements. The contents of each element are briefly summarized in Table 1.
Table 1. Plan Contents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Element Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Use</td>
<td>Land use capacity to meet projected growth, desired land use patterns, community design, historic preservation, resource protection, community gathering spaces, healthy community provisions, regional coordination, and a focus on special planning areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing capacity to meet projected growth, housing preservation, housing design, neighborhood character, regional collaboration, and provision of a range of housing types to serve diverse needs and all economic segments of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>Fostering a balanced economy with healthy retail/commercial uses, maintaining and enhancing tourism opportunities, strengthening manufacturing and marine trades, emphasizing education and training, reducing unnecessary regulatory barriers, and enhancing public/private collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Emphasizing environmental stewardship, protecting and enhancing shorelines and water quality, protecting wildlife habitat, protecting tree cover, promote sustainable development practices, and addressing climate change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks, Recreation &amp; Open Space</td>
<td>Accessible parks, trails, and open spaces to serve the community, efficient and effective park programming, community engagement in park planning process, park maintenance, park financing, open space connectivity, and sustainable design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Transportation to support land uses envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan, movement of people and goods, transportation projects, financing, maintenance, safety, and environmental protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Facilities</td>
<td>Facilities and infrastructure needed for public services that will support planned population, employment, level of service standards, financing strategies, design and location, and maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>Location and design of utilities, quality of service, collaboration with regional partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anacortes became an incorporated city of the third class in 1891. Incorporation came at a high point in the early beginnings of settlement, which began in the shelter of Ship Harbor in the 1870’s. In the late 1870’s Amos Bowman, considered the town’s founder, and husband of the town’s namesake, the former Anna Curtis, established a general store and post office in the Ship Harbor area. In 1889, the quiet settlement was thrust into a boom period based on speculation that a western terminal of the transcontinental railroad would be developed at Anacortes to take advantage of the area’s natural deep water harbor. The railroad terminus failed to materialize and the boom soon passed. By the late 1890’s the City’s prosperity was based on local natural resources of lumber and fisheries and by the turn of the century, the City’s population was 1,176. From 1900-1950, growth of Anacortes’s economy and population was dependent upon development expansion of lumber and fisheries resources, until the 1950’s, when technological changes and resource depletion began to erode the strength of the natural resource base, resulting in a decline in population.

In 1953, with the development of the Shell and then Texaco refineries on March Point, population growth began on an upward trend, reaching 8,400 by 1960. However, from 1960 to 1970 growth from completion of the Industrial Redevelopment Area on Fidalgo Bay and growth in the tourist and marina...
business did not compensate for decreases in traditional employment sectors and the population decreased from 8,400 in 1960 to 7,700 in 1970.

Since 1970, the downward population trend of the ‘60’s has been reversed and the City has been experiencing slow to moderate population and economic growth since then. The official state estimate of the April, 2015 population is 16,310 (Office of Financial Management).

Today, Anacortes is the largest seaport in Skagit County and the County’s second largest city. Anacortes’s tremendous natural beauty and small town feel contribute to a quality of life that is highly valued by its people. In the face of continued growth, the City seeks to shape its future in ways that will maintain the quality of life that makes Anacortes a special place to live and work.

**Figure 1. Anacortes vicinity map.**
Vision Statement

A vision represents a community’s best desired future. Previous versions of the Comprehensive Plan lacked a vision statement; therefore, the 2016 update establishes the Community’s vision, based on extensive community visioning efforts and crafted by the Community Advisory Committee, Planning Commission and City Council:

**Anacortes is a unique, creative, vibrant and caring maritime waterfront community that supports cultural and economic diversity and vitality, balances sustainable growth with respect for our history, and protects our natural environment and public lands for future generations.**

Values Statements

The following “Values Statements” further define and clarify the vision by identifying values to embrace/achieve in the next twenty plus years.

**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.

**Provide a Supportive & Connected Community**

- Provide a variety of housing types in all price ranges.
- Utilize residents’ extensive knowledge and experience.
- Be aware of how we relate to the issues around the world.
- Provide good access to town amenities.
- Provide high quality health and community services.
- Make education available for people of all ages and abilities.
- Provide cultural and artistic activities and opportunities.
- Offer a variety of year-round recreational and tourism opportunities.
- Provide good pedestrian, bicycle, and multi-modal access.

**Pursue Economic Vitality**

- Encourage diverse economic opportunities.
- Leverage our marine traditions (waterfronts).
- Acquire and retain highly skilled trade/crafts.
- Actively recruit new businesses and support existing businesses.
- Foster a lively downtown and commercial areas.
- Invest appropriately in infrastructure (i.e., utilities, communication, transportation, schools, and services).
- Adopt innovative and creative technologies.
- Leverage our natural and recreational amenities.

**Embrace a Culture that Celebrates Anacortes’s History & Natural Setting**

- Preserve our historic places and natural surroundings.
- Preserve the historic, pedestrian-friendly scale of Old Town and the CBD.
- Preserve public marine and forest views.
- Develop design standards reflecting small-town scale and character.
- Engage the community and guests in festivals and other events.
- Provide and protect access to the waterfront and forestlands.
- Encourage year-round visitors.
Community Engagement Activities

The Mayor and Council were unanimous in their desire to start the Comprehensive Plan update with proactive engagement of the community through an extensive visioning and community input effort. The following is a summary of the public engagement activities completed during the Plan development:

**Community Workshops:** The City conducted four interactive public workshops with over 100 citizens attending each meeting. The first two workshops (March 27 and April 30, 2014) focused on community visioning. The third workshop (August 26, 2014) focused on the central Fidalgo Bay waterfront. The fourth workshop (February 26, 2015) evaluated land use alternatives. These meetings were noticed through utility bills, newspaper, city hall, website, library, hospital sign, and through emails.

**Website:** The City has maintained a webpage devoted to the Comprehensive Plan update—including planning updates, invitations to public meetings, links to surveys, meeting summaries, and document drafts.

**Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meetings:** A 12-member CAC consisting of interested community members was established by the City Council (Resolution 1888). The CAC was tasked with assisting in the development of the comprehensive plan update by performing an advisory role to improve the Planning Commission recommendations and City Council decisions through facilitation of public discussion, performing analysis and seeking answers to questions raised throughout the process. Technical expertise on various subjects was provided to the CAC by a Technical Advisory Panel comprised of members with expertise in various industries or interests. The CAC had met 27 times (as of October 14, 2015) and produced various issue papers and recommendations related to land use, housing, economic development, the environment, sustainability, community design, transportation, and infrastructure.

**Public Meetings & Public Hearings:** Multiple opportunities for public input and participation were provided at Planning Commission and City Council meetings throughout the plan development. As of October 14, 2015, this included 12 Planning Commission, 10 City Council, and 4 joint Planning Commission/City Council meetings.

**Other community engagement:**
- Mailings
- Periodic email updates
- Presentations to various community groups
- Booth at the Anacortes Farmers’ Market
- Broadcast of workshops, meetings and upcoming meeting information on Channel 10
- Publication of information in the Anacortes American and A-Town is Our Town
- Online and mailed surveys
Implementation

The goals and policies contained within Section 1 are the heart of the plan, and provide direction for guiding Anacortes’s growth. A goal is a direction-setter. It is an ideal future end, condition or statement related to the public health, safety or general welfare towards which planning and implementation measures are directed. A goal is a general expression of community values and, therefore, abstract in nature.

A policy is a specific statement that guides decision-making. It indicates a clear commitment of the local legislative body. A policy is based upon a comprehensive plan’s goals and the analysis of the data. A policy is put into effect through implementation measures such as zoning, land division, and environmental ordinances.

There are a number of tools used to implement the Comprehensive Plan. The main methods are through development regulations, such as zoning and critical areas ordinances, and through capital improvement plans, such as sewer, water, parks and traffic. These tools constantly weigh the City’s financial ability to support development against its minimum population obligations and environmental protection. It is the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies that the development regulations and capital improvement plans are based upon.

Table 2. Comprehensive Plan implementation flow chart.
Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are necessary from time to time to respond to changing conditions and needs of the community. The Growth Management Act requires that amendments to a Comprehensive Plan be considered no more frequently than once per year. Proposed amendments to the Comprehensive plan are to be considered concurrently so that the cumulative effect of various proposals can be ascertained. In considering proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, proposals will be evaluated for intent and consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, and whether there has been a change in conditions or circumstances from initial adoption of the Comprehensive Plan has, or new information is present which was not available at the time of the initial adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission reviews amendments to the Plan, and forwards recommendations to the City Council.

Comprehensive Plan Updates

The Growth Management Act requires that Comprehensive Plans be reviewed and updated as necessary, at least every seven years, outside of the optional annual review process. Skagit County must review its designated urban growth areas at least every ten years and the densities permitted within both incorporated and unincorporated portions of the County.