

Town of Coupeville

June 2025 Draft

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2025-2045

VOLUME 1



Contents

Vision and Plan Introduction.....	1
Land Use Element	12
Historic Preservation & Community Design Element.....	27
Housing Element.....	35
Economic Stability Element.....	48
Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element.....	55
Natural Systems Element.....	68
Climate Element.....	74
Transportation Element.....	88
Capital Facilities Element.....	97
Utilities Element	109

Plan at a Glance

Vision & Plan Introduction

This chapter introduces the Coupeville vision statement and provides brief background information on the Town of Coupeville's history and physical form, the planning framework under which this plan was created, and how the plan is implemented.

Land Use Element

This is central to all other elements and describes development patterns that support Coupeville's vision for the future. It includes the Future Land Use Designation Map. Goals and policies address growth management, residential and commercial uses, and resource protection.

Historic Preservation & Community Design Element

This combines historic preservation and community design as a singular, integrated element to promote Coupeville's wealth of historical resources and quality development.

Housing Element

This addresses the preservation, improvement, and development of housing; identifies land to accommodate different housing types; and makes provisions for the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community including planning for housing by income band and providing for emergency housing/shelters and permanent supportive housing.

Economic Stability Element

This element provides guidance on the types of businesses that are compatible and complementary in Coupeville, it addresses tourism, and it promotes employment opportunities.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element

This element guides the expansion and maintenance of Coupeville's park system and helps ensure a healthy recreational and open space environment.

Natural Systems Element

This element aims to protect Coupeville's natural systems, such as air and water quality, and to protect people and property from natural hazards.

Climate Element

This element provides guidance on mitigating the effects of a changing climate, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for climate impact scenarios, including Fostering

resilience to climate impacts and natural hazards; protecting and enhancing environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advancing environmental justice.

Transportation Element

This element guides the development of the Town's transportation system, including non-motorized transportation, to accommodate existing and future growth described in the Land Use Element.

Capital Facilities Element

This element guides the maintenance, preservation, and expansion of the Town-owned or operated facilities and services in Coupeville include public buildings, streets, parks, water, stormwater, and sewer.

Utilities Element

This element establishes an overall strategy for providing adequate utility service to serve the growth projected in the Land Use Element.

DRAFT

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Vision and Plan Introduction

Vision Statement

Coupeville is a vibrant, friendly, and historic waterfront town with a rich Indigenous, agricultural, maritime, and architectural heritage in the heart of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. Our community cherishes and enhances natural habitats, walkable neighborhoods connected to great parks, trails and beaches, a diversity of housing choices, and homegrown economic opportunities while implementing responsible climate change actions.

The vision statement was crafted in collaboration between the Planning Commission, Town Council, Town staff, the consultant team, and community members.

The Comprehensive Plan

This Comprehensive Plan guides the future growth, character, and development of the Town of Coupeville for the planning period 2025-2045. The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to bring together everything that a community needs to chart its course for the future.

It addresses the entire community and all its values, activities, and functions and contains information about the community's preferences related to physical growth and preservation. It records important facts and context about contemporary and future challenges, and it provides tools and action steps to achieve the plan's goals.

This 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan fulfills the periodic review requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act and replaces the 2023 Coupeville Comprehensive Plan. This plan only applies within the municipal boundaries of the Town of Coupeville. Island



Central Coupeville and waterfront



Parade in Coupeville (photo credit: Sue Hamilton)



Price Sculpture Forest (photo credit: Bondi Budde)

County has planning authority over all the unincorporated areas outside of Coupeville, within the County.

Introduction to Coupeville

Coupeville is a small, historic waterfront town located on the central part of Whidbey Island within Island County and Washington State. It is the county seat for Island County. Today it is primarily a residential community and serves as the commercial center for central Whidbey.

The Town of Coupeville was founded in 1853 and formally incorporated in 1910. The Town contains a little more than one square mile of land area and approximately two miles of shoreline. Major geographic features include three major hills and the Penn Cove shoreline, which forms the Town's northern boundary. State Route 20 divides the Town's built environment into two distinct areas. The older commercial and residential areas are north of the highway, and schools and a newer commercial area are south of the highway.

The entirety of Coupeville lies within the boundaries of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, created in 1978 with the signing of Public Law 95-625 by President Carter. This followed the establishment of the Central Whidbey Island Historic District, the largest National Historic District in the country, in 1973. The 17,572-acre reserve is intended to preserve historical, agricultural, architectural, and cultural traditions while still being sustainable and welcoming to the next generation. The majority (85 percent) of land in the reserve is privately owned, with protections accomplished through conservation easements, land purchases, local land use regulation, and the cooperation of landowners. Major features and visitor draws of the reserve include Ebey's Landing Beach, trails, state parks, working farms, historic buildings, and Coupeville's historic commercial center.

Land Acknowledgement

The Town of Coupeville is located on the homelands of the Lower Skagit People. For thousands of years, Coast Salish tribes have stewarded the lands, waterways, plants and animals in our region. We pay respect to the elders and their families, past, present, and emerging for they hold the memories, traditions and culture of their people. The Town of Coupeville is committed to respecting this long history as we honor and acknowledge the continued presence and rights of all Indigenous people. We will advocate for and partner with our Indigenous neighbors as we continue to work together as an even more inclusive community.



Tsimishian Haayuuk Dancers, Penn Cove Festival, Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands.

Brief Town History

Prior to European settlement, the lands along Penn Cove were home to several Coast Salish Tribe settlements. Whidbey and Camano Islands were home to different tribes prior to the arrival of settlers, including the Kikialus, Snohomish, and Lower Skagit, as well as other tribes and bands signatory to the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliot. Since time immemorial, the ancestors of these tribes have hunted, gathered, and fished throughout their various traditional territories. The Lower Skagit lived in the northern portion of Whidbey Island, including Coupeville, Penn Cove and Maylor Point. Chinook, coho, pink, chum and sockeye salmon provided an abundant source of food. In the island's prairies, bracken fern grew seven feet tall. Dried bracken roots were ground into flour that would be baked for bread. Fresh camas could be boiled and eaten like potatoes, or bulbs could be dried and preserved. (Source: <https://whidbeycamanoislands.com/an-immemorial-indigenous-presence/> Written by Ana Ramirez, Education Curator. Hibulb Cultural Center and Nature Preserve).

European expeditions began in the 1700's. The Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 brought an influx of settlers, which led to the displacement of Coast Salish peoples from their ancestral lands and forced most of them to reservations. Colonel Isaac Ebey, the first local claimant, gave his name to the settlement of Ebey's Landing on the Straits of Juan de Fuca south of Coupeville. Captain Thomas Coupe founded Coupeville in 1853. By 1855, Ebey's Landing and Penn Cove were ringed with land claims. Newcomers found large open prairies easy to convert to farmland, as well as woodlands and protected harbors.

After it began growing in the 1860s, Coupeville became the center of the area's development. Logging and agriculture were the original economic base. The Town became the seat of county government in 1881. The original Town plat, recorded in 1883, includes most of the central part of Coupeville east of North Main Street. At the turn of the century, Whidbey Island's location within Puget Sound was used for national defense purposes, with the development of Fort Casey and Fort Ebey by the United States Army.



Susie Kettle (maiden name Slapoose, Lushootseed name Teloleta). Susie was Lower Skagit and was born about 1861 and died in 1938. (photo credit: Island County Historical Museum).



Penn Cove Water Festival Canoe Race, Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands.



Barley field (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

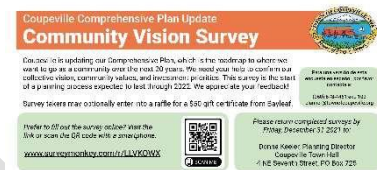
Since World War II, and particularly since 1970, Coupeville has seen considerable growth and change. Retirees have discovered the friendly community, mild climate and beautiful setting. Some newcomers are willing to commute long distances to live in a small town. The completion of a new state highway in 1967 provided easy access throughout the island and to ferry connections. As the county seat, Coupeville has seen the effects of the growth throughout Island County with expanded county offices, schools, and medical services.

As these changes led to the demolition of old buildings and the construction of new ones, Coupeville residents became acutely aware of their unique historic landscape and buildings. They also came to realize the importance of tourism to the local economy. The Central Whidbey Island Historic District (established in 1972) and Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (1978) have provided a framework to preserve the Town's unique character while allowing it to adapt to meet future needs.

Town Engagement Activities

While the major update that was completed in 2023 featured a range of COVID-19 pandemic-era engagement activities centered on a plan that was updated top to bottom, the 2025 update included a range of engagement activities and strategies less rooted in the pandemic but more focused on key aspects of the update, including but not limited to, housing and climate. Key activities were:

- Proactive interviews with key community stakeholders and leaders
- A communitywide planning priorities survey answered by 255 people
- A visioning workshop held online jointly with the Planning Commission and Town Council, plus a follow-up meeting
- Two community workshops to discuss plan ideas and concepts
- Responding to public comments on the plan's direction and content
- At least 8 Planning Commission meetings to discuss strategies, goals, policies, and the draft plan
- Several Town Council adoption meetings
- Creation and maintenance of a website for the planning process



A survey was mailed to Town residents and property owners in November 2021



Town Workshop #2 in October 2022.

- Regular updates in the Coupeville newsletter
- Regular notifications by email to interested parties

This plan addresses many of Coupeville's ongoing and emerging challenges identified by community members. These include:

- Lack of affordable housing supply and housing options, especially for low to moderate income workers
- Limited resources to preserve historic structures, landscapes, and cultures
- Climate change and sea level rise
- An aging population
- Limited transportation options for those who cannot or choose not to drive

The Coupeville community is also optimistic about its future, thanks to its many positive attributes. These include:

- Strong identity centered around historic, agricultural, Indigenous, and maritime heritage
- Community commitment toward preservation of the Town's historic identity
- Small town and rural feel
- Integrity of residential neighborhoods
- Location within Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve
- Robust tourism economy
- Natural splendor, water views, and landscape vistas
- Presence of major institutions and employers including the Island County government campus, Whidbey Health, and Coupeville School District.

Washington State Planning Framework

This Comprehensive Plan meets the goals and requirements of the 1990 Growth Management Act (GMA), which provides the planning framework for counties, cities, and towns in the state. Island County and all the cities and towns within it are required to "fully plan" under the GMA. Full planning means adopting the required elements listed in the table below and regulating critical areas (sensitive environmental areas).

The Comprehensive Plan is the primary plan that guides and is supported by other Town plans and development regulations. This plan is designed to assess existing conditions, look forward and plan for the next 20 years.

Per RCW 36.70A.130, local jurisdictions are required to periodically update their comprehensive plans to ensure that they are consistent with GMA requirements and the Town can accommodate projected population and employment growth over the next twenty years. Although the Town updated the Comprehensive Plan in 2023, additional updates are required to meet more recent changes to State requirements, particularly around housing and adapting to climate change under HB 1337, HB 1220 and HB 1181.

The town's integration with Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve gives it special status for planning purposes. Typically, towns and cities planning under the GMA are required to map an "urban growth area" outside of the incorporated boundary in anticipation of future land annexations, population growth, and infrastructure expansion for the next 20 years. Under RCW 36.70A.110(2), communities within a national historical reserve are exempted from this mandate. Coupeville is the only such town in Washington State. Further, the town "... may restrict densities, intensities, and forms of urban growth as determined to be necessary and appropriate to protect the physical, cultural, or historic integrity of the reserve."

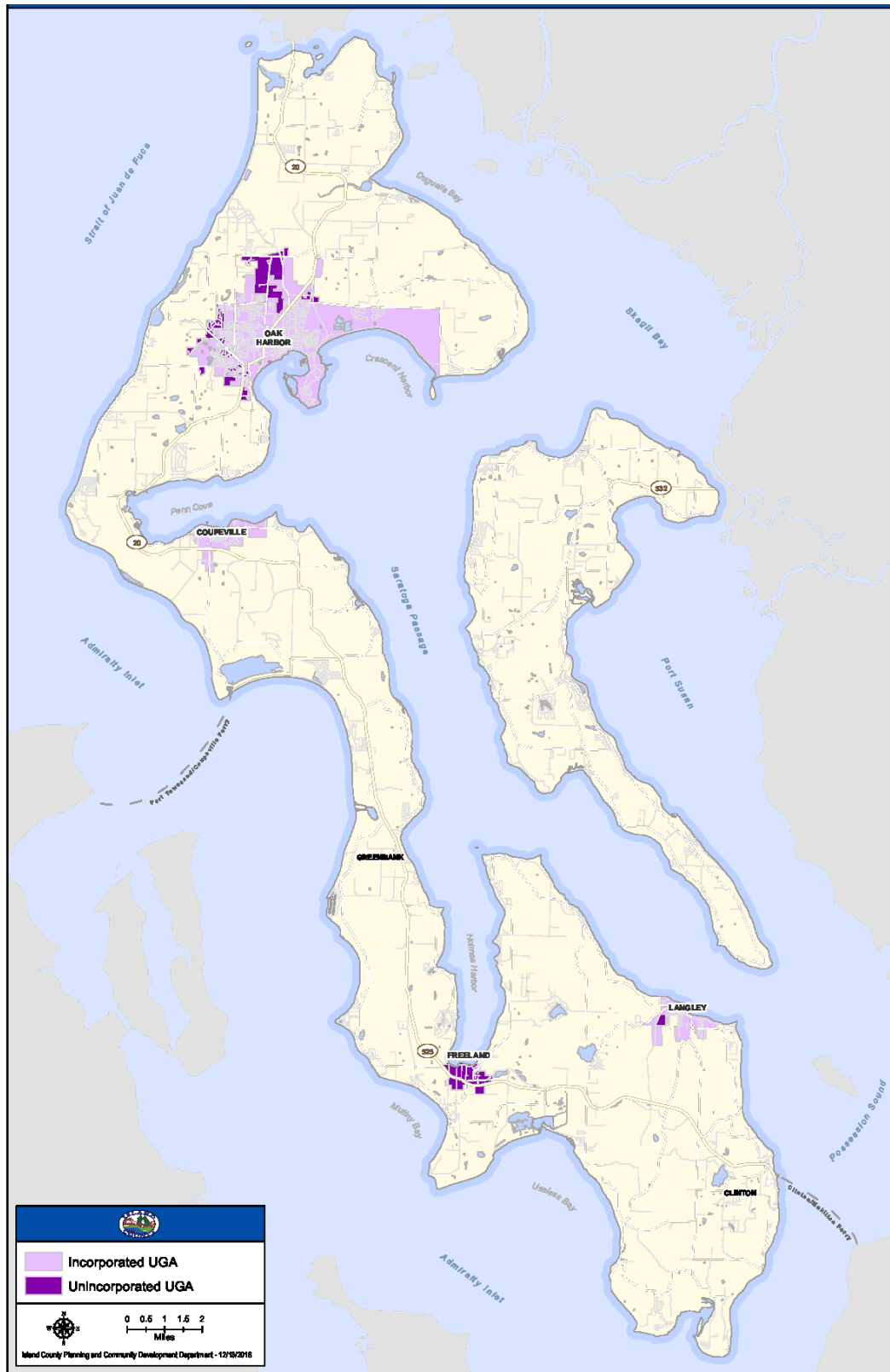
What are the consequences to the Town for not complying with GMA?

The Governor has the authority, under RCW

36.70A.345, to impose sanctions against jurisdictions that do not comply with GMA, as determined by the Growth Management Hearings Board. Sanctions may include withholding or temporarily rescinding the authority to collect portions of taxes and other revenue sources.

Table 1. Comprehensive Planning Elements.

Required elements	Optional elements
<i>The GMA requires Coupeville to address these topic areas called "elements." These are:</i>	<i>Coupeville has also chosen to include the following extra elements in its Comprehensive Plan because of their value to the community and their importance to the town's orderly planning and development:</i>
Land Use	Economic Development (locally renamed as Economic Stability)
Housing	
Capital Facilities	Park and Recreation (locally renamed as Parks, Recreation & Open Space)
Utilities	Natural Systems
Transportation	Historic Preservation and Community Design
Climate Element	



Planning context

Coupeville is the only community on Whidbey Island without an unincorporated urban growth area (UGA) due to its unique location within Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

Island County Comprehensive Plan 2016, Map 1E, with Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve boundary

Population Forecast, Housing Capacity and Land Capacity

As of 2024, Coupeville has an estimated population of 2,020 people.

Using the projection method selected by Island County, Coupeville's projected 2045 population is approximately 2,175, an increase of 155 people over the twenty-year plan horizon.

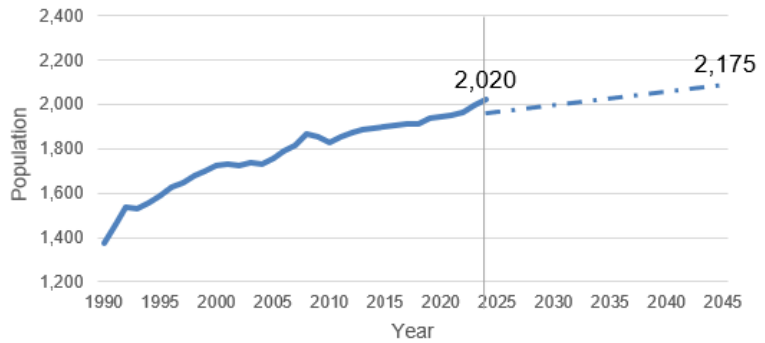


Figure 9 - Coupeville Population, Historical (1990-2024) and Projected (2025-2045)

Note: Historical estimates in census years are a count while intercensal years are estimates. Sources: OFM Historical April 1 Intercensal Estimates of Population, 1990-2000 prepared March 2002; 2000-2010 last revised June 23, 2016; 2021 last revised November 30, 2021; OFM GMA Population Projections for Counties 2010-2040 with 2050 Supplemental, December 2017; Island County 2036 Appendix B: Population Growth Analysis & Accommodations, 2016; BERK, 2022; Facet, 2024.

According to the 2024 OFM Postcensal estimates, Coupeville has an estimated 1,047 housing units, representing an increase of 154 units since 2010. In 2021, the Washington Legislature changed the way communities are required to plan for housing. House Bill 1220 (HB 1220) amended the Growth Management Act (GMA) to instruct local governments to “plan and accommodate” for housing affordable to all income levels. This dramatically changed how communities plan for housing.

Growth rates

Coupeville's estimated population of 2,175 people is less than 10% increase over 21 years. This is an average of 0.5% per year, which is a relatively low growth rate but consistent with Coupeville's 0.6% growth 2010-2020. For comparison, other nearby cities during that period had these average annual growth rates:

- Mukilteo: 0.6%
 - Langley: 1.1%
 - Port Townsend: 1.1%
 - Oak Harbor: 1.2%
 - Anacortes: 1.2%
- Source: U.S. Census

A land capacity analysis and housing needs assessment in 2024 found that Coupeville has excess capacity in the LDR and RM-9600 zones to meet the needs of households that are 120% above the area median income (AMI). However, under the 2023 Future Land Use Map scenario, Coupeville does not have enough capacity to meet the needs of households under 120% of AMI, particularly for 80% and below over the 20-year planning period. As a result, even though the population is anticipated to increase by 155 people, 351 new units will be needed to meet all affordability levels.

More information about the **Land Capacity Analysis** methodology and key findings is available in Appendix A.5.

The land capacity analysis also determined that Coupeville has adequate land to accommodate this forecasted growth. The analysis considered the current zoning regulations, density limits, infrastructure capacity, and trends in the real estate market. Using this information, the analysis finds that Coupeville has an estimated capacity for 188 additional housing units based on current conditions. This capacity increases to 282 housing units if sewer service were to be expanded to all areas of the town.

For more details on the methodology for these forecasts, please see Appendix A - Land Use.

A separate analysis of housing unit capacity by income bracket has been completed for the Housing Element; please see the Housing Element and Housing Needs Assessment appendix.

Implementation

As a policy document, the Coupeville Comprehensive Plan provides a source of reference and guidance for future regulatory and administrative actions. The Plan itself, however, does not directly regulate property rights, land uses, or other activities. Implementation of the Plan's goals and policies happens through the Town's development regulations, budgeting and investments, and regular updates to the plan.

How This Plan Works

The goals and policies are the heart of the plan and provide direction for Coupeville's future. A goal is intended to be 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, is typically more abstract in nature.

A policy is a specific statement that guides decision-making. It indicates a clear commitment from 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 the zoning code, staff hiring, or project funding commitments.

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 transportation. These tools constantly weigh the Town'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.

Budgeting and Investing

Coupeville's budgets and investments convert Comprehensive Plan policies into reality. The development of capital facilities, operation of public services, and the use of public funds and land should be consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Goals and policies are implemented most directly through the Capital Facilities Element and the associated Capital Facilities Plan and capital budget, which are updated annually to plan for modification and expansion of infrastructure like roads, utilities, and parks.

The operating budget also plays a role regarding staff resources needed to support all elements. Many policies of this Comprehensive Plan support specific research or programs that require sufficient staff capacity, support for writing grant applications, or funding for outside professional services. For example: implement the Land Use and Historic Preservation elements by updating development regulations; implement the Transportation Element through writing grant applications and designing updated streets; and implement the Economic Stability element with tourism research and management programs.

The Town strives to ensure the public receives maximum possible benefit from the expenditure of public funds.

This is achievable with a budget planning process that provides for public review and comment during the long- range budgeting process and balances priorities according to infrastructure needs, projected growth, community priorities, state and federal laws, and fiscal restraint. Budgeting should support the highest feasible levels of service to promote the security, health, safety, and general welfare of Coupeville's residents, businesses, and visitors.

Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are necessary from time to time to comply with changing regulations and 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, except in certain special circumstances. Proposed amendments to the Comprehensive plan must be considered concurrently so that the cumulative effect of various proposals can be determined. Proposed amendments 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 or new information is present which was not available at the time of the initial adoption. Town staff and the Planning Commission reviews proposed amendments to the Plan, takes public input, and forwards recommendations to the Town Council.

Comprehensive Plan Periodic Updates

The Growth Management Act requires that Comprehensive Plans be reviewed and updated as necessary, at least every ten years, outside of the optional annual review process (RCW 36.70A.130). The next major periodic update will occur in 2035 and at least every ten years thereafter. The Town must also complete an implementation progress report on the Plan five years after adoption (in the case of this update, in 2030) (RCW 36.70A.130(9)).

Goals and Policies

The goals and policies set forth throughout the comprehensive plan are the result of the “visioning” process facilitated by the City of Sedro-Woolley in the early stages of the development of the comprehensive plan. Some modifications have been made as a result of new developments in the planning process of the City and County and as a result of the special study recommendations.

It is envisioned that the adoption of some of these goals and policies will require several years to enact. The City will actively work to implement these goals and policies within the next ten years until the next required major update of the comprehensive plan. These goals and policies will be incorporated into the City’s codes as necessary and annually as amendments to the comprehensive plan.

Land Use Element

Introduction

The Land Use Element is central to all other elements. It provides for the distribution of land use meeting Coupeville's needs for residential, commercial, recreation, public facilities, and other land uses. This element also describes development patterns that support Coupeville's vision for the future. The Element includes policies that promote compatible pedestrian-oriented development, resource protection and sustainable design, economic vitality, historic preservation, and the development of inviting and distinctive public spaces.

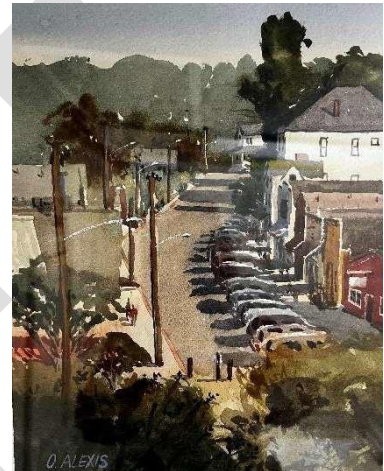
The Growth Management Act requires cities and towns to show how they will be able to accommodate 20 years of growth through sufficient buildable land that is zoned appropriately.

Appendix A - Land Use contains the Land Use Element background information with data and analysis that provide the foundation for the Land Use Element goals and policies, including the Land Capacity Analysis required under the GMA and outlined in the Island County Countywide Planning Policies.

Existing Conditions Summary

Within Coupeville's Town limits there is a total land area of 721 acres. Land uses within the Town include a mixture of residential, commercial, and public uses and a significant amount of land is vacant and undeveloped.

The oldest and most densely developed area is the original Town plat, which includes much of the area extending south from the shoreline between Main Street and Gould Street. Coupeville's boundaries encompass almost the entire claim of Thomas and Maria Coupe (filed November 20, 1852) and most of the John Alexander claim (August 1, 1852), each of



Painting of Front Street in Coupeville



Cliff house (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

them about 320 acres. (Source: How Coupeville Grew, A Short History of Town Development, 1998).

Commercial development is focused on the Town's primary streets, including N Main Street, S Main Street, NW Front Street, and NW Coveland Street. Retail businesses are mixed with government and professional offices. Coupeville is also home to WhidbeyHealth Medical Center, which anchors many medical uses, and the Coupeville School District.

Housing is distributed throughout the Town. Early residential development occurred on small lots in the central portion of the town. More recent development has been suburban in nature, with large lots in outlying parts of town. While the majority of existing housing is single family, the Town also has an increasing number of attached and multifamily units, as well as three mobile home parks.

See *Appendix A - Land Use* for details of Coupeville's land use and see the Housing Element for additional housing information.

Goals and Policies

Goal LU-1: Land Use Pattern and Growth Management. Establish and manage a pattern of development consistent with the community's vision and provide for variety of land uses that further the policies of this Plan.

- LU-1.1 Promote opportunities for a well- balanced mix of land uses, including residential, commercial, public services, recreational, and cultural uses through the Future Land Use Map adopted with the Comprehensive Plan.
- LU-1.2 Acknowledge and maintain the current Town boundary as a reasonable and logical corporate boundary and service area. Minor and strategic annexations may occur where property owners propose or demonstrate a significant benefit to the Town, which could include protection of historic resources, environmental protection, increase in housing supply and variety, increase in park space, and net positive fiscal impact. Allow only for minor strategic annexations where the subject land is:
 - A. Not viable for agricultural uses
 - B. Located for viable service connections

This policy gives the Town a tool to evaluate any proposals to annex land or expand the Coupeville town boundary. The Department of Commerce advises that annexations should have a net benefit to the Town and the Reserve.

- C. Viable and appropriate for housing development, community facilities and services, or park, recreation, and open space purposes.
- D. Supportive of other goals of policies of the Comprehensive Plan and Island County countywide planning policies

- LU-1.3 Provide a reasonable supply of development capacity through the Future Land Use Map and zoning standards to provide a variety of opportunities for residential development, redevelopment and infill, housing choices, and housing affordability.
- LU-1.4 Direct growth to the neighborhoods with the most opportunities to accommodate new development due to available land, infrastructure capacity, and proximity to services.
- LU-1.5 Growth should be carried out in a thoughtful manner, putting historic properties and the cultural landscape of Coupeville and Central Whidbey at the forefront for protection.

Accommodate growth and development in a manner that protects the physical, cultural, and historical integrity of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.
- LU-1.6 Respect the historic pattern of development in the Town by striving to maintain the Donation Land Claim and Town Plat system and avoid suburban design trends, including cul-de-sacs.
- LU-1.7 Engage with partner agencies and groups to ensure that protecting Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve continues to serve as a guiding principle for the future of the greater Coupeville community.
- LU-1.8 Establish future land use designations as shown in Table LU-1.

Table LU-1. Land use designations.

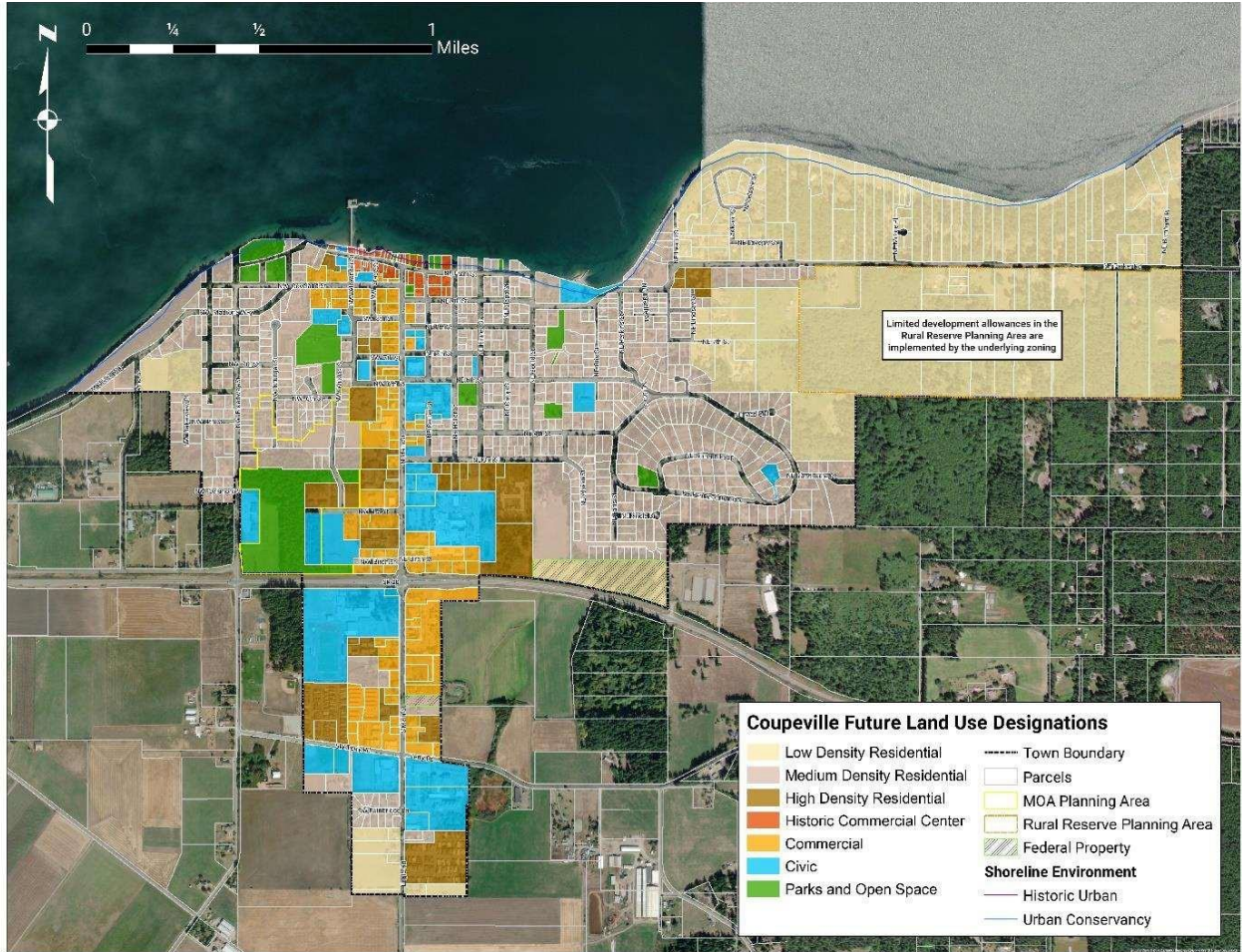
Future Land Use Designations	Description	Implementing Zones
Low Density Residential (LDR)	<p>This designation is for areas inappropriate for more intensive urban development due to topography, presence of wetlands, high cost of extending urban services, and/or the desire to serve as a transition between the town and surrounding rural lands. Lands within this designation are intended to minimize impervious surfaces, protect natural features, and/or to protect the cultural and physical integrity of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.</p> <p>Land use and density: Single-family dwellings are predominant land use, with other compatible housing forms (cottages and accessory dwelling units) permitted in certain circumstances. Areas with minimal or no public sewer service or which are difficult to develop owing to topography or other factors should be zoned RR. Areas with public sewer service should be zoned LDR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential density should be a maximum of 3 units per acre with 1 principal unit and up to 2 middle housing units. • Those areas currently without public sewer are limited to 2-acre minimums lot size (Rural Reserve) 	Rural Reserve Low Density Residential

Future Land Use Designations	Description	Implementing Zones
Medium Density Residential	<p>Purpose: Allows for medium density residential use in areas that provide a suitable environment for residential development, have good access to the Town's transportation system, and feature (or planned to feature) adequate public services to serve residential development.</p> <p>Land use and density: Single-family dwellings are predominant land use. Appropriately scaled and designed middle housing types, including accessory dwelling units, cottages, and duplexes are allowed depending on the site's size and context and size and design of the dwellings.</p> <p>Residential densities depend on the current context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those areas currently without public sewer service are limited to 2 acre minimum lot sizes (Rural Reserve) • Residential density in all other areas should be a maximum of 13.5 units per acre with 1 principal unit and up to 2 ADU's per lot, or up to 3 middle housing units per lot. 	<p>Medium Density Residential</p> <p>Memorandum of Agreement (MOA Area)</p>
High Density Residential	<p>Purpose: Allows for high density residential use in areas that are near commercial areas, parks, trails, transit routes, and located to permit efficient provision of public services.</p> <p>Land use and density: This designation allows for a mixture of multifamily housing types, including townhouse and apartment dwellings. Small scale and pedestrian-oriented commercial services are also allowed on corner lots. Residential densities depend on the current context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those areas currently without public sewer service are limited to 2-acre minimum lot sizes (Rural Reserve) • All other areas are allowed up to 18 units per acre. • Minimum densities for new subdivisions and other multi-unit developments are important to maintain and enhance housing capacity and diversity. 	<p>High Density Residential</p> <p>Memorandum of Agreement (MOA Area)</p>

Future Land Use Designations	Description	Implementing Zones
Commercial	<p>Purpose: Allows for commercial and multifamily development that is appropriate in size and scale to the Town. This designation should be applied in areas with multimodal transportation access and near concentrations of residential development.</p> <p>Land use and density: Commercial-designated areas have land uses which serve the entire Town. The TC zone is appropriate for commercial areas centered on Main Street and providing a variety of neighborhood services. The GC zone is appropriate in areas which prioritize automobile-oriented access and characterized by existing light industrial development and larger-scale retail and service uses</p> <p>Residential uses are allowed in the TC zone with no maximum density, subject to other zoning requirements. Residential uses are allowed in the GC zone up to a maximum of 15 units per acre.</p>	<p>Town Commercial</p> <p>General Commercial</p>
Historic Commercial Center	<p>Purpose: Provides for a range of commercial, residential, and water-oriented development which is appropriate in scale and character within historic downtown Coupeville. This area balances services and amenities for both Coupeville residents and tourists.</p> <p>Land use and density: A variety of commercial retail, office, and service uses are permitted. Residential uses are limited, largely consisting of historic single-family homes, short term rentals, and apartment units generally not at street level.</p>	<p>Historic Commercial Center</p>
Civic	<p>Purpose: Includes areas used for schools, religious institutions, government buildings, public parking lots, hospitals, public cultural centers, parks, public recreation centers, and other similar uses.</p> <p>Land use and density: A variety of public, quasi-public, civic, governmental, and institutional uses are allowed. Some principal commercial uses that support the functions and operations of the Civic designation are permitted. Residential uses are allowed in some circumstances such as when surplus publicly-owned land is available or when they are integrated with existing or planned civic uses.</p>	<p>Civic</p> <p>High Density Residential</p> <p>Medium Density Residential</p> <p>Town Commercial</p> <p>Memorandum of Agreement</p>

Future Land Use Designations	Description	Implementing Zones
Parks and Open Space	<p>Purpose: Intended to identify existing public parks, recreation, and open spaces within Town limits.</p> <p>Land use and density: Parks, recreation, and open space only, including lands managed by the National Park Service which may not be open to the public.</p>	<p>Parks, and Open Space</p> <p>Memorandum of Agreement</p>
Manufactured Home Park Zoning Overlay	<p>Purpose: Intended to protect existing affordable housing stock and provide for affordable homeownership and rental housing.</p> <p>Land use and density: Areas suitable for development or placement and occupancy of mobile homes, manufactured homes, or modular homes for residential purposes or rented or leased sites in mobile home parks. These areas are intended to encourage multifamily density residential areas.</p>	High Density Residential

LU-1.9 Manage and maintain the Town's Official Zoning Map to ensure continued consistency with the Future Land Use Designation Map.



Coupeville Future Land Use Designations Map. See a larger version of the map on the Coupeville Comprehensive Plan webpage: <https://townofcoupeville.org/comp-plan/>

LU-1.10 Lands under the most intensive noise zone of Outlying Landing Field Coupeville (85 db DNL) should not be designated greater than Low Density Residential.

LU-1.11 Evaluate options for where building height limits may be modified to increase height limit from 28 feet to 34 feet to potentially allow three-story buildings in a few select High Density Residential and Commercial areas.

See Appendix A - Land Use for the Navy's 2021 Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) Footprint Map for Outlying Landing Field (OLF) Coupeville.

Increased height limits could be contingent upon certain criteria, such as ensuring the increased heights will not impact viewsheds and compliance with the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Design Guidelines

- LU-1.12 Review and amend the Shoreline Master Program as necessary to govern the development of all designated Shorelines of the State within Coupeville.
- LU-1.13 For properties zoned Rural Reserve, rezones to Low Density Residential shall be prohibited until appropriate infrastructure, particularly sewer, is available to serve the property.
- LU-1.14 In the Memorandum of Agreement area, work with the property owner(s) to provide more housing choices and more efficient use of this area.
- LU-1.15 In coordination with all parties, work toward converting the MOA area into appropriate zoning designations consistent with other residential zones in Coupeville.

Goal LU-2: Residential Uses. Enhance the quantity and diversity of Coupeville's housing options while reinforcing and enhancing the quality, character, and function of Coupeville's residential neighborhoods.

LU-2.1 Provide for a wide variety of housing types within the Town to meet the full range of housing needs for Coupeville's evolving population.

A. Accessory dwelling units (ADU's).

Encourage attached and detached ADU's in all residential districts provided size, design, and other provisions are included to promote compatibility with surrounding uses. Streamline ADU permitting and fees to encourage their production throughout Coupeville.



ADU.

B. Cottages. Encourage the development of cottage housing (a cluster of small homes around a common open space) in residential zones as an increasingly popular housing type, provided special design provisions are included to ensure a pedestrian-oriented design, inclusion of



Cottage housing in Coupeville.

common open space, and strict cottage size limitations.

- C. **Small homes.** Encourage and incentivize the integration of small detached single family homes. Such homes, provided they are no more than 1,400 square feet and emphasizing a pedestrian-oriented design, would fit well into Coupeville’s context and serve a wide demographic of Coupeville’s population.
- D. **Duplexes.** Allow for and encourage duplexes in more residential areas provided the zoning and design provisions promote pedestrian-oriented designs compatible with existing neighborhoods. Review, if expanded opportunities are appropriate in the zoning code, such as changing the buffer requirements.
- E. **Townhouses.** Allow for and encourage the development of townhouses in the Medium and High Density Residential zones as an efficient and popular form of housing for a large demographic of Coupeville’s population. Design standards emphasizing pedestrian-oriented design, facade articulation, and usable open space are particularly important. Define and encourage townhouses consistent with other residential land uses.
- F. **Multifamily housing.** Review development regulations to evaluate barriers to development of multifamily housing to be located in walking distance of transit and commercial services, including zoning and availability of land, height and density limits, and other standards.
- G. **Assisted living.** Review development regulations to evaluate barriers to development of assisted living, nursing homes, and similar supportive facilities.

See Housing Element policy H-1.7 for related ideas to explore in a housing action plan.



Example of a duplex.



Townhouse in Coupeville.



*Example of multifamily housing
(photo credit: Opticos Design)*

H. **Tiny homes.** Evaluate options to permit compatible, well designed tiny homes on parcels designated for high density residential and civic uses.



Tiny homes.

- LU-2.2 To protect limited housing stock availability in Town, continue prohibiting short term rentals in residential zones.
- LU-2.3 Building codes. Study an amendment to the Town's building codes to streamline the design and review of small, multi-unit housing structures (four units or less) by allowing them to be built under the International Residential Code instead of the International Building Code. Coordinate with the development community, the fire district, and other stakeholders as appropriate to develop the amendment.
- LU-2.4 Encourage development and redevelopment of a wider variety of housing types.
- LU-2.5 Minimize the amount of housing displacement created from development

Goal LU-3: Commercial Uses. Enhance the character and economic vitality of Coupeville's commercial districts and overall business environment.

- LU-3.1 Support efforts to protect and maintain historic structures, particularly those north of Front Street that are at risk of sea level rise, storm surge, and bluff erosion.
- LU-3.2 Encourage new commercial development to be mixed-use with residential components.
Provide greater flexibility for residential uses to be developed in commercial zones, but continue to preserve street frontages for commercial use.
- LU-3.3 Review the amount and type of parking required for commercial uses and make code adjustments if there are barriers to development and local entrepreneurship.
- LU-3.4 Recognize that industrial uses are generally not compatible with the existing development pattern in the Town. This, however, does not preclude consideration of potential proposals for small scale light industrial development such as artisan manufacturing, microbreweries, roasteries, furniture and craft shops, and art production studios.
- LU-3.5 Prohibit any further single-purpose commercial development adjacent to SR 20, except for professional offices. Residential development is appropriate provided all zoning criteria are met.
- LU-3.6 Develop regulations to ensure new construction adjacent to State Route (SR) 20 is adequately and appropriately screened with native landscaping from SR 20 views.

Mixed use refers to two or more types of land uses being present in a building, on a parcel of land, or in a neighborhood. A common example is residential and commercial land uses being placed close together. Mixed-use development and communities have the benefit of placing homes closer to where people want to work and shop, benefitting both the economy and the environment.



Commercial center in south Coupeville.



Kapaw's Iskreme (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

Goal LU-4: Resource Protection, Sustainability, and Climate Change.

Establish and promote strategies to ensure Coupeville is a sustainable and resilient community through resource conservation and climate change preparedness.

LU-4.1 Promote a compact, mixed-use development pattern that minimizes and reduces greenhouse gas emissions and encourages physical activity and a healthy community. This is achieved, for example, by locating a mix of housing, retail, service, schools, medical care, and recreation uses in close walking/bicycling distance of each other to reduce the need for driving, and by encouraging multi-unit housing types which have reduced energy needs for heating and cooling.



ADU (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

LU-4.2 Permit and encourage home gardens for food production and composting.

LU-4.3 Ensure that pedestrian and other non-motorized accessibility measures are incorporated in development proposals, where appropriate.



Coupeville shoreline (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

LU-4.4 Ensure compatibility of land uses with natural features and systems, such as topography, geology, soil suitability, surface water, ground water, frequently flooded areas, wetlands, climate, scenic and cultural resources, and vegetation and wildlife.



Seal (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

LU-4.5 Seek to retain open space such as wetlands, forests, shorelines, and other areas that provide essential habitat for native wildlife species. This is achieved, for example, by clustering residential lots and maintaining native forests and undergrowth.

LU-4.6 Prohibit unnecessary disturbance of natural vegetation in new development and encourage retention of trees and other vegetation.



Orca (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

LU-4.7 To protect wildlife habitat areas and minimize adverse stormwater impacts, minimize grading of landforms and the extent of soil and vegetation disturbance in new development.

LU-4.8 Facilitate clean energy production at the site, neighborhood, and community scale. This could include proactively identifying suitable locations for clean energy production and streamlining regulations for permitting rooftop solar and wind energy systems, for example. The scale and design of energy production systems should be compatible with the historic areas of Coupeville and comply with the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Design Guidelines.



Solar panels in the midday sun on a house roof (photo credit: Watt A Lot via Unsplash).

LU-4.9 Reduce the pollution impacts of fossil-fuel infrastructure, such as by prohibiting development of new fossil-fuel gas stations. Facilitate the development of electric vehicle charging stations and hydrogen fuel stations in Town and in throughout the Reserve. The scale, design, and appearance of vehicle fueling/charging stations should be compatible with the character of Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve.



Ebey's Landing (photo credit: Brian Nelson).

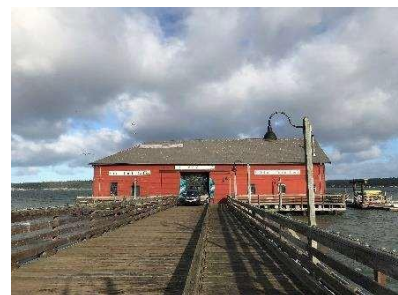
LU-4.10 Encourage water conservation measures in the zoning standards, including requirements for drought tolerant landscaping and native vegetation and allowing rainwater catchment for domestic use.



Overflow drain in rain garden swale (photo credit: Brett VA).

Goal LU-5: Public Spaces and Facilities. Protect and enhance Coupeville's cherished community hubs and open spaces including the Recreation Hall, Town Park, Community Green, shorelines, neighborhood parks and trails, and public institutions.

LU-5.1 Work collaboratively with Island County, Coupeville School District #204, Whidbey Health Medical Center, and other major institutions on joint land use planning. Encourage institutions to develop master plans for their future development to ensure that future growth is planned and coordinated between all affected parties. Master plans may allow institutions to develop more intensively to reduce the amount of property necessary for their future growth.



The Coupeville Wharf.

- LU-5.2 Encourage Island County to maximize existing property holdings through infill development.
- LU-5.3 Protect and enhance the Community Green as a community gathering space for a variety of events.
- LU-5.4 Support efforts to preserve and promote the Coupeville Wharf.
- LU-5.5 Encourage public participation in the design of public spaces and facilities.
- LU-5.6 Periodically review the inventory of undeveloped public land managed by all levels of government. Undeveloped or surplus public land should be designated appropriately on the Future Land Use Map.



Coupeville Recreation Hall (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Sunrise on Penn Cover (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

Goal LU-6: Land Use Processes. Assure that development review and permit processes operate in a fair, timely and predictable manner and update processes from time to time to incorporate best practices, changes in law, and align with community priorities and values.

- LU-6.1 Establish and maintain Town planning processes that allow a regular public discussion and examination of community goals and values.
- LU-6.2 Consider the regional impact of local land use decisions and coordinate planning and development decisions with those governmental agencies having jurisdiction or other direct interests in land use matters, particularly Island County and Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Trust Board.
- LU-6.3 Work cooperatively with Island County to discourage urban uses outside of Coupeville's boundary which intrude upon prime farmland, forest, and natural resource areas which are integral to the Reserve. Re-establish joint planning areas if needed.
- LU-6.4 Update processes and procedures throughout the code to be consistent with the Hearing Examiner system established on February 8, 2018.
- LU-6.5 As soon as possible after adopting amendments to the Coupeville Comprehensive Plan, update the Zoning Map and Development Regulations to ensure consistency with the Plan.
- LU-6.6 Periodically review the concurrency ordinance (at least during every periodic Comprehensive Plan update) for its ability to mitigate the growth impacts of major development proposals.

Historic Preservation & Community Design Element

Introduction

This element combines historic preservation and community design as a singular, integrated element. Preservation is a dynamic process whereby the cultural values are both tangible and intangible and are acknowledged and perpetuated as part of an integrated planning program. With at least 136 contributing and non-contributing historic properties, the community takes great pride in its history and unique context within Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

Central Whidbey Island Historic District and Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve

In 1973 the Central Whidbey Island Historic District (CWIHD) was established, creating the largest national historic district in the Country. The CWIHD followed the original Donation Land Claim boundaries, acknowledging the historic landscape as well as historic buildings. It included more than 8000 acres of land surrounding Penn Cove. Located within the district are original Donation Land Claims preempted by early settlers according to the provisions of the donation Land Law passed by Congress in 1850, along with numerous historic buildings and sites.

The establishment of the CWIHD was instrumental in gaining congressional support for the formation of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (Reserve). The Reserve was established by Congress in 1978 "to preserve and protect a rural community which provides an unbroken historic record from nineteenth century exploration and settlement of Puget Sound up to the present time" (Public Law 95-625, Sec. 508 (a), November 10, 1978).

Nationally significant, when the Reserve was established, it represented a new approach to preserving land and heritage



Will Jenne House.

Of the 136 listed properties in Coupeville, 106 are classified as contributing and 30 are non-contributing to Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. All historic properties in the Ebey's Reserve Inventory are considered to have the same level of protection or categorization as individually listed buildings.

Sustainability

"Preservation is fundamentally a sustainable practice. Adapting and reusing historic structures reduces consumption of raw land, new materials, and other resources. Rehabilitating existing buildings for continued use and maintaining in-place building materials are standard preservation practices that are also good for the overall environment."

- Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve Trust Board

resources. The Reserve's distinct landscape, rural character and heritage resources are economically important within the agricultural, recreation and tourism industries, socially important within our community, and worthy of continued proactive preservation. This new approach recognized that the Town of Coupeville as a key partner in the Reserve.

Ebey's Reserve Trust Board

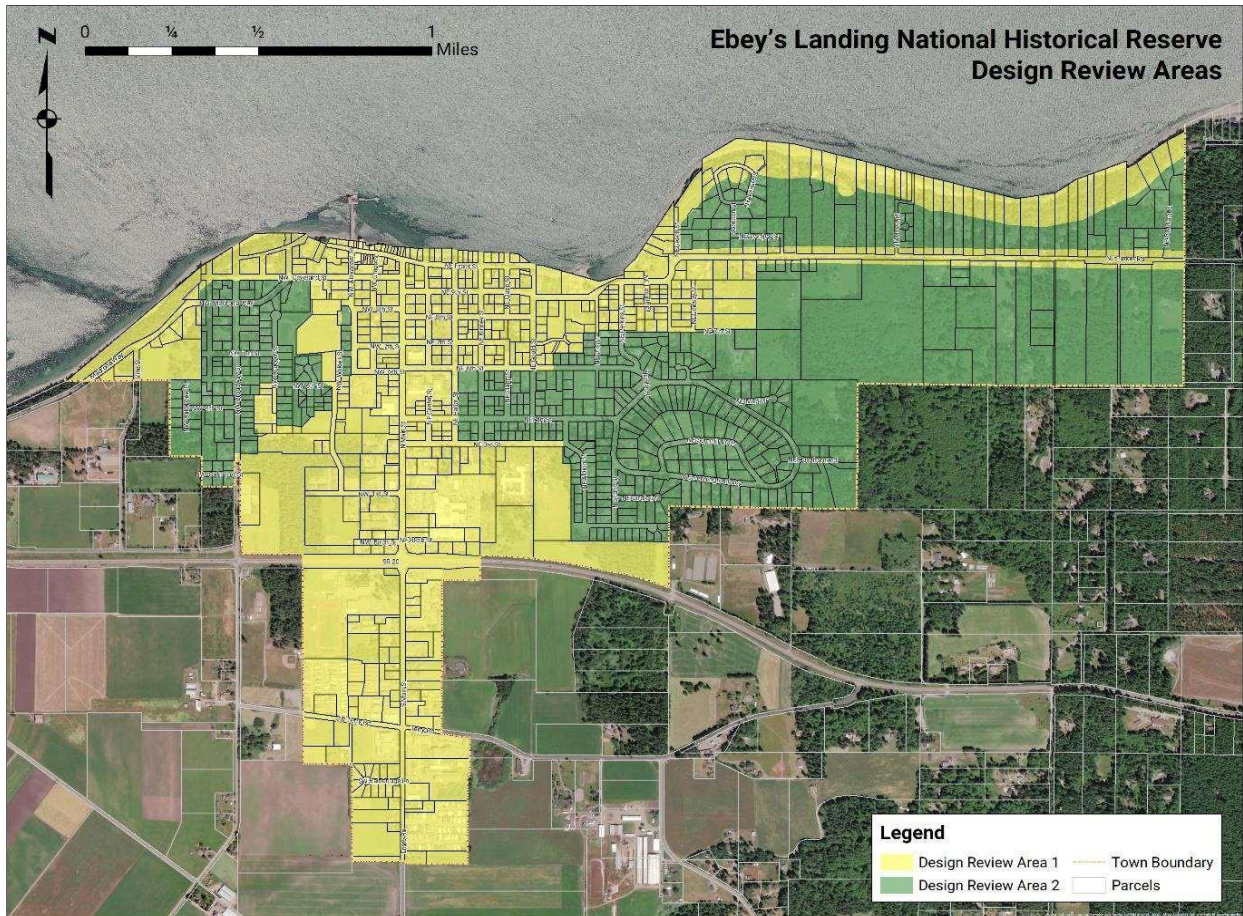
The nine-member Trust Board is made up of representatives appointed by the four government partners of the 1988 Interlocal Agreement: Town of Coupeville, Island County, Washington State Parks and National Park Service. The Trust Board employs a Reserve Manager, Historic Preservation Coordinator and other staff as needed. The Trust Board's key responsibilities are to coordinate the partnership defined in the 1988 Interlocal Agreement, to monitor the NPS acquired scenic easements in the Reserve, and to advise local, state, and federal partners on preservation in Reserve. This includes serving on the Historic Reserve Committee (Reserve Committee) as part of the Design Review process.

Learn more about the Reserve and historic preservation online:

ebeyreserve.com/historic-preservation



Colonel's House.



Design review areas in Coupeville.

Ebey's Reserve Design Review Process

The Ebey's Reserve Design Guidelines were adopted in 2011, along with Chapter 16.13 - Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Design Review and Community Design Standards, serve as the tools to facilitate the protection of historic resources in the Reserve. Design review is the process of applying context-specific design guidelines to proposed development and land use projects, including remodeling

and/or restoration of projects. This process is intended as a tool to help property owners care for, preserve, and conserve the overall character and appearance of the Reserve. Design review promotes sensitive rehabilitation and new construction that maintains the unique the Town of Coupeville and Island County have unified codes that for the most part, mirror each other.

Design Review Areas

The difference in Areas 1 and 2 is the range of design guidelines applicable to rehabilitation and construction projects.

Design Review Area 2 has a more modern character and less stringent review requirements and standards.

The success of the Design Review process to date is character of the Reserve, helping to retain strong property values for the entire community, and preserve our shared heritage. For this reason, and for consistency, attributed to the dedication of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), made up of appointed volunteers representing the Town and the County. The primary role of the HPC is to identify and actively encourage preservation and conservation of the Reserve's historic and cultural resources by maintaining a register of historic places and to issue or make recommendations on the issuance of Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) decision for new and modified building and sites.

Goals and Policies

Goal HP-1: Historic Resources. Protect, preserve, and celebrate Coupeville's historic and cultural resources.

- HP-1.1 Jointly conduct a major update of the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Design Guidelines with Island County and the Reserve. At a minimum, the guidelines should continue to ensure that new construction is compatible with surrounding development in terms of building scale, historical context, architectural character and building, siting and massing intensity.
- HP-1.2 Update and maintain zoning provisions to accommodate modest and compatible infill development in the Historic Commercial Center and other areas featuring historic structures, while encouraging the restoration, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and preservation of historic structures. Adaptive reuse or re-purposing of all existing structures is encouraged where practical.
- HP-1.3 Explore zoning, financial, and other incentives and programs to preserve, restore, and rehabilitate historic and/or cultural resources in Coupeville. This includes promoting incentives and programs through education and providing access to information. Where appropriate, incentives should be provided to incorporate coastal adaptation

Further Reading

For additional background information on the history of Coupeville, refer to "Coupeville - Past, Present and Future: Historic Preservation Plan" (1998) and "How Coupeville Grew: A Short History of Town Development: Excerpts from the Town's Historic Preservation Plan" (1998).



The home of Captain Thomas Coupe and Maria Coupe, circa 1933.



Historic house (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

strategies during preservation, restoration or rehabilitation of historic structures or cultural resources to increase resiliency to rising sea levels.

- HP-1.4 The Town will encourage the purchase of development rights through conservation easements by other entities (such as the National Park Service and the Whidbey Camano Land Trust) for structures, agricultural fields, woodlands, wetlands, shorelines, forests and other features and landscapes that represent the most enduring and character- defining characteristics of Coupeville and the Reserve.
- HP-1.5 Maintain and enhance the Town design review process in a manner that supports the historic preservation goal in a fair, equitable, and predictable process. Ensure non-historic areas are not over-regulated.
- HP-1.6 Emphasize the Town's historic context and preservation efforts in tourism efforts and make it highly visible throughout the Town.
- HP-1.7 Support the Coupeville Historic Waterfront Association, Historic Whidbey, Island County Historical Museum, Chamber of Commerce, Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, and other partners in efforts to improve the structural integrity and appearance of historic buildings in the historic business core. Resiliency efforts, such as updating energy systems, incorporating cooling systems, improving building materials, and planning for future climate conditions, should be considered during restoration activities.
- HP-1.8 Continue supporting the Town's partnership with the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Trust Board by cooperating together on projects, providing financial support and working jointly to increase public awareness and appreciation of the Reserve.
- HP-1.9 Coordinate with the County and the Reserve to provide ongoing staff support, training, and guidance to the Historic Preservation Commission.



The prairie, farm, and forest environment surrounding Coupeville (photo credit: Allison Gubata).



The Coupeville Cash Store Building, built 1886, and newly renovated and renamed to Salty Vons Waterfront Inn (photo credit: Von and Barbara Summers).



Front Street, circa 1920.

- HP-1.10 In partnership with Island County, continue to support the Reserve in maintaining a database of historic structures in Coupeville and in the Reserve that is compatible with statewide standards developed by the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.
- HP-1.11 In partnership with the Trust Board, explore the possibility of becoming a Certified Local Government.
- HP-1.12 Install prominent gateway features into the historic commercial center.
- HP-1.13 Ensure that cultural resources and practices – including significant historic sites and culturally important traditional foods and natural resources – are resilient to the impacts of extreme weather and other natural hazards worsened by climate change
- HP-1.14 Protect significant sites prone to floods, windstorms, sea level rise, excessive heat or other hazards worsened by climate change.
- HP-1.15 Ensure that cultural resources and practices, including significant historic sites and culturally important traditional foods and natural resources, are resilient to the impacts of extreme weather and other natural hazards worsened by climate change.
- HP-1.16 Protect significant sites prone to floods, windstorms, sea level rise, excessive heat or other hazards worsened by climate change.



The Coupeville Wharf (photo credit: John Hummel).

Goal HP-2: Quality Development. Promote compatible, high-quality, and pedestrian-friendly development that reinforces Coupeville's small-town identity within Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

- HC-2.1 Update zoning provisions to implement Coupeville's community design goals. Specifically:
 - A. While respecting the historical Town plat and grid system, integrate flexibility in the design of subdivisions to accommodate greater lot/housing type diversity, take advantage of unique site amenities and/or context adjacencies, maximize opportunities for common open space, and help meet the Town's environmental goals



The Frain Engle House.

and policies. Avoid suburban design trends including cul-de-sacs, rolled curbs, stacked mailboxes, wide streets, and other modern features.

- B. Incentivize the development of smaller compatible homes and dwelling units.
- C. Update sign regulations that balance visibility and identity needs of businesses and neighborhood context.
- D. Ensure view corridors are acknowledged and protected within the context of historical preservation.

HP-2.2 Re-evaluate and update the adopted design guidelines every ten years or more often to achieve contemporary community goals and objectives and make adjustments as necessary to improve effectiveness.

- A. Employ site and building design techniques that promote safe and inviting pedestrian access and connections.
- B. Provide building massing and articulation standards that respect the character and scale of Coupeville's historic business district, other commercial areas and neighborhoods.
- C. Place an emphasis on human-scaled design details that contribute to the Town's character and identity.
- D. Promote the use of high-quality, durable, and sustainable materials that respect the site's context and enhance the Town's character.
- E. Promote design that takes advantage of special vistas, particularly prominent views from public streets and places.

Small homes are important for both the preservation of Coupeville's historic charm and to provide starter homes and affordable options for current day residents. Zoning incentives could, for example, count small homes as ½ a dwelling unit for the purposes of density calculations in areas designated for medium and high-density residential development.

See Housing Element Policy H-1.7 for related ideas to explore in a housing action plan.



Example of small homes that are consistent with the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Design Guidelines for new construction.



A mixed-use office and lodging building with significant modulation and parking located in the rear.



View from Front Street (photo credit: John Hummel).

- F. Employ site and building design techniques that promote safe and inviting pedestrian access and connections.
- G. Review standards for accommodating parking in both residential and commercial areas with minimal impact on character, such as minimizing the required amount of parking, screening standards, and location standards.
- H. Emphasize protection of native vegetation, particularly forests, as an enduring and character-defining feature of Coupeville and the Reserve, especially those visible from points of entry and primary roads.
- I. Strive for a balance of predictability and flexibility in the design guidelines. This can be accomplished by emphasizing clear minimum standards while integrating strategic opportunities for flexibility.



Afternoon on Coupeville Wharf (photo credit: John Hummel).

HP-2.3 Design streets and public facilities to support and strengthen Coupeville's character, identity, and economic vitality. Specifically:

- A. Maintain and enhance the Town's historic waterfront through the use of common landscaping and gateway design elements and educational and directional signage.
- B. Encourage pedestrian movement through the historic waterfront by means of thematic signage, pedestrian walkways, informal gathering spaces, and parking management.



A town gateway sign decorated for the holiday season.

Housing Element

Introduction

The Housing Element addresses the preservation, improvement, and development of housing; identifies land to accommodate different housing types; and makes provisions for the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. Coupeville's housing element seeks to ensure that there will be enough housing to accommodate expected growth in the Town, and the variety of housing necessary to accommodate a range of income levels, ages, and special needs. At the same time, the element seeks to preserve existing neighborhood character by including policies that will keep new development compatible. This is an element in which multiple interests need to be balanced, including community character, demographic characteristics, affordability, and others.

The Housing Element is supported by a housing needs analysis, which quantifies existing and projected housing needs and identifies the number of housing units necessary to accommodate projected growth. This analysis is contained in Appendix C - Housing.

Growth Management Act (GMA)

The Housing Element is intended to satisfy GMA requirements for long range planning and to supplement information and implement goals and policies within the Comprehensive Plan. Under the GMA (RCW 36.70A.070), the Housing Element is required to:

- Include statements of goals and policies for the preservation, improvement and development of housing, including single-family residences, and with an urban growth area boundary, moderate density housing options including, but not limited to, duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes.



Residential mailboxes.



Homes in Coupeville.



Green ADU (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

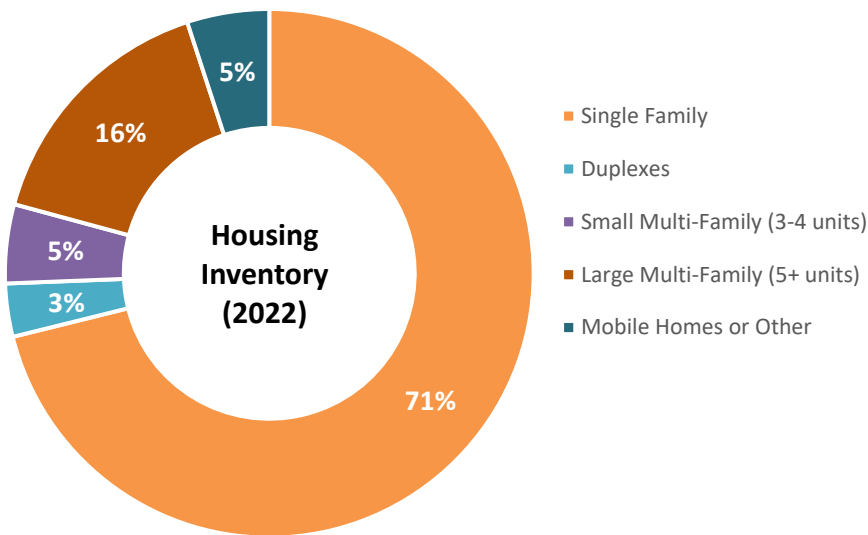


Red ADU (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

- Include an inventory and analysis of projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community including emergency housing and permanent supportive housing.
- Identify sufficient capacity of land for housing.
- Make adequate provisions for existing and projected needs for all economic segments of the community.
- Identify local policies and regulations that result in racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion in housing and how to undo those impacts.
- Identify areas that may be at higher risk of displacement from market forces.
- Establish anti-displacement policies.

Existing Conditions Summary

According to the 2024 OFM Postcensal estimates, Coupeville has an estimated 1,047 housing units. This is an increase of 154 units since 2010.



Housing Inventory by Type, 2022. Sources: OFM, September 2022; BERK, 2022.

More than two-thirds of units (about 71 percent) are one-unit detached structures (single-family homes). Relatedly, approximately 64 percent of units are owner-occupied. The median value of owner-occupied homes in 2024 was more than \$609,000 in 2020, a 105 percent increase since 2015. Area median income has increased only 38 percent over that same span.

Table H-1. Home Ownership Costs for Median and Lower Market Home in Coupeville, 2024.

	Lower Market Home (2024)	Median Home (2024)
Cost to Purchase		
Value	\$461,186	\$609,518
Assumed 10% down payment (\$)	\$46,119	\$60,952
Mortgage amount (\$)	\$415,067.22	\$548,566.56
Interest rate (%)	6.88%	6.88%
Monthly payments (#)	360	360
Monthly mortgage payment, principal and interest (\$)	\$2,728.08	\$3,605.52
Annual Housing Expenses		
Mortgage payment, principal and interest (\$)	\$32,737.00	\$43,266.30
Property tax, annual (\$)	\$3,796.69	\$5,017.83
PMI, annual (\$)	\$4,150.67	\$5,485.67
Insurance, annual (\$)	\$2,305.93	\$3,047.59
Annual Costs (\$)	\$42,990.29	\$56,817.39
Monthly Costs (\$)	\$3,582.52	\$4,734.78
Affordability		
Monthly Income Needed	\$11,951.30	\$15,795.23
Annual Income Needed	\$143,415.60	\$189,542.80

Note: ZHVI represents the whole housing stock and not just the homes that list or sell in a given month. Median home value is the median value of all homes (single family residential and condos) as of July 2024. Assumptions: Interest rate of 6.88% based on 30-year mortgage and refinance rates as reported by the Wall Street Journal on October 30, 2024. Property tax rate of \$9.530435 per \$1,000 of assess value per the Island County 2022 tax levy rates. Private mortgage insurance rate of 1.0% and insurance rate of \$5.00 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Sources: [ZHVI](#), July 2024; [Island County Tax Levy Rates](#), 2022.

Approximately 34 percent of units are renter-occupied. The average rent in the Oak Harbor metro area (of which Coupeville is a part) was \$1,914 per month in 2024. This represents a 91 percent increase from 2015 to 2024.

Table H-2. Rental Affordability in Coupeville, 2022.

	2015	2021	2022	2024
Average Rent (Oak Harbor metro area)	\$1,072	\$1,692	\$1,858	\$1,914
Income Needed to Afford	\$42,880	\$67,687	\$74,310	\$76,560
% of Coupeville households that can afford average rent	49%	53%	48%	50%*

*Assumes a 3% annual income increase from 2021 ACS 5-year estimates.

Sources: ZORI, March 2015 - September 2022; U.S. Census, 2010-2015 and 2016-2020 ACS 5-year Estimates (Table S1901); HUD Income Limits, 2015-2022; BERK, 2022; Facet, 2024.

Housing Need Compared to Capacity

Through a process outlined in the Island Countywide Planning Policies and in collaboration with Island County and the other cities in the county, the Town of Coupeville established the following housing needs by income level. These represent the units by income level that Coupeville must plan for and accommodate within the planning period.

Table H-3. Coupeville Housing Allocations, 2024

	Permanent Housing Needs by Income Level (% of Area Median Income)							Total
	0-30%		>30-50%	>50-80%	>80-100%	>100-120%	>120%	
	Non-PSH	PSH*						
Est. Housing Supply (2020)	73	0	191	162	77	118	396	1,017
Additional Units Needed (2020-2045)	40	34	71	61	29	27	89	350

*The location of 10 existing permanent supportive housing units within Island County is unknown and not included in Commerce's estimated supply by jurisdiction within Island County.

Sources: Department of Commerce Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT), December 2022; Island County Countywide Planning Policies, adopted March 26, 2024; Coupeville Land Capacity Analysis (Facet), 2024.

As established in the Land Use Element, Coupeville has capacity (assuming sewer expansion) as follows for residential units in its zones:

- Low Density Residential (LDR) 91
- Medium Density Residential (RM-9600) 90
- High Density Residential (RH) 4
- Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) 27

When grouping zones and their allowed uses and densities by income category compared to aggregated need by income category is as follows:

Table H-4. Growth-Related Housing Need by Income Level vs. Capacity

Income Level (% AMI)	Projected Housing Need ¹	Zone Categories Serving These Needs	Aggregated Housing Needs	Total Capacity	Capacity Surplus (Deficit)
0-30% PSH	34	Low-Rise Multifamily, Mid-Rise Multifamily, ADUs	194	4 + 69 ADU = 73	(121)
0-30% Non-PSH	40				
31-50%	71				
51-80%	61 – 10 multifamily – 2 ADU = 49				
81-100%	29	Moderate Density	56	27	(29)
101-120%	27				
>120%	89 – 5 = 84	Low Density	84	201	117
Total	351		351	310	(41)

Source: Facet, 2024.

The exhibit above shows a gap of 121 units potentially available to households making 80 percent AMI and below. There is also a moderate-density zone category gap of 29 units. There is a surplus of 117 units of housing units likely affordable to households making more than 120 percent AMI.

As shown in the Housing Needs Assessment appendix, housing has not been constructed at a pace sufficient to meet the needs within the planning period for zones with capacity for 0-80%

¹ From 2020-2044 Housing Allocations

AMI. Moderate-density and low-density homes do not face a historical barrier to construction at a pace sufficient to meet demand.

Adequate Provisions

The following steps are being taken that will address shortfalls in moderate-density and low-rise multifamily, mid-rise multifamily, and ADU capacity.

Land Use Changes

5.6-acre parcel in NW Coupeville future land use designation is changing from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential.

2.1-acre parcel in south Coupeville off S Main St future land use designation is changing from Medium Density Residential to High Density Residential.

Code Changes

- Middle Housing Code – Coupeville adopted a middle housing ordinance that includes updated standards for ADUs to comply with new GMA requirements as well as provisions for several middle housing types. Specific changes include:
 - New definitions as needed
 - Duplexes allowed in Residential Reserve (RR) zone
 - Duplexes and cottages allowed in Low Density Residential (LDR) zone
 - Duplexes, cottages, townhomes, and triplexes (as well as Class II group homes) allowed in Medium Density Residential (MR-9600) zone
 - Townhomes allowed in High Density Residential (RH) zone
 - Mixed-use structures added to permitted uses in Historic/Limited Commercial (HLC) zone
 - All multifamily residential and mixed-use added to permitted uses in Town Commercial (TC) zone
 - Mixed-use added to permitted uses in General Commercial (GC) zone
 - New supplemental use standards for triplexes and townhomes as well as revisions to duplex supplemental standards
 - Updated ADU code, including affordability incentive
 - New cottage housing standards
 - New parking requirements for duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, cottages, and ADUs (previously parking was only separated by single-family and multifamily units)

- Unit Lot Subdivision code – In addition to establishing use allowances and supplemental use standards in the zoning code, the Town completed/is completing a unit lot subdivision ordinance creating standards in the subdivision title

Other

- While the land capacity analysis requirements contained within the Island Countywide Planning Policies prohibit assignment of capacity to land that is tax exempt, the Town of Coupeville has reason to believe that a 4.8-acre property owned by Whidbey Health (the Whidbey Island Public Hospital District) and zoned RH (High Density Residential) contains true development capacity for high-density housing that is likely to be realized during the planning period.
- This plan also establishes a Manufactured Home Park zoning designation to protect naturally occurring affordable housing as well as other policies in this element to deter displacement.

Goals and Policies

Goal H-1. Housing Supply. Provide for a sufficient supply, diversity, and affordability of housing to meet community needs.

- H-1.1 Provide for an adequate supply of appropriately zoned land to accommodate Coupeville's housing allocations by income bracket.
- H-1.2 Promote a variety of residential densities and housing types in all price ranges to meet a range of housing needs and respond to changing needs and preferences.
- H-1.3 Encourage integration of smaller housing and "middle" housing types, such as cottages, duplexes, townhouses, and accessory dwelling units, into residential neighborhoods.
- H-1.4 Encourage infill development on vacant or under-utilized land.
- H-1.5 Evaluate local development standards and regulations for effects on housing costs and barriers to achieving desired housing types.
- H-1.6 Allow for development of multifamily housing in areas close to shopping, employment, services, and public transportation.



Gould St House and ADU (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



ADU (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

H-1.7 Update the Housing Needs Assessment data at regular intervals to track implementation progress of the Comprehensive Plan and to explore options for incentivizing and requiring affordable units in new residential development. At a minimum, consider:

- Density and/or height bonuses in one or more zones in exchange for rent-restricted (or other similar restrictions) affordable housing (including monitoring requirements to ensure long-term affordability).
- Zoning incentives for small homes (e.g. under 1,400 square feet).
- Tax and utility fee exemptions for affordable housing.
- Development of single-room occupancy housing.
- Partnering with religious organizations, Island County, land trusts, and other non-profits to build affordable housing.
- Identification of publicly-owned properties that could possibly serve as sites for the development of affordable housing.
- Cooperate in the establishment of a public/private housing trust fund to
 - provide loans and grants for affordable and supportive housing.
 - Expanded tenant protections.
 - Other strategic capacity-related land use and zoning changes that fit the Town's vision, goals, and policies. This could include adjustments to minimize lot sizes for one or more zones or other future land use map changes.

Incentivizing small homes. The average size of new single-family home in the United States has been growing for decades, peaking at 2,653 square feet in 2016, according to the US Census. In desirable communities such as Coupeville with relatively low zoned densities, developers tend to build large two-story homes to maximize values on increasingly costly land.

One direct solution is to allow developers to build more homes if they are smaller - perhaps no more than 1,000 to 1,400 square feet. This is enough space for two or three bedrooms.

H-1.8 Establish a new zoning designation or overlay for existing mobile home parks to protect existing affordable housing stock. Enact regulations that

provide protections against displacement of mobile home parks while exploring partnership opportunities.

Middle housing (or the "missing middle") refers to housing choices like duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, accessory dwelling units (ADU's), and cottage housing that fit between the scale of apartment buildings and single-family homes. This type of housing has been prohibited or difficult to build in many cities and towns since the mid-20th century, but was historically common. It has regained appeal because it can be economical to build and thus have lower costs, providing more affordable housing options.



Examples of middle housing.

Does new housing development affect adjacent property values?

The quick answer to this question is: it depends. Research shows that market value of properties near new housing development generally changes in at least a neutral or a slightly positive direction in the long-term, but property tax bills may decrease because new housing adds shared value to an entire community.

Older adults and people with disabilities on limited incomes are eligible for an exemption from paying some property taxes, depending on their income levels. More information is available from the Island County Assessor's Department:

islandcountywa.gov/269/Exemptions

Goal H-2. Neighborhoods. Promote the vitality of residential neighborhoods.

- H-2.1 Prioritize and maintain procedures for the protection of historically significant housing sites and structures, including structures that are significant examples of the architectural design of the period prior to 1945.
- H-2.2 Continue to administer the process and standards to permit home occupations in residential areas. Home occupations should be limited to those which are incidental to the primary residential use and do not change the residential character of the structure.

Goal H-3. Supportive Housing. Provide a sufficient supply of housing for populations with unique needs, including independent living for seniors, assisted living, memory care, rehabilitation facilities, and transitional housing.

- H-3.1 Support the capacity for Coupeville residents to age-in-place, including consideration of housing's location and proximity to services, housing design and access (e.g. availability of single-level and elevator-served housing), and the overall cost of housing for people on fixed incomes.
- H-3.2 Promote supportive housing near services and transit access to help people experiencing disabilities, housing insecurity, and homelessness to transition to more stable and secure housing.
- H-3.3 Encourage private sector efforts to secure federal and/or state funds to provide housing for elderly and disabled residents.
- H-3.4 Enact and maintain reasonable development regulations that encourage development of permanent supportive housing where appropriate in order to meet Coupeville's housing allocations.

Is low-income housing part of the Comprehensive Plan?

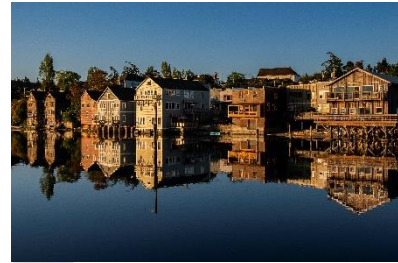
The Town of Coupeville does not propose or manage housing Developments. There is not a specific "low-income" housing project proposed by the Town.

An aspiration of the Comprehensive Plan is for housing prices to be stabilized or even lowered so that people of moderate incomes can afford to live in Coupeville - especially the workers who support the Town's economy like teachers, nurses, restaurant workers, and retail staff. The primary method known to stabilize housing prices is to increase supply so there is more competition among property owners and a variety of options for buyers and renters to choose from.

Acknowledging that even smaller housing units can be out of reach for many people in today's market, the Plan recommends exploring approaches and strategies for ensuring future housing units intended to for individuals and families of moderate to low income remain affordable over a long period of time

Goal H-4. High-Quality Housing. Encourage the design, construction, and maintenance of housing to keep homes in good condition.

H-4.1 Encourage the preservation and upkeep of existing housing. Conserve the Town's existing housing stock through continued investment in adequate public services, appropriate zoning, design standards to buffer residential areas from conflicting uses, and encouragement of rehabilitation programs.



Waterfront housing (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

H-4.2 Permit and encourage the development of manufactured, prefabricated, and modular housing as an affordable housing option so long as such housing has similar character and appearance as traditional site-built housing in Coupeville and complies with Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Design Guidelines.



Airplane flying over trees (photo credit: Elvis Kaiser).

H-4.3 Encourage the construction and upgrade of housing with increased standards for soundproofing and weatherproofing to mitigate jet aircraft noise, adapt to the effects of climate change, and improve energy efficiency.

H-4.4 Provide resources to help older residential buildings convert from wood and fossil fuel heating sources to electric heating and heat pumps.

About 28% of Coupeville dwelling units rely primarily on wood or fossil fuel for heating, according to 2020 Census data.

Goal H-5. Collaboration to Provide Affordable Housing. Actively participate and coordinate with other agencies in efforts to meet regional housing needs.

H-5.1 Continue to participate in local and regional affiliations and alliances to provide affordable housing in Coupeville and across Whidbey Island.

H-5.2 Seek and advocate for regional, state, federal, and philanthropic funding options to support development of housing for low- and moderate-income households.

H-5.3 Work with other jurisdictions and health and social service organizations to develop and implement a coordinated, regional approach to homelessness.

Goal H-6. Caring Community. Foster a caring and welcoming community that supports individuals, children, and families in meeting their housing needs.

H-6.1 Enhance the accessibility of Coupeville's housing and connections to other land uses, especially for the elderly, people with disabilities, and people using mobility support devices. Specifically:

- A. Encourage housing choices with single-level units on the ground floor or elevator-accessed multifamily housing.
- B. Locate age-friendly housing near commercial and civic amenities like shopping destinations and parks.
- C. Provide safe and accessible connections between housing, commercial areas, and civic amenities through features like paved walkways, curb ramps, and traffic calming.
- D. Support continuation and expansion of transit services which help seniors living in Coupeville travel around Whidbey Island without a car, especially those who cannot physically drive or afford to drive.



Evening on Front Street (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Island transit (photo credit: IslandBruce).

H-6.2 Promote housing location and design that encourages healthy living, active lifestyles, and which supports aging in place. For example, locate senior-accessible housing near medical services, parks, and grocery stores.



Coupeville Town Park sign (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

H-6.3 Make human services more available, inclusive, and accessible to the Coupeville community. Opportunities and strategies to address a spectrum of community needs include seeking outside funding, establishing service provider partnerships, and evaluating zoning for standards on human service facilities.

H-6.4 Support Island County Health and Human Services in maintaining current counts of the number of homeless people and other special needs populations in Coupeville to understand the scale of needs.

-
- H-6.5 Consider human services objectives in developing Town regulations and codes. For example, enforcing code abatement may mean making people homeless. Provide referrals to community resources to assist these residents, before they are abated, is critical.
- H-6.6 Educate the community about and promote affordable and special needs housing and human services facilities and programs.
- Conduct early and ongoing public outreach and communication during program or project review and apply appropriate conditions of approval that address community concerns such as traffic, public services, or environmental quality.
- H-6.7 Enact development regulations that create opportunity to construct sufficient emergency shelter and emergency housing to meet Coupeville’s housing unit allocations while mitigating impacts.

Economic Stability Element

Introduction

Coupeville's commercial heritage is unique. As the economic heart of Whidbey Island for nearly a century, the Town primarily served the timber, agriculture, and maritime industries, as well as retail and wholesale markets and personal and business services. This commercial legacy survives to some extent, especially in the built environment of a mercantile past: Front Street, North Main Street, and Prairie Center are strong evidence of a small town that functioned more as a regional economic center than a geographically isolated town. In contrast, Coupeville's regional draw is now based more on its cultural assets (especially history, art, and nature) than its ability to provide a wide range of products and services as rapid post-war development in Oak Harbor shifted the economic center of Whidbey Island eight miles to the north.

Among the GMA goals is a recognition that economic development and economic opportunities for residents should be encouraged throughout the State of Washington. However, this broad goal should be realized within the capacities of a sustainable environment, public services, and public facilities, and within the context of comprehensive planning. Economic goals should complement and support the community vision for Coupeville. This chapter builds upon other elements of the Comprehensive Plan to develop a direction that assures a sustainable local economy while protecting the Town's history and small-town character.

Why Economic Stability?

The Town added the Economic Stability element to the Comprehensive Plan in 1998 after working closely with the Executive Director of the Island County Economic Development Council (EDC) and a committee of local business and resident interests. The committee intentionally



Storefronts on Front Street in historic central Coupeville (photo credit: John Feit).



Town Hall (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

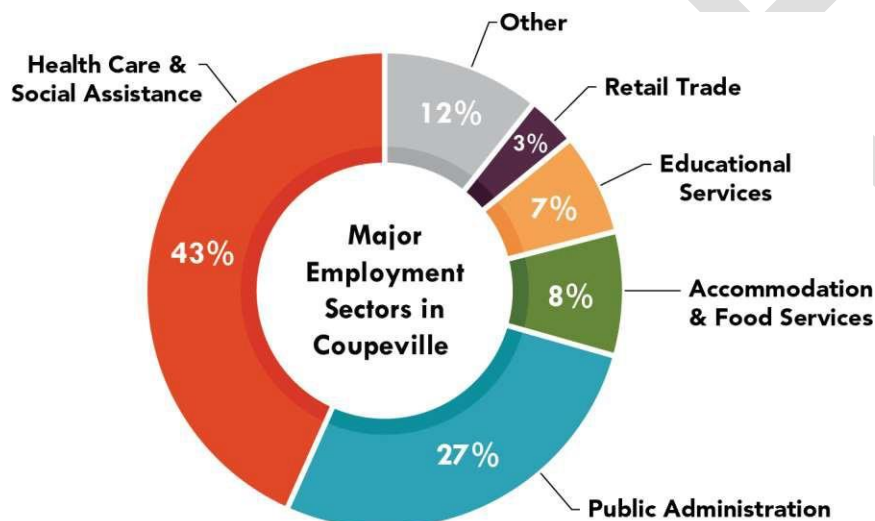


Whale wheel carved by local woodworker Roger Purdue (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

expressed a preference for "economic stability" as opposed to "economic development" because stability implies using the Town's current assets in a more efficient manner. Examples might include attracting more year-round visitors or encouraging more economic use of existing commercial areas. Economic sustainability and stability would thus be managed within the Town's historic character for economic growth.

Existing Conditions Summary

As of 2019, Census OnTheMap data indicates that there are 1,978 jobs within Coupeville. Nearly three-quarters of jobs are within the health care/social assistance or public administration sectors. Health care and social assistance accounts for 43% of employment within Coupeville followed by public administration (27%), accommodation and food services (8%), and educational services (7%).² Reflective of these percentages, major employers in town include WhidbeyHealth, Island County, and the Coupeville School District.



Major Employment Sectors in Coupeville (2% of Employment Share or More), 2019

Note: The Public Administration sector includes government employment such as from the Town of Coupeville and Island County. Other sectors include Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (1.8%), Finance and Insurance (1.6%), Other Services (excluding Public Administration) (1.5%), Construction (1.4%), and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (1.1%).

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, 2019; BERK, 2023.

More individuals commute into Coupeville for work than leave the town to work in another location (1,878 compared with 536 individuals, respectively). Around 100 individuals that live in the Town also work in the Town as well. Those who commute to Coupeville to work tend to earn more in wages than those who live in Coupeville.

² U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, 2019



Town of Coupeville Employee Travel Patterns: Inflow/Outflow Analysis

Note: Inflow/Outflow analysis performed for primary jobs (public and private-sector jobs, one job per worker). A primary job is the highest paying job for an individual worker.

Source: US Census, OnTheMap, 2019.

Tourism and hospitality are also important sectors in Coupeville and Island County. The Coupeville Chamber of Commerce estimates that Coupeville's seasonal population ranges from 1,000 - 1,500 depending on the time of year (highest in the spring and summer months and lowest in the fall and winter months).³ In 2021, Coupeville received \$13.4M of visitor travel spending, approximately 9% of countywide visitor travel spending that occurred in incorporated areas and approximately 5% of countywide visitor travel spending overall.⁴ While visitor spending, earnings, and tax receipts decreased in 2020 (likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic), spending and earning amounts from 2021 indicate patterns are returning to pre-2020 numbers.

See *Appendix D - Economic Stability* for more information about Coupeville's workforce, major employers/industries, and employment projections.

³ Coupeville Chamber of Commerce, Seasonal Population by Quarter, Q4 2018 - Q4 2020.

⁴ Island County Travel Impacts 2015-2021 (Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism), May 2022.

Goals and Policies

Goal ES-1: Compatible and Complementary Businesses. Encourage new businesses and the retention and expansion of existing businesses that are environmentally compatible, complementary to community needs, and consistent with land uses.

- ES-1.1 Work with local stakeholders, such as the Central Whidbey Chamber of Commerce, Coupeville Historic Waterfront Association and the Island County Economic Development Council, to support the sustainability of year- round businesses that best match community retail and service needs.
- ES-1.2 Support the retention, growth, and new location of small and locally-owned businesses.
- ES-1.3 Review existing commercial zones and uses to ensure that both community and business needs are met, while providing for orderly transitions between commercial and residential uses.
- ES-1.4 Review existing land use and development regulations and identify possible locations for limited, carefully regulated light manufacturing businesses, such as artisan manufacturing, microbreweries, furniture and craft stores, boat building and repair, and art production studios.
- ES-1.5 Encourage water-oriented and visually compatible small-scale commercial uses on the waterfront that are consistent with the character of the Front Street area, including the Coupeville Wharf.
- ES-1.6 Encourage "green" businesses that are less resource intensive and that have fewer impacts on the cultural landscape.
- ES-1.7 Continue to support seasonal farmers' markets to encourage markets for local products.
- ES-1.8 Assure that Town regulations governing businesses balance legitimate business needs while protecting residential integrity.
- ES-1.9 Consider establishing a master use permit and/or consolidated permit process that allows for all needed permits to be processed concurrently to ensure timely, fair, and predictable timelines. Ensure prospective Town businesses receive all



Wharf Dog storefront (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



McGregor Studio (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Farmers' market produce (photo credit: Megan Bucknall).

- necessary business regulations, permit forms, and utility information in a single packet
- ES-1.10 Support establishment of affordable childcare services within the town and Central Whidbey Island for children of all ages via potentially expedited permit review processes, providing support for grant applications, and other means.
 - ES-1.11 Develop an equitable payment-in-lieu-of-taxes program with property tax exempt entities which is commensurate with the level of Town services provided to each entity.
 - ES-1.12 Build a coalition of employers/businesses and housing non-profits to work together to address housing needs to attract and retain employees.



Children on slide (photo credit: Amber Faust).

Goal ES-2: Tourism. Emphasize Coupeville's historic character, activities, and beautiful natural setting in order to maintain and enhance year-round opportunities for sustainable tourism.

- ES-2.1 Support and partner with *Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands* Regenerative Tourism campaign that provides unique visitor experiences by connecting with and community and promotes sustainable tourism in Coupeville.
- ES-2.2 Support Coupeville's arts community and Creative Art District to enhance the Town's image and reputation as a center for arts training, display, and sales.
- ES-2.3 Support the Coupeville Port District in its wharf restoration projects and enhancement of boating activities and marine recreation.
- ES-2.4 Cooperate with and support the activities of the Trust Board of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, the Island County Historical Society, and other partners to preserve historic character and enhance educational opportunities.
- ES-2.5 Expand pedestrian access for residents and tourists to interconnect all Town parks, Island County's non-motorized trail system, Whidbey Camano Land Trust trails, state parks, and Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve facilities.

A Creative District is a geographically defined area of cultural and economic activity where innovation and creativity can thrive. It's a place for people to gather and enjoy their community's arts and culture and a place that helps the community move enthusiastically into the future. Creative Districts are designated by the Washington State Arts Commission ([ArtsWA](#)).

- ES-2.6 Support tourism marketing for Coupeville and Whidbey Island, including active cooperation with those efforts that promote Island County during the "off-season."
- ES-2.7 Coordinate with CHWA, Coupeville Chamber of Commerce, the Museum, businesses, and others, on improving parking and walkability in the historic downtown area, a permanent public bathroom and other facilities.
- ES-2.8 Consider branding and wayfinding for the Town that businesses can incorporate into their marketing plans.
- ES-2.9. Explore and analyze Town owned properties to determine their highest and best use for public benefit.



Four Springs Lake Preserve on Camano (photo credit: Joe Mabel).

Goal ES-3: Employment Opportunities. Foster an array of sustainable employment choices for all income and age levels, particularly jobs that pay a living wage.

- ES-3.1 Promote economic resilience by encouraging diversity of businesses not reliant on a single business sector or large employer. Include strategies for increasing business sector diversity and to encourage innovative use of underutilized space.
- ES-3.2 Encourage expansion of existing employers and attraction of new employers that pay wages sufficient to support family households and fund needed public services.
- ES-3.3 Collaborate with educational facilities and other public and private institutions to provide educational opportunities in entrepreneurship, training, innovation, and mentoring
- ES-3.4 Engage in regular communication with local businesses and resources outside the region to better understand industry trends, cooperatively plan for future needs, and work toward common goals.
- ES-3.5 Encourage low-impact, home-based businesses in residential areas.

A **living wage** is the minimum income necessary for a worker to afford a decent standard of living, including food, water, housing, education, health care, childcare, transportation, clothing, and other essential needs like provision for unexpected events. There is no one universally accepted measure of what a living wage is as needs vary by location and household type.

A related concept is that of a **family wage**-one sufficient to not only support oneself, but also to raise a family.

- ES-3.6 Encourage development of co-working spaces that support Coupeville's remote worker community.
- ES-3.7 Continue to support the major employers within Coupeville, including Island County, WhidbeyHealth, and the Coupeville School District.



Coworking space.

DRAFT

Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element

Introduction

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element guides the expansion and maintenance of Coupeville's park system and helps ensure a healthy recreational and open space environment. These dedicated park, recreation, and open space areas interweave with the built environment to preserve the intangible small-town character enjoyed by Coupeville residents. In addition, these areas perform a valuable service in protecting areas that sustain wildlife habitat as well as cultural, biological, geological, and ecological processes within the community. Maintaining this existing system while planning for future enhancement are the hallmarks of this element.



Picnic shelter at Coupeville Town Park.



Bald eagle (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

Existing Conditions Summary

The Town of Coupeville owns and maintains a number of developed and undeveloped active and passive recreational facilities. These facilities are classified as either parks, open space, or trails and walkways (see Table PR-1).

Table PR-1 - Coupeville recreational classification system.

Facility Type	Use	Service Area	Locational Characteristics
Parks	Typically have high levels of recreation and/or facility development. Includes parks able to support a wide range of activities or with regionally important facilities, areas for more intense and varied recreational activities, and specialized facilities serving a single purpose, limited population, or specific group.	Varies according to location and size.	May be linked with specific neighborhoods or within close proximity to associated uses, within residential neighborhoods (primarily local access), or unlinked to specific neighborhoods (generally with good access/parking).

Facility Type	Use	Service Area	Locational Characteristics
Open Space	Generally undeveloped with passive natural systems focus, including forests, wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, greenbelts, fish and wildlife habitat areas, and where appropriate, low- impact and passive outdoor recreation such as trails.	Varies according to location.	Highly diverse character.
Trails/ Walkways	Paved and un-paved routes (including sidewalks) connecting neighborhoods and other recreation facilities.	Varies according to location.	Connect neighborhoods or other facilities.

The Town owns and operates 9 parks totaling approximately 12.2 acres, 22.7 acres of open space, and a growing network of approximately 7.7 miles of trails and walkways (including 3.5 miles of sidewalks). The town is also served by several public recreation facilities owned and operated by other providers such as the School District, Port of Coupeville, and Island County.

See Table PR-2 and Table PR-3 for more detail and Figure 33 for the location of facilities. Trails and sidewalks are detailed in the Transportation Element.

The National Park System owns three properties in Town limits. These sites are not included in this list as they are not accessible to the public and future uses have yet to be determined.

PR-2 - Existing parks, recreation, and open space.

Site Name	Facility Type	Acres	Owner/Provider
Captain Coupe Park & Boat Launch	Park	1.74	Town of Coupeville
Community Green	Park	4.83	Town of Coupeville
Cook's Corner Park	Park	0.09	Town of Coupeville
Coupeville Wharf & Beach Access	Park	0.50	Port of Coupeville
Front Street Deck & Beach Access	Park	0.16	Town of Coupeville
Grace Street Parklet	Park	0.03	Town of Coupeville
Lion's Park (Sixth Street Park)	Park	1.07	Town of Coupeville

Site Name	Facility Type	Acres	Owner/Provider
North Main Park (Island County Park)	Park	0.20	Island County
Sunset Terrace Park	Park	0.90	Town of Coupeville
Town Park & Beach Access	Park	3.00	Town of Coupeville
Waterfront Walk	Park/Trail	0.40	Town of Coupeville
Five Acre Woods*	Open Space	5.00	Town of Coupeville
Forested Property & Community Garden	Open Space	16.23	Town of Coupeville
Johnson Lot	Open Space	0.15	Town of Coupeville
NE Gould Open Space	Open Space	0.69	Town of Coupeville
Peaceful Valley Open Space Strip	Open Space	0.63	Town of Coupeville
Town Hall Lots	Other-Parking Overflow	0.53	Town of Coupeville
NE Ninth Street Open Space	Other-Parking Overflow	1.15	Town of Coupeville
Coupeville Elementary School	Other-School	15.57	Coupeville School District
Coupeville Middle/High School	Other-School	10.43	Coupeville School District
Gymnasium/Athletic Fields	Other-School	7.29	Coupeville School District
Recreation Hall	Other-Indoor Rental Facility	0.44	Town of Coupeville

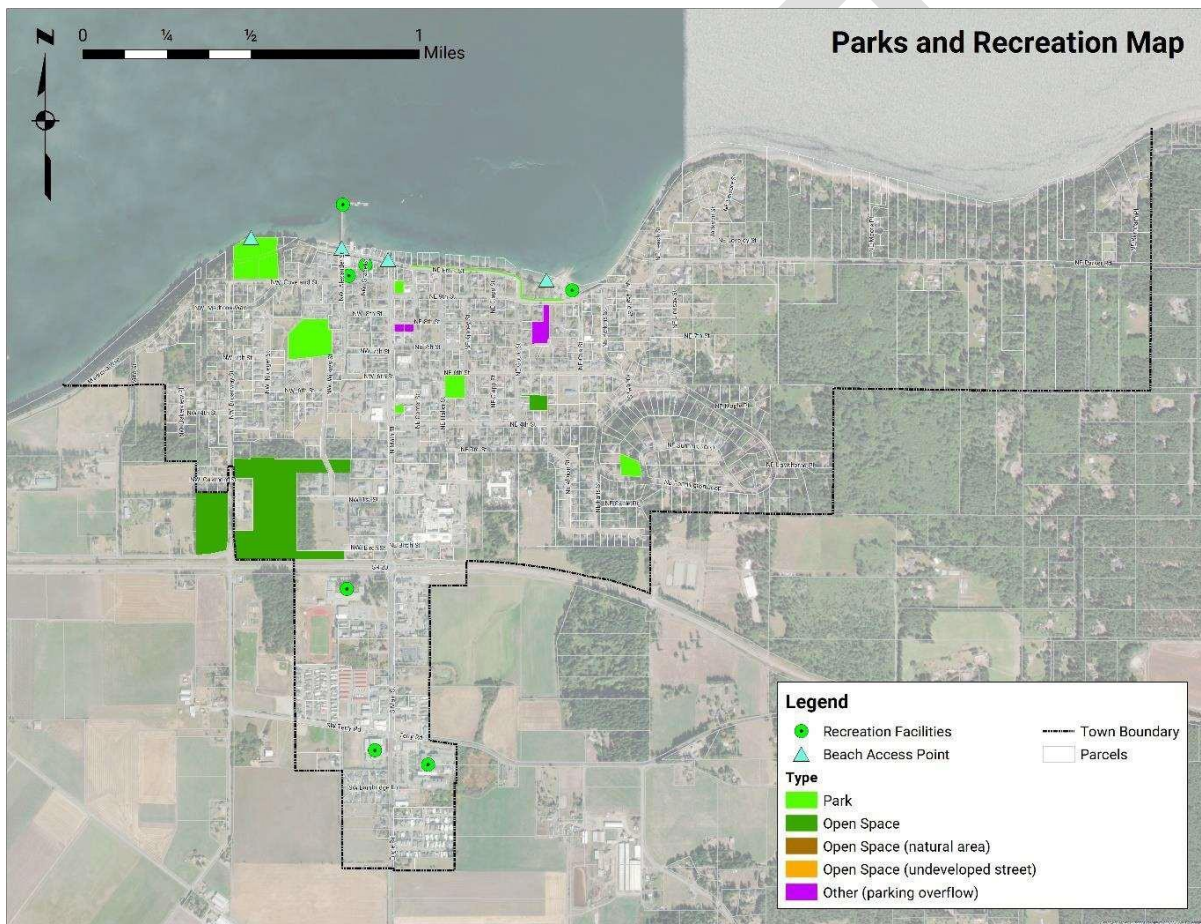
**The Town recently acquired the Five Acre Woods, an undeveloped and forested 5-acre parcel. The site is currently outside of Town limits with limited public access and so it excluded from the existing but included in the future LOS open space calculation in the CFP Appendix.*

PR-3 - Existing trails and walkways (does not include sidewalks).

Site Name	Length (ft)	Length (m)	Owner/Provider
Class 1 Trail on SR 20 from NW Broadway to the east edge of the NPS property	4,432	0.839	Island County
Path in Peaceful Valley (NW Krueger, NW 6 th St, NW Wilkes St)	1,259	0.238	Town of Coupeville
Path on NE Front Street from Gould to N Main Street	1,371	0.259	Town of Coupeville
Path on NE Leach, 9th Street and Gould to NE Front Street	1,826	0.345	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Broadway from Black Road to Madrona Way	2,687	0.508	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Krueger from NW 7th Street to the end of cul-de-sac to Comm. Green path	600	0.11	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Madrona Way from NW Broadway to Vine Street	1,152	0.218	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Parker Road	5,141	0.973	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Wilkes Street from NW 6th Street to NW 1st Street	1,125	0.21	Town of Coupeville
Trail from NW Broadway to NW Wilkes Street	1,033	0.195	Town of Coupeville
Trail from NW Broadway to west end of NW Birch Street	1,205	0.228	Town of Coupeville
Class 1 Trail on SR 20 from NW Broadway to the east edge of the NPS property	4,432	0.839	Island County
Path in Peaceful Valley (NW Krueger, NW 6 th St, NW Wilkes St)	1,259	0.238	Town of Coupeville

Site Name	Length (ft)	Length (m)	Owner/Provider
Path on NE Front Street from Gould to N Main	1,371	0.259	Town of Coupeville

Note: Many of the Town owned trails provide a connection to the County's Class 1 trail along the SR 20 that connect to other trails in Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. Sidewalks are detailed in the Transportation Element.



Existing parks, recreation, and open space.

See the *Capital Facilities Plan Appendix* for detailed analysis of the Town's existing inventory, revenue analysis, forecast of future needs and revenue based on level of service standards, and all known parks projects needed to accommodate projected growth in Coupeville.

Goals and Policies

Goal PR-1: Park and Recreation Facilities. Design, develop, and maintain a wide range of facilities that enhance the community's quality of life, supports the economic and tourism base, and respects the diversity of our community's changing recreation needs.

Park System

PR-1.1 Develop a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) plan to develop and prioritize the diverse recreation and open space needs of Coupeville. Measurable standards should be included in the Plan, along with a detailed trails plan and facilities list developed by the Parks and Recreation Committee. Other PROS features should include:

- Policies focused on walkable access to parks to ensure equitable and safe pedestrian routes to parks and facilities.
- Ensure adequate policies are in place for connectivity, site selection, equitable access, community engagement, environmental protection, transportation, public safety, and others.
- Recommendations for updated LOS standards.

PR-1.2 Ensure indoor and outdoor parks and recreation facilities are convenient and accessible for the residents of Coupeville and meet a range of recreational experiences based on demographic characteristics and recreational needs of the community.

PR-1.3 Provide a balance of both active and passive recreation opportunities that encourage healthy lifestyles, facilitate lifelong participation, and generate a respect for the natural environment.

PR-1.4 Meet or exceed adopted level of service (LOS) standards as defined in Table PR-4.

A future Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan would address the goals and policies in this Element with more detail. Goals and policies as well as suggested project and funding lists would be based on:

- A detailed inventory and assessment of existing facilities.
- Anticipated growth and changes in demand for park and recreation facilities.
- A feasibility study considering upgrades to existing parks, such as Captain Coupe Park and Town Park, and the need for new recreational facilities, such as pickle ball courts.
- A dedicated community outreach effort.

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan would then be adopted by reference in the Comprehensive Plan (similar to the Town's other system plans).

Table PR-4 - Parks and recreation level of service standards.

Type of Facility	Level of Service (per 1,000 population)
Park	3.5 acres
Trails/Walkways	5,280 feet
Park	3.5 acres

PR-1.5 Enhance and maintain the physical appearance of Coupeville's public parks and open spaces.

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Acquisition, Upgrades, or New Facilities

- PR-1.6 Regularly identify desirable lands for future park development and open space. Prioritize acquisition and protection of the Thomas Coupe House property and other significant historic resources.
- PR-1.7 Prioritize acquisition of park land and open space in underserved neighborhoods as identified in a future Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. Preliminarily underserved areas include south Coupeville
- PR-1.8 Design new parks to respond to the context of the surrounding community. For example, a park near a school could accommodate young users with playgrounds, and a park near a senior living facility should be accessible to seniors.
- PR-1.9 Upgrade existing playgrounds on an ongoing basis and actively pursue opportunities to incorporate new and inclusive play structures into future development or renovation.
- PR-1.10 Include a measurable standard for the provision of parks and trails within new plats based on the adopted Town-wide LOS (see Policy PR-1.4) in the subdivision chapter of the Coupeville Development Regulations.
- PR-1.11 Explore opportunities to enhance non- motorized marine activities in Coupeville - such as sea kayaking and paddle boarding - and consider associated infrastructure needs, such as non-motorized boat storage facilities and beach access.

See also Policy PR-1.15 and Policy PR-3.3.



Grace Street Parklet



Walking path (photo credit: Elaine Fritsch).

Other Policies

- PR-1.12 Encourage community cohesion through support for seasonal activities and cultural events open to all residents of Coupeville, such as the Penn Cove Water Festival, Christmas in Coupeville, the Coupeville Arts and Crafts Festival, and Memorial Day Parade and Picnic.
- PR-1.13 Encourage continued participation in the Town's community garden.



Whidbey Race Week (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

- PR-1.14 Consider annexing Town-owned parcels adjacent to the Town boundary acquired for park, recreation, or open space purposes (including lands donated or transferred from other government entities).
- PR-1.15 Incorporate educational opportunities for climate preparedness and resilience into park design and recreation programming.
- PR-1.16 Prioritize the acquisition and expansion of trail systems, including removing barriers to trail connectivity.
- PR- 1.17 Create a continuous trail, recreation and open space network along the east/west spine of the Town starting at Price Sculpture Park on NE Parker Road to Town Park. Prioritize water views, non-motorized connectivity and recreational amenities.
- PR-1.18 Coordinate with the Coupeville School District and the Boys and Girls Club to enhance public access to recreational facilities and playground equipment as appropriate.
- PR-1.19 Develop a parks and recreation webpage and informational materials on the facilities that exist in and adjacent to Coupeville.



Town Park (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

Goal PR-2: Funding. Strive to budget adequate funding to support new parks and recreation programs and to maintain existing facilities.

- PR-2.1 Ensure facilities are easy to maintain with life cycle features that account for long-term costs and benefits. Evaluate existing parks, facilities, and programs to maximize efficient maintenance and operating practices.
- PR-2.2 Consider creative funding mechanisms-such as parkland impact fees, enhanced user fees, or cost sharing opportunities-to reduce costs, retain financial flexibility, match user benefits and interests, increase facility services, and distribute costs and benefits to public and private user interests.



Town Park (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

- PR-2.3 Review user fees for the Recreation Hall and Park Pavilion regularly, and consider new user fees for other public facilities, such as the boat launch and dump station.
- PR-2.4 Encourage multiple use of public facilities to take advantage of cost efficiencies and offer the greatest benefit to residents and visitors.
- PR-2.5 Research and actively solicit funding from public and private sources for new parks, recreation and open space areas and facilities, programs, and improvements.
- PR-2.6 Increase public awareness of the Community Commemorative Fund as a way for the public to donate money for public improvements in honor of an individual or group.
- PR-2.7 Actively seek grant funds for parks, recreation and open space planning, facilities, maintenance, expansion and acquisition.



Captain Coupe's Park & Boat Launch (photo credit: Brian Nelson).

Goal PR-3: Open Space Preservation. Preserve open space areas that reflect Coupeville's natural heritage, such as wetlands, significant geological features, forests, shorelines, and other landscape elements or non-renewable natural resources. Ensure landscaping and natural vegetation are a consistent and widespread feature of the Coupeville townscape.

- PR-3.1 Consistent with State law, the Town shall not vacate street ends which provide visual or physical access to the waterfront.
- PR-3.2 Require new development to preserve natural areas through creative development standards (such as lot averaging or development rights transfer) and, where appropriate, provide for public use and access to these areas. Future development should incorporate open space and green belts into the final design. Where feasible, link open spaces and green belts with existing trail networks.
- PR-3.3 Include a measurable standard for the provision of open space within new plats based on the adopted Town-wide LOS (see Policy PR- 1.3) in the

Natural areas are sites (terrestrial or aquatic) of special biodiversity significance due to the presence of rare plant or animal species, unique natural communities, important animal assemblages, or other ecological features.

Green belts are an area of land within the Town where development is restricted to maintain open space and natural areas.

- subdivision chapter of the Coupeville Development Regulations.
- PR-3.4 Partner with Island County to enact regulations to restrict the use of jet skis within Coupeville's shoreline jurisdiction and Penn Cove to protect wildlife and the serenity, safety, and ecological function of Penn Cove.
- PR-3.5 Establish links between open space areas in proximity to one another.
- PR-3.6 Develop a public and private tree planting and retention program to encourage a greener Coupeville. The Town should take the lead in this effort-through such programs as the Community Commemorative Fund-and should encourage and facilitate participation by interested groups and individuals.
- PR-3.7 Develop and maintain an inventory of street trees and a brochure of appropriate species for additional planting, with information on view preservation, proximity of paving, presence of overhead and underground utilities, and maintenance requirements.
- PR-3.8 Provide educational materials to residents and developers promoting the community values of landscaping and native vegetation in enhancing stormwater management, air quality, wildlife habitat, noise attenuation, aesthetics, and ecotourism.



Suva at sail on Penn Cove (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Tree planting event.



Street trees.

Goal PR-4: Coordination. Improve coordination of park and recreational facilities between the Town, Island County, the National Park Service, Coupeville School District, and others.

- PR-4.1 Leverage public/private partnerships and other non-traditional sources for recreational opportunities, facilities, and funding. Cooperate with Island County, Coupeville School District, neighboring communities, and other public and private agencies where appropriate and pursue interlocal agreements.

PR-4.2 Coordinate planning for pedestrian and bicycle travel within Coupeville with Island County's Non-motorized Trails Plan and connect with public paths and scenic areas within Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

Island County Non-motorized Trails Plan

islandcountywa.gov/723/Parks-and-Trails-Documents

PR-4.3 Support Island Transit, the Reserve, and others in the establishment of a seasonal shuttle that circulates throughout the Reserve to improve access to educational opportunities for tourists and non-single occupancy vehicle access to the state parks for Coupeville residents.



Island Transit on Whidbey Island
(photo credit: AvgeeKJoe)

PR-4.4 Foster partnerships and cooperative efforts with other agencies, organizations, community groups, and volunteers in planning and providing for parks, recreation, and open space.

PR-4.5 Explore partnerships between the Town and service organizations or private concerns to develop native landscaping sponsorships, tree purchase, native planting programs, or community awards for outstanding landscaping efforts.

PR-4.6 Encourage use of recreation facilities owned by the Town and other entities, such as the Price Sculpture Park, Whidbey Camano Land Trust, Island County, State Parks, Coupeville School District, and others.



Street tree in front of house.

Goal PR-5: Access and Equity. Ensure the recreation system is accessible and meets the needs of all ages and interest groups.

PR-5.1 Evaluate and upgrade existing parks, facilities, and programs to improve safety and accessibility for all users.

PR-5.2 Ensure new facilities are accessible per ADA standards and are sensitive to issues of universal accessibility. Increase awareness of accessible features via signage, publicity, and other means.

- PR-5.3 Increase opportunities for public access to and enjoyment of Coupeville's shorelines, including both physical and visual access.
- PR-5.4 Support cultural arts facilities and programs to increase community awareness, attendance, and participation opportunities.
- PR-5.5 Improve non-motorized connections on the arterial and local access street system in Coupeville to ensure safe bicycle and pedestrian access between park and recreation facilities



Grace Street bike rack.

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Natural Systems Element

Introduction

Coupeville is situated in a spectacular natural setting. In addition to providing aesthetic beauty, the area's natural systems also provide important ecological functions and values. This Natural Systems Element aims to protect Coupeville's natural systems. Further, this element aims to protect people and property from natural hazards.

Penn Cove is an integral component of Coupeville's natural systems. However, Penn Cove and its adjacent shorelands within Town limits are primarily managed by the Town's Shoreline Master Program. Therefore, the Town's Shoreline Master Program-not this Natural Systems Element-sets forth the goals and policies that apply specifically to the Town's shoreline areas.



The central Coupeville waterfront and bluff.



Coupeville area topography, with contour lines every 20 feet (credit: USGS).

Existing Conditions Summary

Coupeville is situated on and around three hills: one in the northeast end of Town and two in the central portion of Town. In some areas, uplands slope gently to the shoreline. In other areas, uplands meet Penn Cove with a steep slope. South of State Route 20, the south side of Coupeville blends into the surrounding prairie.

Coupeville has a generally mild marine climate. Skies are partly cloudy or cloudy more than 300 days of the year. Southwesterly winds predominate. Coupeville lies in the "rain shadow" of the Olympic Mountains and receives an average of slightly less than 18 inches of precipitation annually, with ranges between approximately 11 and 26 inches. Over 70 percent of the precipitation falls between October and April. Groundwater is the only source of freshwater supply.

Coupeville is classified as "Western Hemlock Vegetative Zone" but logging and burning over the past 150 years have enabled Douglas Fir to replace Western Hemlock as the climax species. Migratory and resident shorebirds and waterfowl are found on and near the shoreline in large numbers. Coupeville also has a diversity of other bird species, including songbirds, raptors, corvids and others. The waters of Penn Cove feature an abundance of aquatic life, including a diverse and large shellfish population.

Goals and Policies

Goal NS-1: Natural Systems Protection. Manage development to minimize disruption of natural systems, retain the natural aesthetics of the community, and reduce the risks of damage to life and property.

- NS-1.1 Consider the potential impacts of climate change in all decisions related to natural systems.
- NS-1.2 Protect and enhance the natural systems of Coupeville by working collaboratively with other governments, organizations, and community members.

The **Olympic Rain Shadow** is an area to the northeast of the Olympic Mountains that experiences significantly drier weather than surrounding locations. Storm systems typically arrive on the Washington coast from the southwest. As the moist air in these systems meets the mountains, it rises, and the moisture gets wrung out. When the air gets to the other side of the mountains it is much drier, resulting in the rain shadow.



Penn Cove beach (photo credit: John Feit).



Starfish (photo credit: Mary Jo Adams)



Whidbey Island shoreline (photo credit: Mary MacPherson).

- NS-1.3 Encourage the reduction in use of pesticides harmful to the environment.
- NS-1.4 Continue encouraging water conservation to protect sole source ground water aquifer supplies.
- NS-1.5 Continue implementing low impact development standards and promoting sustainable development within the Town and Reserve to protect and enhance the water quality of Penn Cove, protect tree cover and encourage carbon sequestration.
- NS-1.6 Implement lighting designs, practices, and standards that protect the night sky and reduce the negative impacts of light pollution, such as sky glow, disruption of ecosystems, and energy waste.
- NS-1.7 In collaboration with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, consider measures to minimize conflicts between humans and wildlife, particularly deer.



Harmful chemicals are often present in car wash soap.



Deer in Coupeville (photo credit: Mary MacPherson).

Goal NS-2: Green Community. Maintain and enhance Coupeville's status as a green community, one with abundant nature and natural systems that are visible and accessible.

- NS-2.1 Consider biophilic community planning approaches in town planning and design.
- NS-2.2 Seek to provide nature in the places where people live, learn, work, and play to positively affect health and well-being.
- NS-2.3 Invest in nature-based infrastructure as cost-effective, sustainable, long-term solutions to a changing climate and other environmental and social challenges, such as heat waves, water quality and quantity, and stormwater management.
- NS-2.4 Provide wildlife open space corridors, particularly those connected to protected lands and water bodies outside of Coupeville.
- NS-2.5 Consider the potential to use vegetated open space corridors as part of an integrated system to absorb and treat stormwater.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Habitat at Home program helps people learn how they can support wildlife in their own outdoor spaces. You can even get certified and receive a yard sign highlighting your achievement! To get started, visit:

wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/habitat-at-home

A biophilic community connects the science of biophilia-humans' innate love of nature-and the practice of planning. (definition adapted from Planning for Biophilic Cities, American Planning Association).

Goal NS-3: Trees and Vegetation. Protect and enhance trees and vegetation to provide natural systems and other benefits.

- NS-3.1 Promote the installation and management of native trees and vegetation on publicly owned land, such as parks, to provide habitat and green infrastructure benefits.
- NS-3.2 Encourage retention of existing trees and native vegetation in proposed developments.
- NS-3.3 Encourage the planting of native trees and shrubs and the minimization of lawn areas.
- NS-3.4 Periodically review and update the Town's tree protection ordinance to ensure tree protection goals are being met.
- NS-3.5 Support efforts to control and, where feasible, eradicate invasive plant species.



Trees in a residential neighborhood.



Tree staking.

Goal NS-4: Critical Areas. Protect critical areas designated under the Growth Management Act, and other important ecological systems, to preserve the functions and values of the natural environment and to safeguard the public from hazards to health and safety.

- NS-4.1 Use the best available science in developing policies and development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas and other important ecological systems.
- NS-4.2 Give special consideration to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance fish habitat.
- NS-4.3 Protect groundwater and surface water resources.
- NS-4.4 When considering amendments to the comprehensive plan, avoid directing new growth to areas with a high probability of conflicts between new development and protecting critical areas.
- NS-4.5 Continue to ensure that development regulations do not allow a new loss of critical area functions and values.
- NS-4.6 The Town should designate critical areas and important habitat and natural areas using performance standards and maps. Update maps of critical areas as necessary and feasible to provide the most current, accurate, and complete information regarding the locations of critical areas.

As defined by the Growth Management Act, **critical areas** include wetland, critical aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, and geographically hazardous areas.

Coupeville's **drinking water** comes entirely from local groundwater sources. Once groundwater is contaminated it is difficult, costly, and sometimes impossible to clean up.

Preventing contamination is necessary to avoid exorbitant costs, hardships, and potential physical harm to people and ecosystems.

-
- NS-4.7 Prioritize restoration and enhancement efforts in locations where priority habitats and species have been identified.
 - NS-4.8 Ensure that the most current management recommendations established by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife are implemented to protect priority habitats and species when impacts are permitted.
 - NS-4.9 Identify funding opportunities to establish a monitoring and adaptive management program to evaluate effectiveness of critical area regulations overtime.

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Goal NS-5: Shorelines. Provide management of Penn Cove and its adjacent shorelands consistent with the Washington State Shoreline Management Act.

- NS-5.1 Use the Town's Shoreline Master Program to provide management of areas of Penn Cove and adjacent shorelands within Town limits.

- NS 5.2 Identify and implement strategies to increase the resilience of the shoreline environment to sea-level rise and other climate hazards, while also protecting shoreline ecological functions, allowing water-dependent uses, and providing public access.



Coupeville waterfront (photo credit: John Feit).

As stipulated by the Growth Management Act, the goals and policies of the Town's **Shoreline Master Program** represent an element of this comprehensive plan.

Sea level rise is a significant consequence of climate change, and the Town is taking steps to prepare. An important early step is a sea level rise vulnerability assessment to evaluate what areas and assets are most at risk.

Findings from the assessment can be reviewed here:

townofcoupeville.org/comprehensive-plan-update/sea-level-rise-vulnerability-assessment/

Climate Element

Introduction

The Climate Element responds to current and future impacts of climate change on the built, natural, and social environment of the Town of Coupeville. Priorities of the Town that are linked to climate change include protection of coastal resources as well as sustainable economic opportunities and maintaining the historic character of the Town. Effects of climate change have been realized locally on Town resources and are projected to intensify, persist over longer durations, and become more frequent. This element emphasizes climate resiliency in local planning to relieve disruptions to climate-reliant industries (tourism, agriculture, etc.), incorporating public health strategies among physical and structural improvements. RCW 70A.65.010 defines climate resilience as:

"Climate resilience" is the ongoing process of anticipating, preparing for, and adapting to changes in climate and minimizing negative impacts to our natural systems, infrastructure, and communities.

This Element includes climate resilience goals and policies to address mitigation, adaptation, and response/recovery as informed by science. Mitigation includes minimization and avoidance measures. Adaptation includes modification or changes to existing community assets to better withstand changing conditions. Recovery and response measures ensure that Coupeville can recover in a timely manner following a hazard event, whether restoring community services, economic stability, or physical infrastructure.



Stormy day in the wharf (photo credit: John Hummel).



Pale swallowtail (photo credit Mary Jo Adams).



Geese on Smith Farm (photo credit: John Hummel).



Pacific tree frog (photo credit Mary Jo Adams).

Growth Management Act (GMA) Requirements

In July 2023, the Washington State Legislature signed into law [House Bill \(HB\) 1181](#). The Growth Management Act (GMA) adopts planning goals for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction and climate change and resiliency. Planning jurisdictions under RCW [36.70A.040](#) are required to integrate a climate element into their comprehensive plans to identify and prepare for natural hazards exacerbated by climate change.

The Town of Coupeville selected to develop a new Climate element instead of integrating it into existing elements, which is also an option under GMA. The climate element includes a resilience sub-element:

- A resilience sub-element that per HB 1181’s minimum requirements must (RCW [36.70A.070\(9\)\(e\)\(i\)](#)):
 1. *Address natural hazards created or aggravated by climate change; including sea level rise, landslides, flooding, drought, heat, smoke, wildfire, and other effects of changes to temperature and precipitation patterns;*
 2. *Identify, protect, and enhance natural areas to foster climate resilience, as well as areas of vital habitat for safe species migration;*
 3. *Identify, protect, and enhance community resilience to climate impacts, including social, economic, and built-environment factors, which support adaptation to climate impacts consistent with environmental justice.*

A GHG emissions reduction sub-element is not mandatory for the Town of Coupeville based on its size, while the Town has voluntarily incorporated actions to reduce overall emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

The goals and policies of this element are intended to protect the Town’s assets most at risk of damage or loss from climate-influenced hazards. A Vulnerability and Risk Assessment of the Town’s assets from impacts of climate-related hazards was conducted to prioritize where action should be taken or accepted over this 20-year planning horizon. The technical memorandum, “Climate Mitigation Challenges and Opportunities Analysis,” outlines the findings and community engagement efforts that led to the development of the Town of Coupeville’s climate resilience goals and policies based on the extent of risk posed to each asset from climate-influenced hazards, see [Appendix XX](#).

Priorities for the Town of Coupeville

‘Climate Change and Sustainability’ was previously designated as a Policy Theme in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. Using this guiding initiative, community feedback, and technical studies, including the University of Washington Climate Impact Group’s Climate Mapping for a Resilient Washington tool, the following climate-exacerbated hazards were identified as relevant to the Town of Coupeville:

- Drought
- Extreme Heat
- Severe Weather Events
- Sea Level Rise

Though not the focus of analysis, the following hazards are considered throughout the Climate Element through discussion and determination of measures, while they often occur as secondary effects of the hazards bulleted above: ocean acidification, increasing ocean temperatures, and harmful algae blooms; landslide; extreme flood events; degraded air quality from adjacent wildfire; and freezing temperatures.

A proactive, community-based approach is required to prevent disproportionate exposure and impact on vulnerable or overburdened populations. This climate element has developed goals and policies in line with eliminating this disparity marked by this symbol:



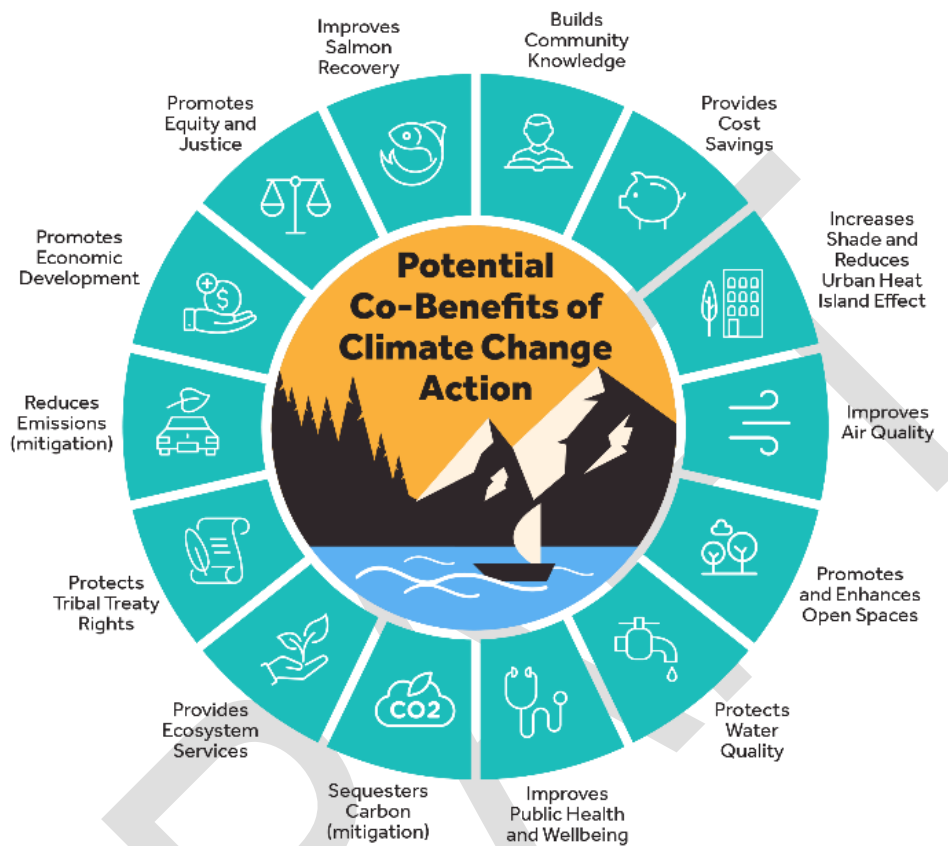
The Town of Coupeville has 2 miles of shoreline, putting the character of the Town and its economic viability at risk. Therefore, specific studies and actions related to coastal adaptation have been developed. Coastal adaptation strategies will be marked by the following wave symbol:



To support the reduction of GHG emissions reductions, the Town of Coupeville has developed goals and policies marked by the following symbol:



Similar to the Natural Systems Element, this element aims to protect people and property from natural hazards. Many human actions are drivers of climate change, so proactive approaches to prevent further disruption of natural processes, such as green stormwater infrastructure and low impact development, reducing VMT, and promoting active transportation, are persistent goals of the Climate Element. This element focuses climate change actions on several areas where many co-benefits can be achieved, while acknowledging and addressing the contribution of human activities to global warming. By aligning goals and policies with these co-benefits, the Town aims to clearly reflect community desires in its codes and regulations.



Climate Change Information

“The magnitude and rate of climate change and associated risks depend strongly on near-term mitigation and adaptation actions” (IPCC 2023⁵). Coupeville is expected to experience drier, hotter summers, more extreme storm events, and increasingly significant impacts from sea level rise. These changes could lead to increased cooling days for buildings, flooding from extreme storm events and precipitation, and increased erosion risk to local habitats, town residents, and infrastructure. The Town of Coupeville has already demonstrated its commitment to addressing these climate-related hazards and exploring effective adaptation and mitigation strategies. In addition, the Town has taken steps

By 2050...

Average summer maximum temperatures may **increase by approximately 3.9 degrees Fahrenheit**;

Total precipitation of the **25-year storm may increase by 7%**;

There is a 50% chance the town will experience **0.83 feet of relative sea level rise** locally.

⁵ https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_FullVolume.pdf

toward effective recovery and response strategies to ensure recurring events are less and less disruptive.

Coastal Adaptation

In 2023, the Town of Coupeville conducted a Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment, followed by a Coastal Adaptation Strategy in 2025. These studies identified flooding and shoreline recession as climate change impacts affecting Coupeville's coastal areas. Roads, historic waterfront buildings, and sewer lines emerged as the three most vulnerable asset classes within the Town. The Coastal Adaptation Strategy outlined potential actions the Town could take, guided by its established priorities and principles:

- Passive management techniques,
- Shore protection,
- Accommodation in place,
- Retreat and relocation, and
- Development restrictions.

Values reflected in the Strategy include preserving the historic character of Coupeville's waterfront district, maintaining existing beach access, and protecting critical infrastructure such as structures threatened by bluff recession. The Coastal Adaptation Strategy is an example of the Town's efforts to understand the impacts of climate change and shift priorities accordingly.

Water Resource Protection

The Town has received a grant to conduct a reclaimed water feasibility study. According to the Washington State Department of Ecology, reclaimed water can be used for:

- Wetland restoration
- Replenishing groundwater supplies
- To increase the volume of water in rivers and streams
- Dust control and construction activities

In 2023 Coupeville prepared a Nitrogen Optimization Plan. Implementation of this plan will increase efforts toward food security, pollution prevention, benefits to soil health, and reducing nitrogen emissions overall.

Emergency Response

The Town of Coupeville is annexed into the 2020 Island County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan. Earthquake, severe weather, and coastal erosion were the top three hazards identified in this plan.

Overarching Goals and Policies

The climate resilience goals and policies for this element were developed with an understanding that the Town of Coupeville is a unique location already experiencing impacts of a changing climate and that continued efforts to prepare for these impacts are required. The following guiding goals and policies provide an overarching framework for the Town to address climate change.

Guiding Goal: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and ameliorate the effects of climate change (adaptation) in order to foster the community's environmental, economic and social resilience in the face of shifting conditions, such as sea level rise, more extreme weather events, and human responses to climate change.

Guiding Policy 1: **Mitigation.** Participate with state, regional and local partners to reduce greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the 1990 benchmark and future year targets set forth in state law. Educate the public about climate change and incentivize activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Guiding Policy 2: **Adaptation.** Minimize or ameliorate the impacts of climate change on our community and its ecosystems through climate-informed policies, programs and regulations.

Guiding Policy 3: **Implementation.** Create goals and policies that increase community resilience to climate change by evaluating the implications of climate change on all element areas and developing actions that incorporate those realities in order to achieve robust long-term outcomes. Goals and policies should result in regulations and work plans for application in all areas of local government oversight, by requiring the evaluation of the implications of climate change in all local decisions.

This climate resilience planning process has established strategies to build community resilience, enhance natural areas, and reduce VMT. Overarching themes articulated in the goals and policies sections below, include:

- Partner with neighboring jurisdictions and community-based groups
- Protect community health by optimizing open space and urban tree cover
- Continue to improve studies and mapping
- Maintain the Town as self-sufficient as possible through water resources and food security
- Restore and enhance coastal resources, allowing public access and ensuring proper nearshore habitat and upland for species reliant on these shore zones

- Align strategies with land use and building standards to ensure future growth is available and in agreement with the need to relocate land opportunities (accept those areas that need to be acquired for restoration rather than economic development)
- Strengthen emergency response and preparedness through a variety of strategies including strategic planning, community shelters, and public awareness

Resilience Goals and Policies (Sub Element)

To meet HB 1181's minimum requirements, the Town of Coupeville must include at least one climate resilience goal and supportive policy for each climate-exacerbated hazard relevant to the Town. Commerce encourages jurisdictions to address all 11 comprehensive planning sectors, see [Appendix XX](#).

Goal CR-1: Buildings & Energy. Ensure that buildings are designed and built sustainably to reduce environmental impacts and remain resilient to extreme weather and other hazards worsened by climate change.

- CR-1.1 Require the design and construction and redevelopment of commercial and residential buildings and their surrounding sites to reduce and treat stormwater runoff and pollution. Low impact development and green stormwater infrastructure techniques should be incentivized or encouraged, where possible.
- CR-1.2 Reduce stormwater impacts from transportation and development through watershed planning, redevelopment and retrofit projects, and low-impact development.
- CR-1.3 Prioritize the preservation of the historic character of Front Street while actively implementing measures to enhance resilience to rising sea levels. Encourage adaptive strategies for flood protection, infrastructure upgrades, and sustainable urban planning, while ensuring that any development or restoration efforts respect the area's historical significance.
- CR-1.4 Analyze how the municipal water system maintains adequate pressure during a major wildfire event (e.g., multiple structures burning) and how it will look under current and projected drought conditions.
- CR-1.5 Identify mitigation measures to protect structures from wind impacts originating from severe weather events.



Bioretention swale (photo credit: Aaron Volkening).



Front Street covered in snow (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Firefighters on the Pine Gulch Fire (photo credit: Kyle Miller).



CR-1.6 Plan and build facilities, utilities, and infrastructure projects to avoid or withstand flooding from rising sea levels and associated climate impacts (e.g., changing flood plains).

Goal CR-2: Agriculture & Food Systems. Encourage the local agricultural economy, including food and materials producers, distributors, and sellers, to be resilient to the impacts of extreme weather and other natural hazards worsened by climate change.

CR-2.1 Expand local food security and the food-related economy to address climate impacts and increase access to healthy, affordable, and climate-friendly foods.



CR-2.2 Support local farmers and the local agricultural economy by providing venues to sell and distribute local food products, such as farmers markets, farm and produce stands, adequate commercial space and other means, such as CSA's.

CR-2.3 Where feasible, support the local agricultural sectors' efforts to adapt to changing climate conditions.



Farmer (photo credit: Washington State Department of Agriculture).

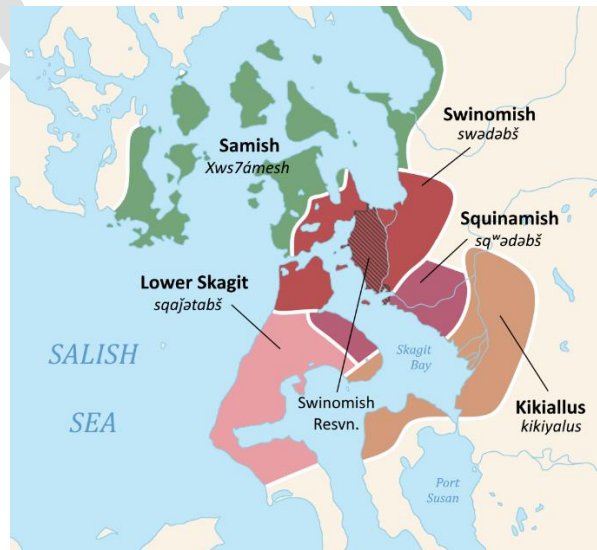
Goal CR-3: Cultural Resources & Practices. Enhance resilience of cultural resources and practices, including significant historic sites, to the impacts of extreme weather and other natural hazards worsened by climate change.



CR-3.1 Protect significant historic sites and buildings prone to floods or other hazards worsened by climate change. Where appropriate, it is encouraged to incorporate coastal adaptation strategies during preservation, restoration or rehabilitation of historic structures or cultural resources to increase resiliency to rising sea levels.



CR-3.2 Establish stronger ties and maintain government-to-government relations with Native American tribes for the preservation of archaeological sites and traditional cultural properties that are vulnerable to climate impacts.



The predecessor bands of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and their territories. The Samish are succeeded today by the Samish Indian Nation. (image credit: PersusjCP).

Goal CR-4: Emergency Management. Enhance emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts to mitigate risks and impacts associated with extreme weather and other hazards worsened by climate change.

- CR-4.1 Coordinate with Island County to identify and implement strategies for reducing residential development pressure in the wildland-urban interface.
- CR-4.2 Integrate a climate impacts risk assessment and policies into the Island County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- CR-4.3 Factor climate impacts into the planning of operations and coordination of preparedness, response, and recovery activities among first-responders and partners, including public health, law enforcement, fire, school, and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel.
- CR-4.4 Incorporate sea-level rise information, along with tsunami hazard mapping, into critical area delineation for siting critical infrastructure, land-use planning, and emergency management.



Emergency response (photo credit: Courtney Wentz).



Goal CR-5: Emergency Management. Develop and maintain local government staff members' technical expertise and skills related to climate change and environmental justice so as to improve communitywide policy implementation, equity, and resilience.

- CR-5.1 Support the Town's Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) to run drills and provide training and educational materials to residents about risks and mitigation opportunities.
- CR-5.2 Work with Island County, Washington Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network, and other local jurisdictions to develop recovery planning efforts.
- CR-5.3 Develop and implement a strategy to expedite the management of debris (e.g., downed tree limbs and buildings blocking roads and streams) after a disaster to reduce the risks of subsequent fire, flood, injury, and disease.



Storm and emergency response team (photo credit: rawpixel.com).

Goal CR-6: Health & Well-Being. Protect community health and well-being from the impacts of climate-exacerbated hazards, prioritizing focus on overburdened communities in Coupeville, and ensure that the most vulnerable residents do not bear disproportionate health impacts.

CR-6.1 Protect the health and well-being of outdoor workers exposed to extreme heat and other climate-exacerbated hazards.

CR-6.2 Develop a year-round resilience hub — a community-serving facility that is designed to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce carbon pollution while enhancing quality of life.



Outdoor worker (photo credit: Mike Major/Crop Trust).

Goal CR-7: Urban Tree Canopy Cover. Protect and enhance the climate resilience of forested areas in Coupeville by implementing climate-smart forest management.

CR-7.1 Prioritize native drought- and pest-resistant trees, shrubs, and grasses in restoration efforts and mitigation plans to support climate resilience.

CR-7.2 Manage tree canopy and forests (including parks, greenbelts and urban forests) to decrease climate-exacerbated risks from severe wildfires, protect residents, and improve ecosystem health and habitat.

CR-7.3 Improve and expand urban forest management to maximize or conserve carbon storage.

CR-7.4 Identify locations within Town limits to install interpretive signs to highlight and provide education regarding the importance of urban tree canopy cover.



Snoqualmie Tribe Barfuse Floodplain planting event (photo credit: King County Parks).

Goal CR-8: Water Resources. Coordinate with Island County to protect and preserve groundwater aquifers and recharge capabilities from drought, extreme heat, and other hazards exacerbated by climate change.

CR-8.1 Utilize water conservation methods and technologies in development of irrigation infrastructure within parks and recreation areas so as to foster climate resilience.

CR-8.2 Encourage the use of green infrastructure and low-impact development to address increased storm intensities and stormwater runoff.



Lawn irrigation (photo credit: Brian J Matis).

Goal CR-9: Zoning and Development. Establish land use patterns that increase the resilience of the built environment, ecosystems, and communities to climate change.

CR-9.1 Review land use maps and identify opportunities or barriers to responding to rapid population growth or decline, rebuilding housing and services after disasters, and other extreme climate impact scenarios.



Penn Cove (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



CR-9.2 Consider climate change, including sea-level rise, extreme precipitation, increased winter streamflow, and other impacts, in floodplain management planning.



CR-9.3 Establish regulations that require the location of new lots and structures outside of sea-level rise hazard areas.



CR-9.4 Address rising sea water by siting and planning for relocation of hazardous industries and essential public services away from the 500-year floodplain.



Canoe race on Penn Cove (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



CR-9.5 Develop regulations for elevating or setting back new and substantially improved structures to reduce the risk of damage caused by sea level rise.

CR-9.6 During the periodic update cycles of the Shoreline Master Program or Critical Areas Ordinance, review required buffers and setbacks for steep slopes and shorelines vulnerable to erosion exacerbated by climate change, and establish new minimums, if necessary, so that improvements are not required to protect structures during their expected life.



A volunteer gathering water sample (photo credit: Friends of Skagit Beaches).



CR-9.7 Develop, implement, and periodically update a plan to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts to the coastline.



CR-9.8 In areas with significant vulnerability to climate hazards, facilitate and support long-term community visioning including consideration of managed retreat.



CR-9.9 Coordinate with state and federal agencies to determine the pathway to install a tide gauge at the Coupeville wharf to better inform planning decisions.

CR-9.10 Educate residents and consult with qualified professionals regarding the benefits of prescribed burn activities, where appropriate.



Prescribed burn (photo credit: Kyle Sullivan / Bureau of Land Management).

Goal CR-10: Transportation. Assess the local transportation system along State Route 20 and on county and town roadways, including infrastructure, routes, and travel modes, to evaluate whether it is able to withstand the impacts of extreme weather events and other hazards exacerbated by climate change.

CR-10.1 Map transportation infrastructure that is vulnerable to repeated floods, landslides, and other natural hazards, and designate alternative travel routes for critical transportation corridors when roads must be closed.

CR-10.2 Consider planning for relocation of infrastructure that may be at high risk of flooding, sea level rise, landslides, and other natural hazards.

CR-10.3 Prioritize resiliency measures for areas of the local transportation system that serve as emergency access routes for communities.



M/V Salish at the Coupeville Ferry Terminal on Whidbey Island (photo credit: VIGOR/Dean Wallace).

Goal CR-11: Transportation. Encourage land conservation to protect ecological functions for properties at risk of climate-related hazards.



CR-11.1 Prioritize acquiring properties or easements identified in the Coastal Adaptation Strategy that may be necessary for public health and safety in the future.



CR-11.2 Design and site new and expanded roads to have the least possible adverse effect on the shoreline, account for sea-level rise projections, not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological functions or adversely impact existing or planned water-oriented uses, public access, and habitat restoration and enhancement projects.



Turnstones on the cove (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Goal CR-12: Vehicle Miles Traveled Reduction. Reduce vehicle miles traveled to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals.



CR-12.1 Partner with the school district to promote safe, walkable routes.



CR-12.2 Create a safe, well-connected, and attractive bicycle and pedestrian transportation network to encourage active transportation.



CR-12.3 Integrate "Complete Streets" principles into the roadway designs of residential developments.



Joggers and bicyclists ride along a path (photo credit: Cindy Shebley).



CR-12.4 Continue supporting Island Transit's endeavors to improve transit speed, frequency, coverage, and reliability in Coupeville and Island County.



CR-12.5 Prioritize and promote public transit and active transportation expansion and use through coordination of land use and transportation planning.

Goal CR-13: Waste Management. Protect and adapt critical infrastructure, including water and sewer facilities, to ensure resiliency from a changing climate.

CR-13.1 Evaluate the long-term adequacy of water delivery infrastructure to ensure that changes in hydrological patterns can be anticipated and managed effectively.



CR-13.2 Evaluate potential increases in future flow projections for the Town's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) to increase resiliency and capacity over time.



CR-13.3 Encourage planning for the production of reclaimed water for reuse or aquifer recharge, including an investigation into a new wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) to treat portion of flows on the south side of the Town.



Wastewater treatment plant (photo credit: 2024 ICGeo aerial imagery).

Goal CR-14: Economic Development. Promote purchasing from local businesses to support economic development and reduce emissions associated with the transportation, production, and distribution of goods.

- CR-14.1 Support local businesses' efforts to bolster climate preparedness and continuity of operations.
- CR-14.2 Encourage local industrial development to support a circular economy that increases demand for reused and recycled materials and reduces demand for new raw materials and their embodied carbon emissions.



Aqua Gifts shop in Coupeville (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

Goal CR-15: Ecosystems. Protect and restore coastal ecosystems to increase the resilience of species, habitats, and communities to climate change.

- CR-15.1 Identify, protect, and restore submerged aquatic vegetation (eelgrass, kelp, etc.) that provides aquatic habitat, "blue" carbon storage, and other ecosystem services, particularly for surf smelt and hard-shell clam habitats.
- CR-15.2 Consider sea-level rise in coastal and nearshore habitat restoration projects.
- CR-15.3 Require that proposals for shoreline stabilization demonstrate a need and require the use of soft shore stabilization methods to the extent practicable to protect sites from wave-driven erosion or flooding exacerbated by sea level rise



Bull kelp (photo credit: Irene Lyla Lee).

Transportation Element

Introduction

The Transportation Element guides the development of the Town's transportation system to accommodate existing and future growth described in the Land Use Element. Planned transportation system improvements will support this growth, provide alternatives that enable system users to travel via motorized and active transportation routes more easily, and contribute to Coupeville's character as an attractive place for residents, businesses, and visitors.

The Transportation Element supports sustainable programs, projects, and services that address economic, social, and environmental needs in the context of transportation planning. It incorporates local, regional, and national transportation policies and focuses on interjurisdictional collaboration to support infrastructure connectivity for local and regional users.

The Transportation Element is organized into five sections:

- A. Goals and Policies
- B. Inventory of Existing Transportation Facilities and Conditions
- C. Travel Forecasts Evaluation
- D. Transportation Systems Plan
- E. Financing Program

The Transportation Element Goals and Policies are presented here in the Comprehensive Plan document while the Inventory, Forecasts, Systems Plan, and Financing Program are provided in Appendices to the Comprehensive Plan.

The Transportation Element is intended to serve as a guide for making transportation decisions to address both short- and long-term needs. To meet GMA requirements, the



A street in Coupeville.



Canoe racers (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



M/V Salish in service on the Port Townsend/Coupeville route (photo credit: VIGOR/Dean Wallace).

Transportation Element must identify existing transportation system characteristics, establish standards for levels of service (LOS), and identify existing and future deficiencies based on land use growth projections.

The Transportation Element also discusses multimodal transportation mobility and accessibility needs, identifies improvements necessary to enhance safety, comfort, and connectivity for people walking, biking, rolling, riding transit and driving. Consistent with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, the Transportation Plan establishes a flexible policy framework for making decisions consistent with this vision and describes a strategy for accomplishing the vision over the 20-year planning horizon.

Regulatory Setting

Growth Management Act (GMA)

The Transportation Element is intended to satisfy GMA requirements for long range planning and to supplement information and implement goals and policies within the Comprehensive Plan. Under GMA (RCW 36.70A.070), the Transportation Element is required to assess the needs of a community and determine how to provide appropriate multimodal transportation facilities for current and future residents.

The GMA also requires that the Transportation Element contain a funding analysis of the capital transportation projects it recommends (RCW 36.70A.040(6)). This analysis should cover funding needs and resources and should include a multi-year financing plan. The purpose of the analysis is to ensure that the Town's transportation systems plans are affordable and achievable. If it is not, the Element must discuss how additional funds will be raised or how assumptions used in the analysis will be reassessed.

Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization

The Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) was established in 2016 and is the region's designated regional transportation planning organization.



Vehicles on Front Street (photo credit: John Feit).



Sail boat seen from Front Street (photo credit: John Hummel).



Racing canoes (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Bike route sign (photo credit: Esther Reid).

The Island RTPO represents the local government agencies within Island County for the purpose of coordinating on regional transportation planning issues.

[Island Access 2045 RTP](#), adopted in March 2024, is the regional transportation plan (RTP) for the Island County and acts as the region’s long-range transportation strategy.

Successful implementation of Island Access 2045 relies on successful implementation of local comprehensive plans.

[Island RTPO Comprehensive Safety Action Plan \(CSAP\)](#), adopted in April 2025, included all communities within Island County in a systemic analysis of public safety issues and concerns on the regional multimodal transportation network. The CSAP uses the Safe Systems Approach in an effort to reduce and eliminate fatal and serious injuries and to identify opportunities to lower risks for vulnerable road users.

Goals and Policies

Goal T-1. Multimodal Transportation System. Develop an integrated and balanced transportation system that creates complete streets to increase access, mobility, and health for all users as well as address the Town’s climate change goals.

- T-1.1 In conjunction with, or part of the development of a PROS Plan in Policy PR-1.1, develop an Active Transportation Network and strategy to identify and resolve connectivity gaps. Coordinate with Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve, Island County, WSDOT, and the Whidbey-Camano Land Trust for connections to bikeways and trails outside the town.
- T-1.2 Encourage pedestrian and bicycle connections between adjacent developments even when topographic or other constraints prevent connections for motorized vehicles.
- T-1.3 Maintain a street grid system to support efficient pedestrian circulation. Where street connections are not feasible, active transportation connections should be considered.
- T-1.4 Preserve unimproved public rights-of-way when reasonable to assure they are available in the future for development of future connections.
- T-1.5 Support the continued operation and expansion of Island Transit to provide frequent and



A gravel pedestrian path



The Rhododendron Trail on the south side of Highway 20.

- comprehensive transit service within the Coupeville area.
- T-1.6 Evaluate the safety and efficiency of the transportation system across all modes on an ongoing basis so that it continues to adequately serve the Town’s residents and businesses.
 - T-1.7 Adopt a Complete Streets ordinance and incorporate pedestrian, bicycle, and transit friendly designs into roadway improvement projects where feasible.
 - T-1.8 Support the continued operation and expansion of Washington State Ferries to provide sustainable ferry service to Whidbey Island.
 - T-1.9 Develop an ADA Transition Plan to integrate accessibility into the Town’s multimodal transportation system.
 - T-1.10 Provide safe and convenient non-motorized crossings along US 20 on the eastern and western ends of the town where logical connectivity to local and regional trails is needed.
 - T-1.11 Prioritize small grade transportation upgrades throughout the Town over large projects that may not be economically viable.



Protected bike lane (photo credit: SDOT).



Washington State Ferry (photo credit: Ken Lane).

Goal T-2. Support the Land Use Element. Provide a multimodal transportation system that supports the Land Use Element and is consistent with the Island County Countywide Planning Policies and the Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization’s Regional Transportation Plan.

- T-2.1 Ensure that transportation policies, projects, and programs are coordinated and consistent with land use plans and further the Town’s land use, climate, and environmental goals.
- T-2.2 Ensure that public and private projects systematically implement the policy objectives of the Transportation Element through the development review process.
- T-2.3 Coordinate with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Island County to ensure the regional highways and major arterials that provide access to Coupeville function as efficiently as possible.



Front Street (photo credit: John Feit).

T-2.4 Town vehicle LOS standards are:
 LOS C average delay per vehicle for signals, roundabouts, and all-way stop control intersections and
 LOS D for worst traffic movement at unsignalized two-way stop controlled intersections.



Looking north across Dugualla Bay on SR 20 on Whidbey Island (photo credit: WSDOT).




T-2.5 Pedestrian LOS Standards on the Active Transportation Network are listed below:

- A. Within Town: Urban standard sidewalks both sides or shared two-way multiuse pathway one side.
- B. Within Town, where approved: Urban standard sidewalk one side or shared two-way multiuse pathway one side.
- C. UGA: = or > 5-foot-wide shoulder on roadway.

Green = Complete Network Link, meets Town standards

Yellow = Incomplete Network, doesn't meet Town standards

Red = Missing Network Link, doesn't meet Town standards

LOS	Primary Route	Secondary Route
	Meets City standards, facilities on both sides	Meets City standards, facilities on one or both sides
	Facilities exist, but only on one side	N/A
	No facilities exist, does not meet standards	No facilities exist, does not meet standards

T-2.6 Bicycle LOS Standards on the Active Transportation Network are listed below:

- A. Within Town: Urban standard marked bike lanes both sides or shared two-way multiuse pathway one side.

- B. Within Town, where approved: Shared lane markings or shared two-way multiuse pathway one side.
- C. UGA: = or > 5-foot-wide shoulder on roadway.

Green = Complete Network Link, meets Town standards

Yellow = Incomplete Network, doesn't meet Town standards

Red = Missing Network Link, doesn't meet Town standards

LOS	Primary Route	Secondary Route
	Meets City standards, facilities on both sides	Meets City standards, facilities on one or both sides
	Facilities exist, but only on one side	N/A
	No facilities exist, does not meet standards	No facilities exist, does not meet standards

T-2.7 The Transit LOS Standard is based on ADA accessibility of WTA transit bus stops within the public road right-of-way. The prioritization and completion of ADA upgrades at all WTA bus stops provides mutual benefit to Whatcom County and WTA.

Green = ADA Compliant Pedestrian Connection to Transit Stop

Yellow = Non-compliant Pedestrian Connection to Transit Stop

Red = Missing Pedestrian Connection to Transit Stop

Goal T-3. Support the Town's Historic Character. Encourage transportation facility design that supports and enhances the Town's historic character and Ebey's Design Guidelines.

T-3.1 Street standards for arterials, collectors, and access streets will provide guidance on number and width of lanes, intersection spacing, driveway access, right-of-way width, setbacks, lighting,

landscaping, and other appurtenances. The street standards should identify design needs for accommodating transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists as appropriate for each roadway classification and consistent with the Town Complete Streets ordinance.



Front Street (photo credit: John Feit).

T-3.2 Consider alternatives to gravel for public pathways that retain rural streetscape character and are functional for a wide spectrum of users.

T-3.3 Where allowed within the right of way, encourage well-designed, low-maintenance landscaping on road frontages and adjacent public rights-of-way that is attractive to the traveling public.

T-3.4 Encourage appropriately scaled and designed parking to support business and recreational uses.

T-3.5 In coordination with Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve and Island County, develop a signage and wayfinding program that directs vehicles and pedestrians to parking areas, public facilities, and attractions.



Coupeville Inn sign (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

T-3.6 Implement regulations that prohibit or highly limit the use of cul-de-sacs and other modern suburban/subdivision design trends that are inconsistent with historic street patterns. To achieve this, develop historic road design standards for Design Review Area 1 and 2.

Goal T-4. System Preservation. Preserve and extend the service life and utility of transportation investments.

T-4.1 Prioritize essential maintenance, preservation, and safety improvements of the existing transportation system.

T-4.2 Maintain and preserve the transportation system in a way that is mindful of lifecycle costs associated with delayed maintenance.

T-4.3 Coordinate prevention and recovery strategies and disaster response plans with regional and local agencies to protect the transportation system against major disruptions.



WSDOT contractor crews working on SR 20 (photo credit: WSDOT).

T-4.4 Incorporate measures to increase system resiliency in all new and reconstructed transportation improvements.

Goal T-5. Financial Stability. Provide a stable, long-term financial foundation for improving quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.

T-5.1 Use grants, local taxes and funds, and other funding sources to implement capital projects as identified in the Town’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).



Children riding scooters.

T-5.2 Continue to partner with WSDOT, Island County, the Island Regional Transportation Organization (IRTPO) and Island Transit to fund improvement projects and programs that serve the Town.

T-5.3 Ensure that new growth pays a proportionate share of the transportation improvements needed to support growth and adequately mitigate its impacts to the transportation system.

T-5.4 Consider adopting a Transportation Impact Fee program for new development.

Goal T-6. Community Safety and Connectivity. Provide safe, well connected mobility options for all users.

T-6.1 Identify, prioritize, and implement traffic calming measures on roads to slow vehicle traffic to posted speed limits, reduce potential accidents and keep the community and animals safe.



Traffic calming choker (photo credit: Seattle Department of Transportation).

T-6.2 Coordinate with WSDOT, Island County, and the cities of Oak Harbor and Langley to develop a Countywide Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. The plan should identify areas of high risk for collisions and sustainable/implementable solutions.

T-6.3 Connect missing links within the Town’s multimodal transportation network for all modes of transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and automotive vehicles.

T-6.4 Coordinate with WSDOT, Island Transit, Island County, and the cities of Oak Harbor and Langley, to develop a Countywide Transportation Demand

-
- Management (TDM) program to help reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
- T-6.5 Install additional crosswalks on N. Main Street near the Island County campus and on South Main Street between the existing crosswalk by Elementary School entrance and the intersection with Terry Road.

DRAFT

Capital Facilities Element

Introduction

Capital facilities are urban services and facilities that support current residents, businesses, and tourists, and that are needed to serve future development or meet another community need. The GMA defines public facilities as including “streets, roads, highways, sidewalks, street and road lighting systems, traffic signals, domestic water systems, storm and sanitary sewer systems, parks and recreational facilities, and schools.” Public services are defined as including “fire protection and suppression, law enforcement, public health, education, recreation, environmental protections, and other government services.”

Capital facilities generally have a long useful life and include systems owned by the Town as well as those owned by other public agencies (e.g., the School District) or by private companies. Town-owned or operated facilities and services in Coupeville include public buildings, streets, parks, water, stormwater, and sewer. Non-Town-owned or operated facilities and services include police, fire and emergency medical services, schools, and the library.

Capital facilities are significant projects for jurisdictions to fund, build, and maintain, and the sooner a jurisdiction plans for its needs the better they can do to meet their needs. Local governments that are planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) must include a Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) in their Comprehensive Plan that is coordinated with the larger land use planning process.

Coupeville's CFP refers collectively to both the Capital Facilities Element and to the associated CFP Appendix:

- The Capital Facilities Element establishes policies to ensure adequate public facilities are available to serve existing and future development in the town in



Coupeville Town Hall.



*Crow's Roost in Coupeville
(photo credit: Dave Wechner).*



Coupeville at dusk (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

an efficient, effective, and equitable manner. The policies are designed to guide the actions of public agencies, such as the Town, as well as private decisions related to individual developments to support anticipated growth.

- The CFP Appendix contains consolidated capital facility inventory and capital funding analysis for each capital facility category. The CFP Appendix also provides the detailed forecast of future needs and revenue based on level of service (LOS) standards and cost projections necessary to meet GMA requirements for capital planning.

Together, these guide capital planning necessary to provide services to the community and serve as the financing plan and feasibility analysis for the overall comprehensive plan.

What does GMA require?

Capital planning is required by GMA and must be coordinated with the Town's larger land use planning process. At a minimum, state law requires the plan to include water systems, sanitary sewer systems, stormwater facilities, schools, park and recreation facilities, and police and fire protection facilities (Washington Administrative Code 365-196-415).

The GMA establishes five requirements for the CFP: (1) provide an inventory of existing facilities; (2) list a forecast of future needs; (3) show proposed general location and capacity of planned facilities; (4) provide a financing plan for needed facilities; and (5) reassess planned facilities if they cannot be provided and paid for.

The process of addressing these five requirements helps the Town make wise use of Town funds by organizing and prioritizing projects. The first four requirements are addressed in the CFP Appendix and summarized here.

The fifth requirement is addressed in Policy CF-3. 7.

The GMA also requires the Town's Comprehensive Plan include a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. Essential public facilities are facilities that are typically difficult to site but that serve a public purpose. They

Level of Service (LOS) and Meeting Future Growth

Part of the capital facilities planning process involves prioritizing funds available for capital spending. This involves making decisions about the level of service (LOS) that will be provided and where investment will occur and must take into consideration land capacity for growth within Coupeville. LOS standards for capital facilities are established as a "yardstick" to measure performance and help determine the level of investment needed to maintain or meet service standards as growth occurs. LOS standards may be defined by state law, recommended by national professional associations, or locally defined based on community preferences.



Lighthouse (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Coupeville recreation center (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

may be publicly or privately owned or operated, and they may be regional facilities or facilities of state-wide significance. Examples include schools, water transmission lines, sewer collection lines, fire stations, hospitals, jails, prisons, solid waste transfer stations, highways, and stormwater treatment plants.

No comprehensive plan is allowed to preclude the siting of essential public facilities within the community. It is important to recognize that the location of these facilities may have negative impacts on surrounding land use areas and different essential public facilities may have different needs in terms of their physical location. The CFP Appendix includes a list of existing essential public facilities in Coupeville and details the Town's siting process.

Existing Conditions Summary

The Town and special districts serve the Coupeville community with infrastructure and public services. The Town owns and operates public buildings, streets, park and recreation facilities, and water, stormwater, and sewer facilities. Transportation facilities (including streets and public transit) are addressed in the Transportation Element and the Town's 6-Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). Water, stormwater, and sanitary sewer facilities are addressed in the Utilities Element. Parks are addressed in the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element. Additional capital facilities addressed in this element that are not operated by the Town of Coupeville but are necessary for development include law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services, schools, and the library.

See the CFP Appendix for detailed analysis of the Town's existing inventory, revenue analysis, forecast of future needs and revenue based on LOS, and all known capital projects needed to accommodate projected growth in Coupeville for each capital facility category (including transportation, utilities, and parks). This includes a 6- year and, when available, 20-year financing plan to meet concurrency requirements of the GMA (the CFP and TIP project cost estimates become elements of the Town's annual budget). Together, the CFP Appendix and the Capital Facilities, Transportation, Utilities, and Parks, Recreation, & Open Space elements provide a comprehensive look at investment in the Town's infrastructure and its ability to serve residents broadly over the next 20 years.

Table CF-1 summarizes the types of facilities, providers, and applicable plans that guide the agencies for facilities addressed in the CFP Appendix. The applicable plans, as amended, listed



Ol' Captain (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

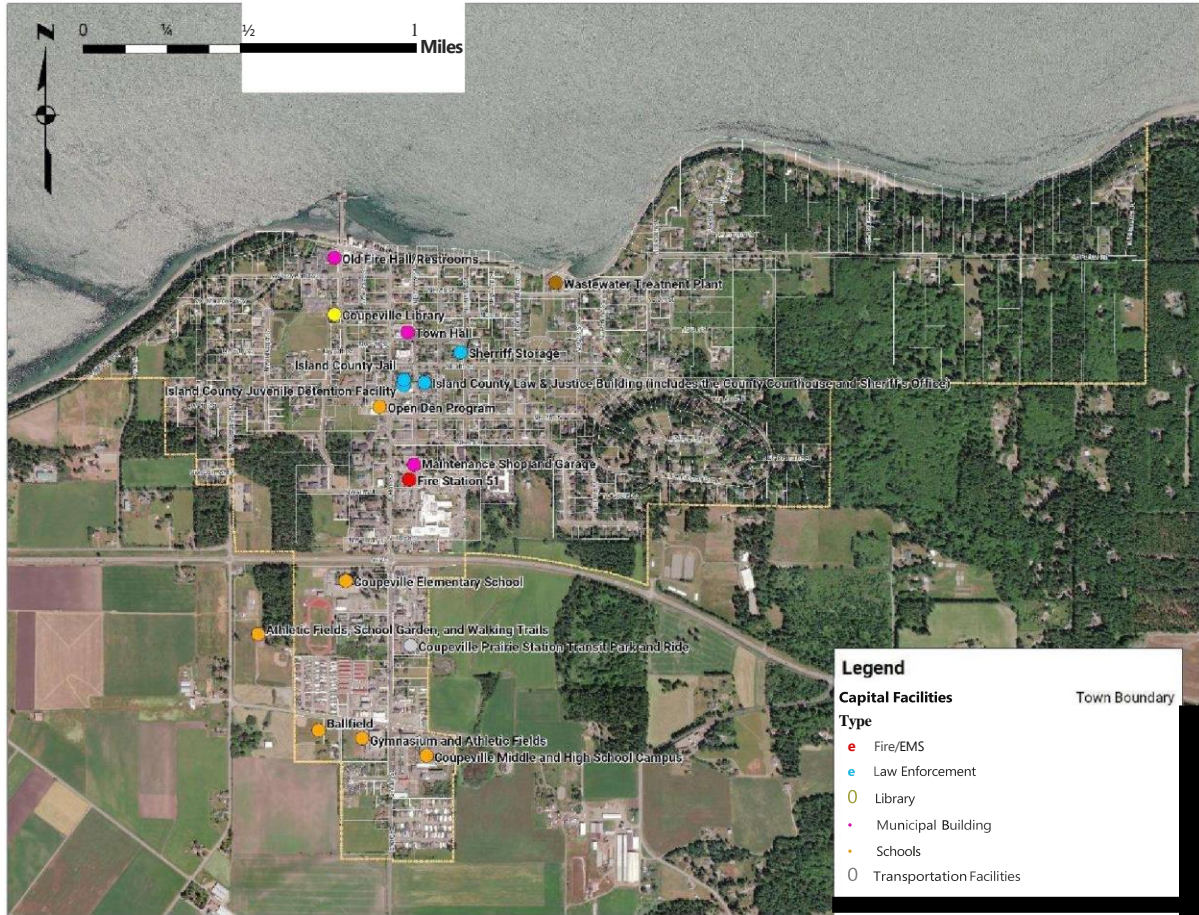
Concurrency means that adequate public facilities are available at the time of development or within a reasonable time following development.

in Table CF-1 are incorporated by reference. Figure 42 shows the location of major community services in the Town.

Table CF-1 - Capital facility service provider and functional plans.

Facility Type	Provider(s)	Description	Applicable Plan(s)
Town of Coupeville	Town of Coupeville	Includes Town-owned buildings and property management related to Town owned capital.	Adopted Town Budget
Streets	Town of Coupeville Public Works Department; WSDOT	Provides streets, sidewalks, traffic controls, and street lighting.	See the Transportation Element Adopted 6-Year Transportation Improvement Program
Public Transit	Island County Public Transportation Benefit Area Transit (Island Transit)	Provide bus services to park & rides.	Island Transit 6-Year Transit Development Plan
Law Enforcement	Town of Coupeville via contract with Island County Sheriff's office	Provides facilities that support the provision of law enforcement services.	Island County Capital Facilities Plan and Capital Improvement Program
Fire & Emergency Services	Central Whidbey Island Fire and Rescue, Whidbey Health	Provides facilities that support the provision of fire and emergency services. WhidbeyHealth provides ambulance service and advance life support. Central Whidbey Island Fire and Rescue staffs a basic life support ambulance under contract with WhidbeyHealth.	Central Whidbey Island Fire and Rescue Integrated Comprehensive Plan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan (Vol. 2) • Standard Coverage & CPR Plan (Vol. 3) • Long Term Financial Plan (Vol. 5) • Capital Projects Plan (Vol. 6) • WhidbeyHealth Strategic Plan
Schools	Coupeville School District (School District 204)	Provides facilities for instruction for the Town of Coupeville.	Coupeville School District 2023 Strategic Plan

Facility Type	Provider(s)	Description	Applicable Plan(s)
Library	Sno-Isle Libraries	Provides access to books, movies, and music and to other community services like free wireless internet and public meeting space.	Sno-Isle Libraries Policies and Guidelines Sno-Isle Libraries Annual Budget
Parks & Recreation	Town of Coupeville Public Works Department	Provides facilities for passive and active recreational activities.	See the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element Adopted Town Budget
Water	Town of Coupeville Public Works and Utilities Departments	Infrastructure for providing drinking water to the Town of Coupeville	See the Utilities Element Adopted Water System Plan Island County Coordinated Water System Plan
Stormwater	Town of Coupeville Public Works and Utilities Department	Provides facilities used in collection, transmission, storage, and treatment within the town.	See the Utilities Element Adopted Integrated Stormwater Management Plan
Sanitary Sewer	Town of Coupeville Public Works and Utilities Department	Provides facilities used in collection, transmission, storage, and treatment within the town.	See the Utilities Element Adopted Comprehensive Sewer Plan



Existing public facilities.

Goals and Policies

Goal CF-1: Adequate facilities and services. Ensure public facilities and services are adequate to serve the planned land use patterns in the town.

- CF-1.1 Plan capital facilities that have capacity and are located to serve existing development and future growth planned in the Land Use Element.
- CF-1.2 Adopt level of service (LOS) standards for individual services to measure performance and evaluate future facility needs as defined in Table CF-2.

Table CF-2 - Capital facility level of service standards.

Facility Type	Level of Service
Town of Coupeville Municipal Buildings	Adequate to serve the town's residents needs and administrative requirements.
Streets	See Transportation Element and <i>Appendix G -Transportation</i> .
Public Transit	See Transportation Element and <i>Appendix G -Transportation</i> .
Law Enforcement	As established in the contract agreement between the Town of Coupeville and Island County Sheriff's Office: 24-hour staffing.
Fire Response	As established in the Central Whidbey Island Fire and Rescue Capital Projects Plan/Standard of Coverage Plan.
Emergency Medical Services	As established in the Central Whidbey Island Fire and Rescue Capital Projects Plan/Standard of Coverage Plan. Note: Central Whidbey Island Fire and Rescue is currently updating their standards of coverage for fire and ambulance times. Coupeville plans to update their LOS to match when the standards are available.
Schools	As established by the Coupeville School District Capital Facilities Plan: K-5: 115 square feet per student. 6-8: 148 square feet per student. 9-12: 173 square feet per student.
Library	Open seven days per week.
Utilities (Water, Stormwater, Sanitary Sewer, Power, Solid Waste)	See Utilities Element, Goal 1.
Parks and Recreation	See Parks and Recreation Element, Goal 1.

CF-1.3 Ensure new development meets Coupeville's transportation LOS before development may be permitted. Mitigation may be required to meet the adopted LOS.

- CF-1.4 Maintain and use updated departmental functional plans (e.g., Water System Plan, Comprehensive Sewer Plan, Integrated Stormwater Management Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, and Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan) to guide development of capital facilities and investment decisions within each functional area. Ensure functional plans are generally consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- CF-1.5 Prioritize proposed capital improvement projects based on the following criteria:
- A. Whether the project is needed to meet federal, state or local requirements that protect public health, safety and welfare;
 - B. Whether the project is financially feasible, including costs associated with long-term maintenance and operations;
 - C. Whether the project is needed to correct existing deficiencies, replace needed facilities or extend the life of existing facilities;
 - D. Whether the project eliminates or diminishes public or environmental hazards; and
 - E. Whether the project is consistent with the adopted capital plans of other public service providers.

Goal CF-2: Funding priorities. Prioritize funding to maintain and invest in adequate capital facilities and public services that increase quality of life, meet service standards, and accommodate Coupeville's current and future population.

- CF-2.1 Prepare and adopt a 6-year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) to finance capital facilities, assess funding capacities, and identify public and private financing to ensure adequate levels of service are maintained. Update a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) concurrent with the budget to identify financing and implementation of facilities contained in the 6- year CFP. Ensure 20-year projected growth, level of service, and funding projections are also considered in the CFP.
- CF-2.2 Require development to carry a proportionate share of capital facility improvement costs to achieve and maintain the adopted LOS standards for essential capital facilities.
- CF-2.3 Use general fund revenues to fund capital improvements only if the project provides a broad public benefit.



Gliding past the wharf (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

CF-2.4 Use long-term borrowing to fund projects when the proposed facility will provide benefits for 20 years or longer.

Goal CF-3: Sound fiscal management. Promote sound fiscal management of government services and facilities.

CF-3.1 Maximize the use of existing facilities.

CF-3.2 Pursue enhanced revenue (e.g., grants, low-interest loans, tax benefit districts and similar sources of funding) to finance capital improvements and maintain a sustainable tax base for the provision of public services.



Coupeville Recreation Hall (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

CF-3.3 Consider the use of impact fees as a funding mechanism to pay for capital facility improvements. Consider exempting certain land uses which have broad public purpose (e.g., low-income housing) from paying impact fees.

See also Policy CF-2.2.

CF-3.4 Consider subsequent operating and maintenance costs when planning for capital facilities to ensure conformance with pertinent financial obligations.

CF-3.5 Design capital facilities that are adaptable, with flexibility to expand or be converted to other uses as the town's needs change over time.

CF-3.6 Regularly review the Town's land and facility holdings and, when public buildings or properties are no longer needed, consider offering them for lease or purchase by other public agencies if there is demonstrated public benefit before offering them for sale or lease to non-profit or private entities.



Fort Casey Lighthouse (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

CF-3.7 Adjust the LOS, planned growth, and/or sources of revenue to maintain a balance between available revenue and needed capital facilities if projected funding is inadequate to finance capital facilities and services necessary to meet the Town's adopted LOS.



Coupeville sunset (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

Goal CF-4: Safe and efficient service. Locate capital facilities in such a way as to provide safe and efficient service to all residents. Plan, design, and site capital facilities in a fair and equitable manner.

- CF-4.1 Design capital improvements consistent with the small town and historic character of the community and Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Design Guidelines.
- CF-4.2 Provide capital facilities and services that protect and minimize their impact on the natural environment, particularly to critical areas.
- CF-4.3 Consider future climate conditions during siting and design-including changes to temperature, precipitation, and sea level-to help ensure facilities can continue to exist and function as intended over their planned life cycle.
- CF-4.4 Incorporate consideration of physical health and well-being into decisions regarding the location, design, and operation of capital facilities.
- CF-4.5 Consider how capital facility decisions will impact different geographic areas and racial and socioeconomic groups.
- CF-4.6 Encourage public engagement and input into large public capital facility projects to identify community needs and benefits.



Town hall (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



The USA's first "historical reserve" was created in 1978 when locals organized to block a housing development on the historic 1850s Ebey's Prairie (photo credit: Jimmy Emerson).

Goal CF-5: Coordination. Coordinate the provision of capital facilities through collaboration with neighboring governments, agencies, and private providers to ensure sufficient and uninterrupted service to residents as growth occur.

- CF-5.1 Seek creative partnerships to finance capital improvements.
- CF-5.2 Coordinate review of development proposals with other providers of public facilities and services-such as the Coupeville School District, Central Whidbey Fire and Rescue, Island Transit, and Island Disposal-to ensure adequate capacity to serve the proposal.
- CF-5.3 Work collaboratively with other providers of public facilities and service-such as Island County, Coupeville School District, Central Whidbey Island Fire and Rescue, WhidbeyHealth, the Island



Shed on Ebey prairie (photo credit: Brian Nelson).

County Sheriff's Office, and Sno-Isle Libraries-to ensure efficient and effective delivery of public services.

- CF-5.4 Partner with Island County to extend water mains and service connections outside of Town limits in the Town's water service area.
- CF-5.5 Coordinate with other public agencies to ensure the efficient and equitable siting of essential public facilities, to ensure their impacts on adjacent uses at proposed or alternative locations have been anticipated, and to mitigate disproportionate financial burdens to the Town.



After sunset on the wharf (photo credit: John Hummel).

Goal CF-6: Essential Public Facilities. Ensure that essential public facilities are sited equitably throughout the Town, County, and State and designed in compliance with the State Growth Management Act.

- CF-6.1 Locate and develop essential public facilities to be compatible with adjoining land uses or designations to the greatest extent possible.
- CF-6.2 Locate essential public facilities in areas where they are best able to serve the individuals they are intended to serve.
- CF-6.3 Continue improving the review process for the siting or expansion of essential public facilities according to the requirements under Section 3. 7 of the Island Countywide Planning Policies.
- CF-6.4 Ensure the Town's zoning ordinance identifies the zoning districts within which various essential public facilities may be located, with or without a conditional use permit, ensuring that a given essential public facility is appropriate in a particular zoning district.
- CF-6.5 Ensure the criteria for determining the location of essential public facilities is coordinated and consistent with other planning goal requirements, such as promoting economic stability and living wage jobs, protecting the environment, and supporting affordable housing.

Essential public facilities are facilities that are typically difficult to site but that serve a public purpose. They may be publicly or privately owned or operated, and they may be regional facilities or facilities of state-wide significance. Examples include schools, water transmission lines, sewer collection lines, fire stations, hospitals, jails, prisons, solid waste transfer stations, highways, and stormwater treatment plants.



Deer are often found near critical areas (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

Goal CF-7: Public Safety. Provide efficient, cost effective, and concurrent levels of fire protection, emergency medical services, and law enforcement services to protect the lives and property of Coupeville residents, businesses, and visitors.

- CF-7.1 Continue evaluating the adequacy of the Town's public safety facilities and equipment, mutual aid agreements, personnel staffing, and programming for the present population and for changes in needs with anticipated growth.
- CF-7.2 Continue supporting community education programs on fire prevention, crime prevention, and community policing to increase the level of community awareness.
- CF-7.3 Enhance public access to information relating to police activity, public safety, and security.
- CF-7.4 Continue to support the Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) and the partnership with the Island County Emergency Services Department in community neighborhood preparedness.



Lt. Craig Anderson, from Coupeville, assigned to the Oak Harbor Fire Department, decontaminates a team member during a mock chemical warfare training exercise at the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island Seaplane Base.

Utilities Element

Introduction

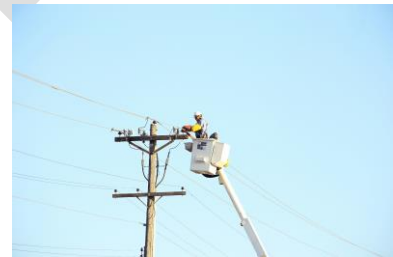
Utilities are the basic building blocks of town living. While we may take these services for granted-not thinking much about the electric lines that make it possible to turn the lights on, pipes that bring drinking water to our faucets, or the wastewater treatment facilities that clean the water we send down the drain-utilities make living in town possible.

This element establishes an overall strategy for providing adequate utility service to serve the growth projected in the Land Use Element. The Growth Management Act (GMA) calls for facilities and services needed to support development-such as wastewater, water supply, solid waste, electrical service, and other urban facilities and utilities-to occur concurrently with the development and consistent with local plans and growth projections. This requires local jurisdictions to make facilities available as demand develops and achieve and maintain level of service (LOS) standards that keep up with demand from new development. This element works together with the Land Use and Capital Facilities elements to make sure Coupeville will have adequate utilities to serve existing and future growth in a timely and cost-effective manner.

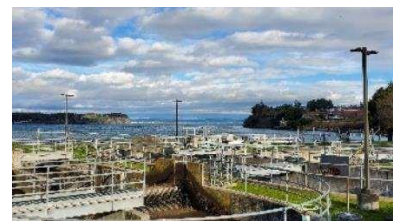
Existing Conditions Summary

Utilities in Coupeville are a combination of Town- managed and non-Town-managed utilities. Town- managed utilities include water, stormwater, and sewer- these utilities are governed by functional plans which are adopted by reference (see the "Existing Conditions Summary" in the Capital Facilities Element and the CFP Appendix).

Utilities have several layers of State and Federal regulations that pre-empt local controls. Nothing in this element is intended to interfere with compliance with applicable regulations or policies of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), or Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Title 80.



Electrician working with a utility pole (photo credit: American Public Power Association).



Coupeville Wastewater Treatment Plan (photo credit: Mary MacPherson)

Non-Town-managed utilities include power, solid waste, and telecommunications (natural gas service is not available in Coupeville). Planning for privately managed utilities is recognized as the primary responsibility of the utility provider-requiring them to manage infrastructure needs and repairs in aging systems, respond to growth, respond to consumer needs, and adapt to new technologies. Table U-1 summarizes the utilities, providers, and applicable plans that further guide the agencies. See Appendix I - Utilities for a description of non-Town-managed utilities.

Table U-1 - Utility service providers and functional plans.

Facility Type	Provider(s)	Description	Applicable Plan(s)
Town-managed			
Water	Town of Coupeville Public Works and Utilities Department	Infrastructure for providing	Adopted Water System Plan Island County Coordinated Water System Plan
Stormwater	Town of Coupeville Public Works and Utilities Department	Provides facilities used in collection, transmission, storage, and treatment or discharge of stormwater within the town.	Adopted Integrated Stormwater Management Plan
Sanitary Sewer	Town of Coupeville Public Works and Utilities Department	Provides facilities used in collection, transmission, storage, and treatment or discharge of waterborne waste within the town.	Adopted Comprehensive Sewer Plan
Non-Town-managed*			
Power	Puget Sound Energy	Provides electric power to the Town of Coupeville.	PSE Integrated Resource Plan
Solid Waste	Island County and Island Disposal	Provides automated refuse collection and recycling to residential customers. Island Disposal provide waste hauling via a contract with the County.	Island County Solid Waste and Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan Island County Capital Facilities Plan and Capital Improvement Program

Facility Type	Provider(s)	Description	Applicable Plan(s)
Telecommunications	Various	Provide a range of services, including telephone, cable, personal wireless communication, and internet.	The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) regulates the rates and services of telephone companies operating in Washington per WAC 480-120. The WUTC does not normally regulate cable, internet, wireless phones, and VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol).

** Non-Town-managed utilities operate within Town limits through local franchise agreements.*

Water and Sewer Service in Coupeville

The Coupeville water system encompasses approximately 4,800 acres throughout Central Whidbey Island (both inside and outside the town limits) and supplies almost 1,500 residential, commercial, and government connections. Current and future capital facility planning work to carefully balance needed improvements with anticipated growth in water availability due to the Town's reliance on scarce groundwater resources.

Planning for water system connections is based on equivalent residential units (ERUs), as various consumer types can have vastly different consumption rates. An ERU is a system-specific unit of measure used to express the amount of water consumed by a typical full-time single-family residence (WAC 246-290-010). The existing system has an available capacity of 3,020 ERUs based on water sources and the anticipated maximum number of connections that can be served by the current water rights is 4,094 ERUs. As of 2022, the Town currently has 1,974 ERUs and demand is projected to reach 3,235 ERUs by 2042. This is 215 ERUs more than existing capacity based on water sources but below water rights. Per the Water System Plan, both the treatment system and source capacity need to be increased to meet these demands.

The Town's sanitary sewer system currently provides service to customers within town limits. System capacity is based on design criteria and effluent limits or waste loadings of the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) as established in the Town's current National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. Estimated 2045 flows and waste loadings based on anticipated growth are all below the NPDES permit limits of the WWTP. However, the 2045 estimated waste loadings are above the 85% loading limit allowed for either parameter. The Town regularly monitors flows and waste loadings and would be required to submit a plan and schedule to the Washington State Department of Ecology if either were to exceed the parameters of the NPDES Permit.

In addition, about one quarter of land inside town limits in eastern Coupeville along NE Parker Rd is outside the current sewer service area. Occupied properties in these areas currently have

on-site sewage disposal systems (septic tanks and drain fields). For existing systems, the Town encourages (through the policies of the Utilities Element) conversion from on-site septic systems as sewer lines become available but does not require conversion unless on-site systems fail and sewer facilities are available. In addition, per the Comprehensive Sewer Plan and Town Code, any application for a subdivision of parcels in these areas would trigger a review for the requirement for installation of a sewer collection system.

See also the CFP Appendix for additional discussion of the existing water and sewer systems, LOS, and planning projects to meet the demands of growth.

Goals and Policies

Goal U-1: Adequate utility services. Facilitate the development and improvement of all utilities at the appropriate levels of service to serve existing and future growth.

- U-1.1 Coordinate utility providers' planning with land use planning. Base the extension and sizing of system components on the land use plan of the area rather than allowing system capacity to determine land use, but allow utility providers to determine the implementation sequence of utility plan components.
- U-1.2 Adopt level of service (LOS) standards for individual services to measure performance and evaluate future facility needs as defined in Table U-2.

Table U-2 - Utility level of service standards.

Facility Type	Level of Service
Water	Potable Water: Group A System under WAC 246.290 compliant with Washington Department of Health (DOH) standards. Water Supply: Permitted equivalent residential units by DOH and water rights per Washington Department of Ecology.
Stormwater	Detention: Maintain existing unless 10-year post- development peak data is less than 0.5 cfs. Collection: 10-year, 24-hour storm.
Sanitary Sewer	Municipal system that allows collection of peak wastewater discharge plus infiltration and inflow.
Power	Electric service available for all residential and commercial customers.
Solid Waste	Once a week curbside pickup.

- U-1.3 Ensure new development meets Coupeville's water and sanitary sewer LOS before development may be permitted. Mitigation may be required to meet the adopted LOS.
- U-1.4 Allow new development only when and where all available public utilities can adequately serve demand.
- U-1.5 Review new development applications for consistency with departmental functional plans (e.g., *Abbreviated Water System Plan*, *Comprehensive Sewer Plan*, and *Integrated Stormwater Management Plan*).
- U-1.6 Process permits and approvals for utility facilities in a fair, predictable, and timely manner and in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations.
- U-1.7 Digitize the Town's inventory of existing utilities-including water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure - usage

Utility Specific

- U-1.8 Require connection to the Town water system for all new development within town limits unless otherwise allowed by State or County regulations. Encourage properties on existing private well systems to connect to Town water.

- U-1.9 Coordinate with Island County to require all new development and encourage existing properties on private well systems outside town limits but within the Coupeville water service area to connect to the Town water system.
- U-1.10 Operate and maintain the stormwater system to protect surface and groundwater quality and preserve and enhance environmentally sensitive areas.
- U-1.11 Establish procedures for the elimination of inappropriate discharges into the stormwater system.
- U-1.12 Design future stormwater facilities and upgrades to existing facilities to eliminate direct discharge of stormwater runoff to Penn Cove without proper treatment and to minimize the number of stormwater outfalls on Penn Cove.
- U-1.13 Require connection to the town sewer system for all new development within town limits where sewer service is available.
- U-1.14 Encourage conversion from on-site septic systems as sewer lines become available.
- U-1.15 Require conversion from on-site septic systems when on-site systems fail and sewer facilities are available.
- U-1.16 Require that installation of septic tanks or other alternative domestic waste systems meet Island County Department of Health standards for soil suitability and location.

Goal U-2: Quality, affordable utility service. Ensure safe, reliable, and quality utility services are available at reasonable and equitable rates throughout Coupeville.

- U-2.1 Provide timely, effective notice of new construction and road maintenance projects. Promote co-location of utility facilities in shared trenches where reasonably feasible and coordination of construction timing to minimize construction related disruptions and reduce the cost of utility delivery.
- U-2.2 Structure rates and fees for Town-operated utilities to recover all costs, including overhead and costs related to the extension, operation, and maintenance of those utilities.
- U-2.3 Assign costs for utility extensions and installations for new development and recently annexed areas to the developer or property owners.
- U-2.4 Explore reduced utility connection fees for low-income households and small infill housing.

The Opportunity Council offers bill assistance to income-eligible households for their home heating, energy, water, and sewer bills as part of state and federally funded programs like Washington State's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Service's Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP).



Road maintenance (photo credit: Tom Shamberger).

- U-2.5 Encourage conservation of resources to delay the need for additional facilities.
- U-2.6 Encourage system design practices that minimize the number and duration of interruptions to customer service.
- U-2.7 Promote public awareness of proper procedures for notification of utility providers prior to construction activities (e.g., Call Before You Dig, etc.).



Electric post under a cloudy sky (photo credit: D. Gibson).

Goal U-3: Sensitive and Sustainable Design. Minimize impacts associated with the siting, development, and operation of utility facilities on adjacent properties and the natural environment.

- U-3.1 Provide timely, effective notice of new construction and road maintenance projects. Promote co-location of utility facilities in shared trenches where reasonably feasible and coordination of construction timing to minimize construction related disruptions and reduce the cost of utility delivery.
- U-3.2 Consolidate utilities where feasible.
- U-3.3 Work with utility providers to inform the community about utility activities and to provide opportunities for public engagement in the planning processes.
- U-3.4 Monitor land uses within wellhead protection areas for potential contamination sources for the town water supply wells.
- U-3.5 Assure that utility facilities are sited, constructed, operated, and maintained consistent with environmental best management practices to minimize impacts on natural features, sensitive and/or critical areas, and water quality and quantity. For example, street lighting should be shielded and directed downward.
- U-3.6 Employ Low Impact Development (LID) practices where feasible through Town projects, incentive programs, and revised development standards and street regulations.



Road sign in middle of road (photo credit: Tom Fisk).



Dark skies are critical for salmon survival. Shielded street lighting prevents light from spilling into lakes and rivers beyond where it is needed.

U-3.7 Ensure exposure to human-made electromagnetic fields in Coupeville is consistent with State and Federal regulations and guidelines set by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection.



Shielded lights on the wharf (photo credit: John Hummel).

U-3.8 Encourage utility providers to minimize tree trimming and vegetation removal during routine maintenance. Require utility providers to notify the Town prior to maintenance or removal of vegetation in public right-of-way.

U-3.9 Promote public education on choosing and maintaining vegetation with growth habits that will not interfere with nearby utilities.



A heron in an environmentally critical area.

U-3.10 Require underground installation of new utility services and, when economically feasible, encourage conversion of existing overhead systems to underground systems through local improvement districts, contract agreements between property owners and utility companies, and by other legal means.

Prioritize undergrounding utilities in historic areas and non-residential districts.



Construction workers inspecting underground utilities (photo credit: Miguel Castillo).

U-3.11 Support the use of utility corridors for recreation and open space purposes, where appropriate.

U-3.12 Consider sea level rise impacts when planning for the expansion and/or improvements of the existing wastewater treatment facility.

Goal U-4: Resource Conservation. Encourage effective energy conservation and recycling measures, including the reduction of energy consumption in Town facilities.

U-4.1 Facilitate conversion to cost effective and environmentally sensitive alternative technologies and renewable energy sources while incorporating the latest technologies available into the services provided.



An electrician installing a solar panel (photo credit: Gustavo Fring).

U-4.2 Encourage the use of energy conservation design strategies in building designs and land use.

- U-4.3 Encourage the use of solar energy for water and space heating and adopt standards to protect solar access.
- U-4.4 Require new multifamily and commercial development to provide on-site recycling services.
- U-4.5 Encourage and actively participate in a uniform regional approach to solid waste management that promotes education, recycling, and composting while maintaining a cost-effective and responsive collection system.
- U-4.6 Work with the Town's solid waste hauler to include glass and yard waste in curbside recycling for residential and commercial customers.
- U-4.7 Investigate the establishment of a Town-led model recycling program and use recycled products for Town activities whenever possible.



2018 Whidbey Island dumpster dive competition to celebrate and sort trash in celebration of Earth Day (photo credit: Scott Wood).



Plastic bottles (photo credit: Mail Maeder).