



COUPEVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
Island County Annex Building - Commissioners Hearing Room
(1 NE 6th Street, Coupeville)
January 6, 2026
6:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER

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 inclusive community.

CHANGES AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- December 2, 2025

PUBLIC INPUT

PUBLIC HEARING

- None

DISCUSSION

- New Planning Commissioners
 - Ricardo Reyes
 - Brandon Roos
- Project Timeline
 - Comprehensive Plan - Periodic Update
 - Other Code Updates
- Comprehensive Plan - Periodic Update
 - Zoning Changes

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

You may also join the meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/205095981>

You can also dial in using your phone.

Access Code: 205-095-981

United States: +1 (872) 240-3212

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

2026 Planning Commission Schedule *(Tentative / Subject to change):*

Date (1 st Tuesday)	Topic	Date (3 rd Tuesday)	Topic
<p>January 6, 2026</p>	<p>New Planning Commissioners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ricardo Reyes • Brandon Roos <p>Project Timeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Plan - Periodic Update • Other Code Updates <p>Periodic Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning Changes 		
<p>February 3, 2026</p>	Empty cell for February 3, 2026		

**TOWN OF COUPEVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
December 2, 2025
6:00pm**

CALL TO ORDER

At 6:00pm, Commission Chair Cook called the meeting to order and read the Land Acknowledgement.

PRESENT

Chair Michelle Cook, Commissioners Susan Upchurch, Von Summers, and Evan Henrich

STAFF PRESENT

Community Planning Director Josh Pitts, and Assistant Planner Lisa Walsh

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Action: A motion was made by Commissioner Upchurch, seconded by Commissioner Summers, to approve the agenda of the December 2, 2025 regular meeting as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Action: A motion was made by Commissioner Summers, seconded by Commissioner Upchurch, to approve the minutes of the November 4, 2025 regular meeting as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION

Comprehensive Plan Update

Community Planning Director Pitts updated the Commission on comments received by the Department of Commerce on the Comprehensive Plan update. Housing number allocations may need to be updated. This may push back the public hearing for adoption.

Memorandum of Agreement

Community Planning Director Pitts updated the Commission on the Memorandum of Agreement discussion from the last Town Council meeting. Town Council agreed that the Town and the Stuurmans family need to meet to discuss all options, and hopefully formulate a master plan for the rest of the build-out of the MOA area.

Street Level Short-Term Rental in Historic Commercial District

Community Planning Director Pitts updated the Commission the Town Council's latest discussion about the possible code change. The Council agreed that they do not want staff and the Planning Commission to do any more work on the issue. Commissioner Upchurch commented that it sounded like the Council may be interested in discussing live/work or owner-occupied units on street level in the Historic Commercial District, but not at this time.

Sign Code

Community Planning Director Pitts led a discussion about the sign code amendments. Pitts and the Commission would like to allow businesses that are not street-facing, such as the businesses in Coupe's Village, to have portable signs at the entrances of the village. Businesses would need to bring them in when they're not open. Upchurch commented that the signs should be allowed to be illuminated with solar lights, especially during the winter months. Chair Cook asked for grammatical corrections and asked whether this would be included in the 5% sign coverage rule. Chair Cook would like the sign not to be included in the 5% coverage rule.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**Banners on Fence**

Commissioner Summers asked about the guidelines for banners on the fence at Main St. and SR20. Chair Cook asked if the Planning Department would send the guidelines to the Commission.

6 NE Front Street

Commissioner Upchurch asked what is going on with the foundation on the parcel where the Zylstra Law Office was moved from. Community Planning Director Pitts said that the foundation will have to stay because it is supporting the bluff, but they are still working with the owner on getting it cleaned up.

Planning Commission Vacancies

Chair Cook commented that she is anxious to get the vacancies on the Planning Commission filled. Community Planning Director Pitts said there are multiple applicants being looked at. Chair Cook asks that it be on the next Council meeting agenda.

The Commission wished Evan Henrich well in his new role as a Town Councilmember.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:25pm, Chair Cook adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

COMMUNITY PLANNING DIRECTOR

Deputy Clerk Chris Jolly

Josh Pitts

TOWN OF COUPEVILLE

MEMORANDUM

COMMUNITY PLANNING DIRECTOR STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 6, 2026
TO: Coupeville Planning Commission
FROM: Josh Pitts, Community Planning Director
RE: Project Timeline

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum is intended to provide the Planning Commission with an overview of the Town's current planning work program, with particular emphasis on the Comprehensive Plan update and related code amendments. While staff were initially optimistic about completing the Comprehensive Plan on an accelerated timeline, it has become clear that additional time is necessary to ensure the work is thorough, well-researched, and responsive to Department of Commerce comments and community needs.

Staff's objective is to present the Town Council, the Planning Commission, and the public with high-quality analysis and clear policy choices that support informed decision-making. Rushing the Comprehensive Plan update simply to meet an earlier target date would not serve the long-term interests of the Town. As a result, staff have developed a revised, phased timeline for completing the Comprehensive Plan and associated code updates.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Several components of the Comprehensive Plan update require significant coordination and technical analysis. For example, AMI housing allocation numbers require collaboration with Facet, the Town's contracted consultant. Scheduling meetings, reviewing draft materials, and resolving policy questions requires more time than originally anticipated.

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, staff responsibilities include managing an active shoreline variance application, conducting meetings with community stakeholders such as Island County and Island Roots, processing permits and Certificates of Appropriateness, preparing reports for the Historic Preservation Commission, advancing other code updates, and responding to calls and emails.

Based on these overlapping responsibilities, staff has developed a phased timeline identifying when each portion of the Comprehensive Plan and related code amendments will be prepared and brought forward to the Planning Commission and Town Council for discussion, recommendation, and approval. This approach allows for deliberate review and meaningful engagement at each step of the process.

LIST OF PROJECTS AND TIMELINE

The following projects are either directly related to, or running concurrently with, the Comprehensive Plan update:

Comprehensive Plan - Target recommendation: June 2, 2026

- Memorandum of Agreement: February 3, 2026
- Housing allocations and permanent housing needs by income level
 - Upzones – Target discussion: January 6, 2026
 - Area Median Income (AMI) housing allocation numbers – Target discussion: March 3, 2026
 - Analysis of barriers to affordable housing, including identification of subsidies, incentives, and funding gaps – Target discussion: March 3, 2026
- Zoning updates:
 - Emergency housing and shelters – Target discussion: April 7, 2026
 - Permanent supportive housing and transitional housing – Target discussion: April 7, 2026
- Code creation:
 - Permanent Supportive Housing, CTC 16.10 – Target discussion: April 7, 2026
 - Temporary Homeless Encampments, CTC 16.10 – Target discussion: May 5, 2026
 - Affordable Housing Density Bonus for Religious Organizations, CTC 16.08.070 – Target discussion: May 5, 2026

Other Code Updates

- Fire Inspection Code - Target recommendation: February 3, 2026
- Sign Code - Target recommendation: March 3, 2026

CONCLUSION

Staff believes that extending the Comprehensive Plan timeline is both prudent and necessary to ensure compliance with state requirements, meaningful consideration of Department of Commerce comments, and thoughtful engagement with the Planning Commission, Town Council, and the community. The revised work program and timeline reflect staff's commitment to producing a Comprehensive Plan and supporting code amendments that are defensible, implementable, and aligned with the Town's long-term goals.

Staff looks forward to continued collaboration with the Planning Commission as these projects advance and will provide regular updates as materials are ready for review and discussion.

TOWN OF COUPEVILLE

MEMORANDUM

COMMUNITY PLANNING DIRECTOR STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 6, 2026
TO: Coupeville Planning Commission
FROM: Josh Pitts, Community Planning Director
RE: Zoning Changes

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum provides an overview of proposed updates to the Town of Coupeville’s Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map. It is intended to clarify how zoning functions within the Town’s planning framework, explain the relationship between the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Map, and outline the rationale for the proposed zoning changes. These changes are being advanced as part of the Town’s ongoing Comprehensive Plan update and are aimed at better aligning zoning regulations with adopted policies, particularly those related to housing needs and capacity.

ZONING OVERVIEW

Zoning is a fundamental land use tool used by municipalities to guide growth and development. Through zoning, land is divided into distinct districts, each with a defined set of regulations governing permitted uses, development intensity, lot sizes, building form, and scale. Some zones are use-based, allowing specific land uses such as residential or commercial activities, while others focus more on development form, density, and physical characteristics of buildings regardless of use. Zoning regulations also distinguish between outright permitted uses and conditional uses that require additional review.

In Coupeville, zoning establishes the regulatory framework that determines how land may be developed today, while also implementing the community’s long-term vision for growth. The Town currently has nine zoning districts, three overlay or planning areas, and two shoreline environment designations that collectively shape land use outcomes.

Zoning Districts

- Rural Reserve
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Historic Commercial Center
- Town Commercial
- General Commercial
- Civic
- Parks and Open Space

Overlays and Planning Areas

- Memorandum of Agreement
- Manufactured Home Park Overlay
- Urban Growth Area

Shoreline Environments

- Historic Urban
- Urban Conservancy

FUTURE LAND USE MAP VS. ZONING MAP

The Future Land Use Map is created in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan and functions as a policy document. It illustrates the general pattern, type, and intensity of development the community anticipates over the long term. Rather than regulating development directly, the Future Land Use Map provides guidance and establishes a framework for future zoning decisions. It is intentionally broad and conceptual, allowing flexibility while still reflecting community values and adopted goals.

In contrast, the Zoning Map is adopted as part of the municipal code and serves as a regulatory document. It establishes the specific zoning designation for each parcel and determines exactly how land may be developed at present. The Zoning Map implements the vision expressed in the Future Land Use Map by applying detailed development standards and use regulations. In this way, the two maps work together: the Future Land Use Map sets the policy direction, and the Zoning Map provides the enforceable rules that carry out that direction.

ZONING CHANGES

Staff will be presenting the Planning Commission with a series of maps for reference, including the 2023 Coupeville Current Zoning Map, the 2023 Coupeville Future Land Use Map, the proposed 2026 Coupeville Current Zoning Map, and the proposed 2026 Coupeville Future Land Use Map (see maps 1–4). These maps illustrate how the proposed zoning changes align with updated land use policies.

As the Commission is aware, communities nationwide are experiencing a housing crisis, and Coupeville is no exception. Under the Growth Management Act, the Town is required to plan for and address its projected housing needs through the Comprehensive Plan. Permanent housing needs are analyzed by income category, expressed as a percentage of Area Median Income (AMI) (see figure 1). Coupeville’s most significant housing capacity shortfall occurs in the 0–80 percent AMI category, with a projected deficit of 121 units (see figure 2).

Currently, more than two-thirds of the Town’s residential properties are single-family units, and much of Coupeville is zoned low-density or medium-density residential. This development pattern limits the Town’s ability to produce housing affordable to lower- and moderate-income households. To meaningfully address the identified housing deficit in the 80 percent and below AMI range, additional capacity must be created through strategic upzoning.

	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	351

(Figure 1. 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.)

Income Level (% AMI)	Projected Housing Need	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)

(Figure 2. Sources: Facet, 2024.)

Staff is proposing to upzone three large parcels from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential, as well as rezone one Medium Density Residential parcel and one Low Density Residential parcel to High Density Residential. These parcels are located in areas that are walkable to essential services, including commercial uses and transit, making them appropriate locations for higher-density residential development. Concentrating density in these areas supports efficient land use, reduces reliance on automobiles, and aligns with broader planning and sustainability goals.

While increased residential density is being proposed in targeted locations, staff does not recommend high-density residential zoning along Parker Street. Given that most commercial services and amenities are concentrated along Main Street, higher-density residential development along Parker would be less consistent with walkability, access to services, and overall land use efficiency.

The Town is currently working with its consultant, Facet, to evaluate how the proposed zoning changes will affect projected housing capacity. While final modeling is still underway, staff are confident that these changes will result in a meaningful increase in housing opportunities for households at or below 80 percent AMI.

Finally, it is also important to note that Coupeville's role as the Island County seat and the location of WhidbeyHealth significantly affects land availability. A substantial portion of land within Town limits is owned and used by these public and institutional entities, limiting its ability to contribute to residential housing supply. Ensuring that these properties are appropriately zoned is necessary to clearly document why certain parcels cannot reasonably support residential development.

CONCLUSION

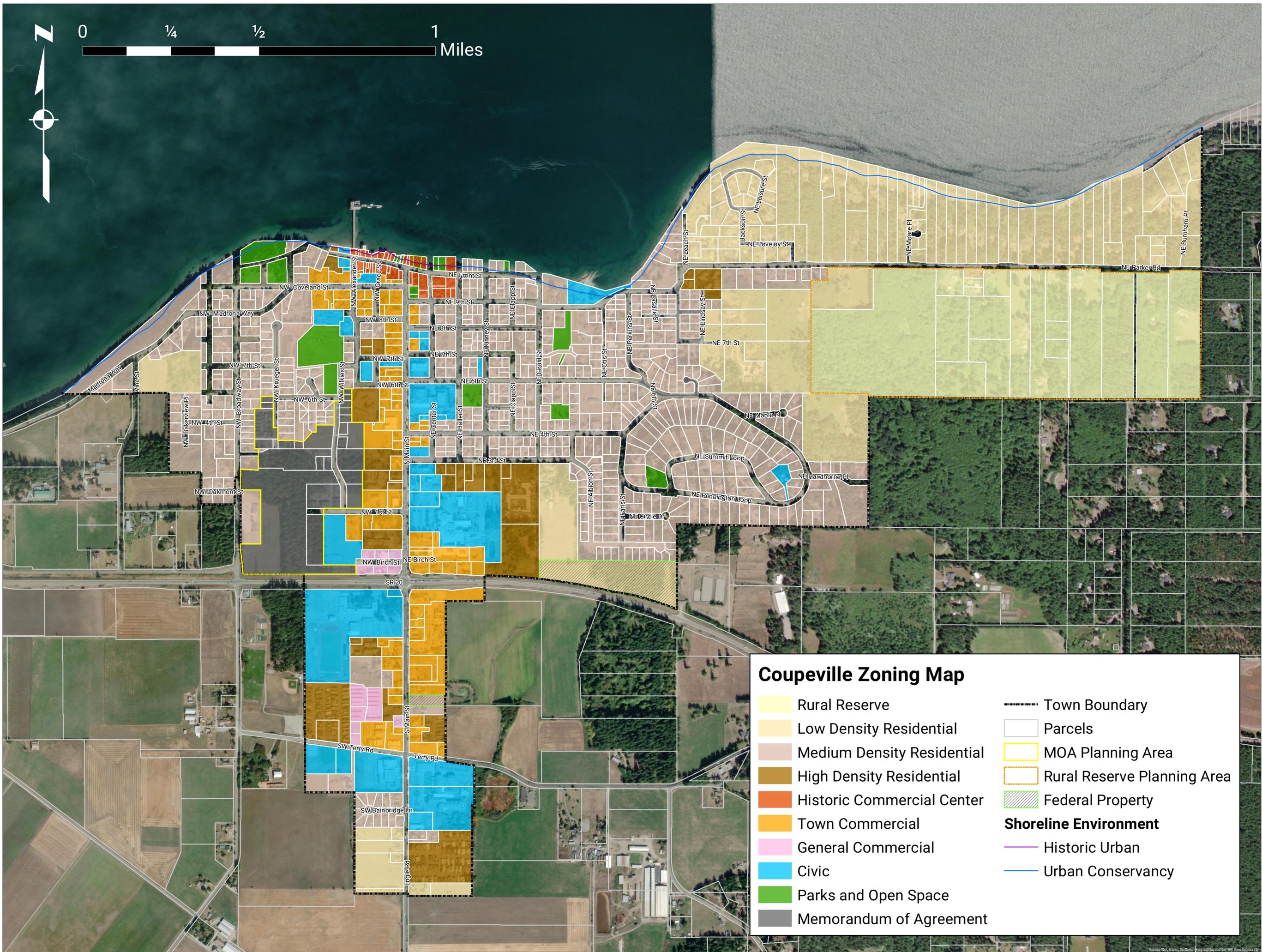
The proposed zoning changes are intended to better align Coupeville's Zoning Map with its Future Land Use Map and Comprehensive Plan policies, particularly those addressing housing needs across income levels. By strategically increasing residential density in walkable, service-rich areas, the Town can make progress toward addressing its housing capacity shortfall while respecting existing development patterns and institutional land constraints. Staff looks forward to discussing these proposals with the Planning Commission and receiving guidance as the Comprehensive Plan update moves forward.

Attachments

1. 2023 Coupeville Current Zoning Map
2. 2023 Coupeville Future Land Use Map
3. Working 2026 Coupeville Current Zoning Map
4. Working 2026 Coupeville Future Land Use Map

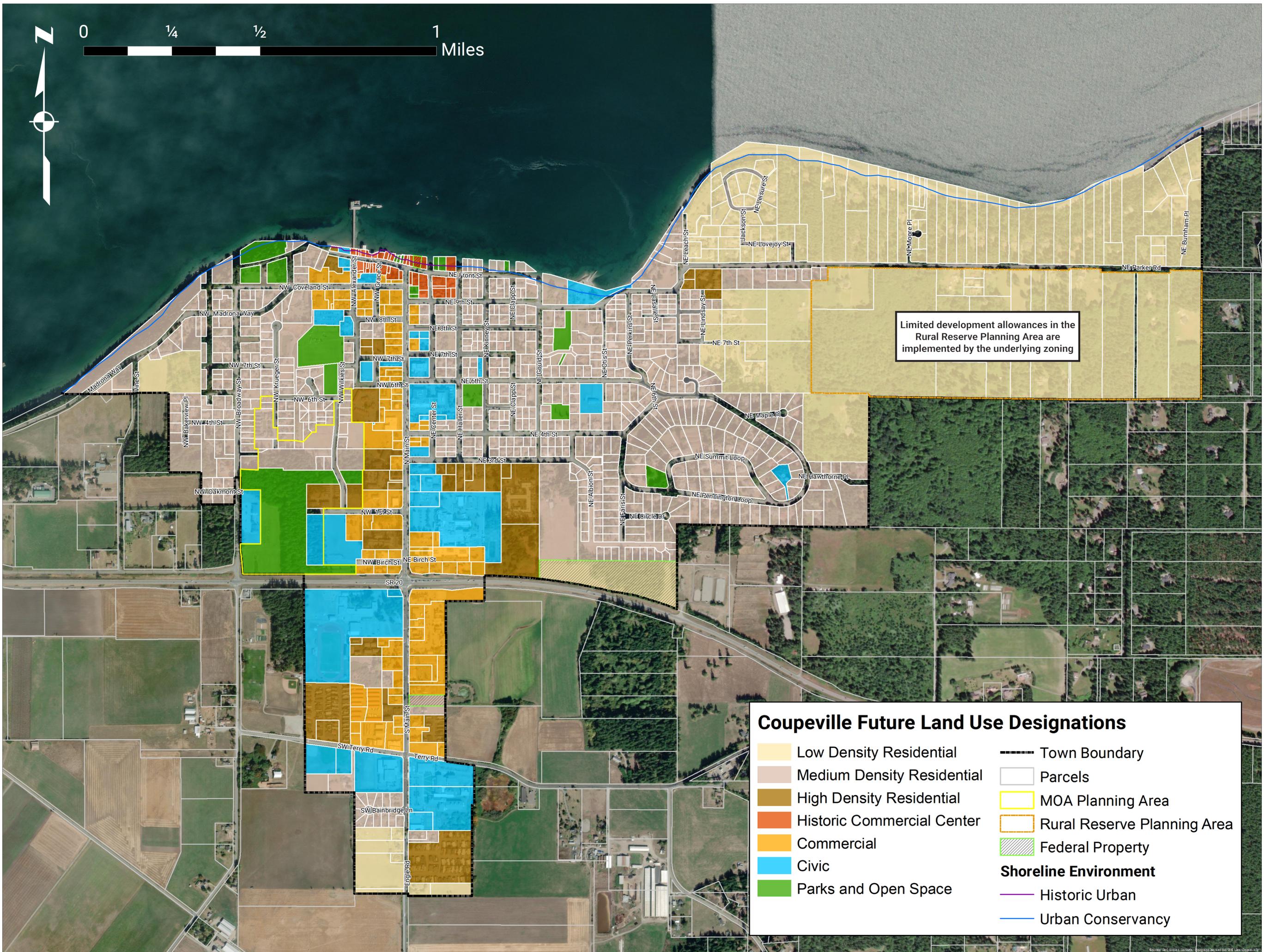


0 1/4 1/2 1 Miles



Coupeville Zoning Map

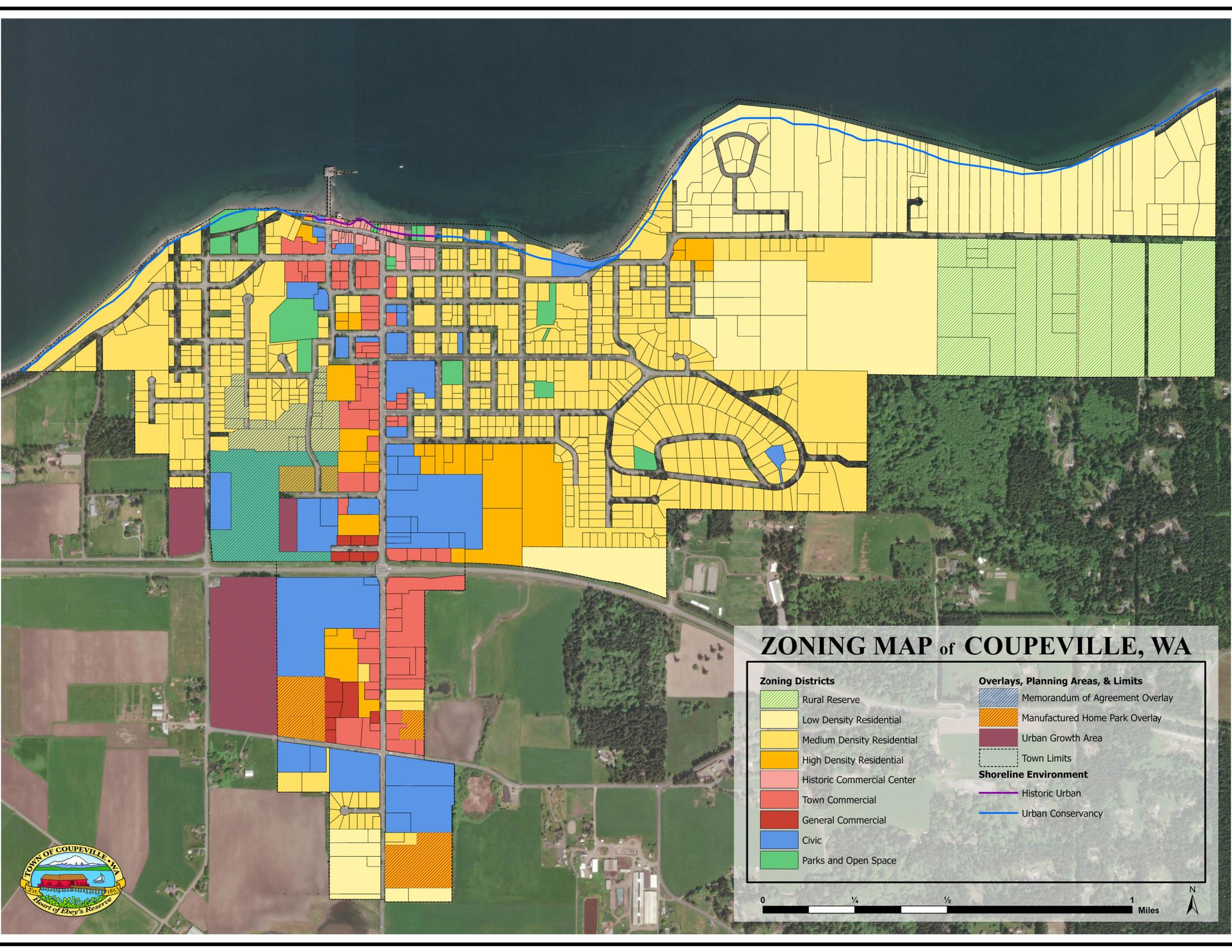
 Rural Reserve	 Town Boundary
 Low Density Residential	 Parcels
 Medium Density Residential	 MOA Planning Area
 High Density Residential	 Rural Reserve Planning Area
 Historic Commercial Center	 Federal Property
 Town Commercial	Shoreline Environment
 General Commercial	 Historic Urban
 Civic	 Urban Conservancy
 Parks and Open Space	
 Memorandum of Agreement	



Limited development allowances in the Rural Reserve Planning Area are implemented by the underlying zoning

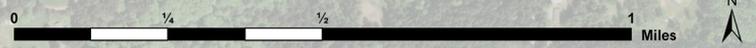
Coupeville Future Land Use Designations

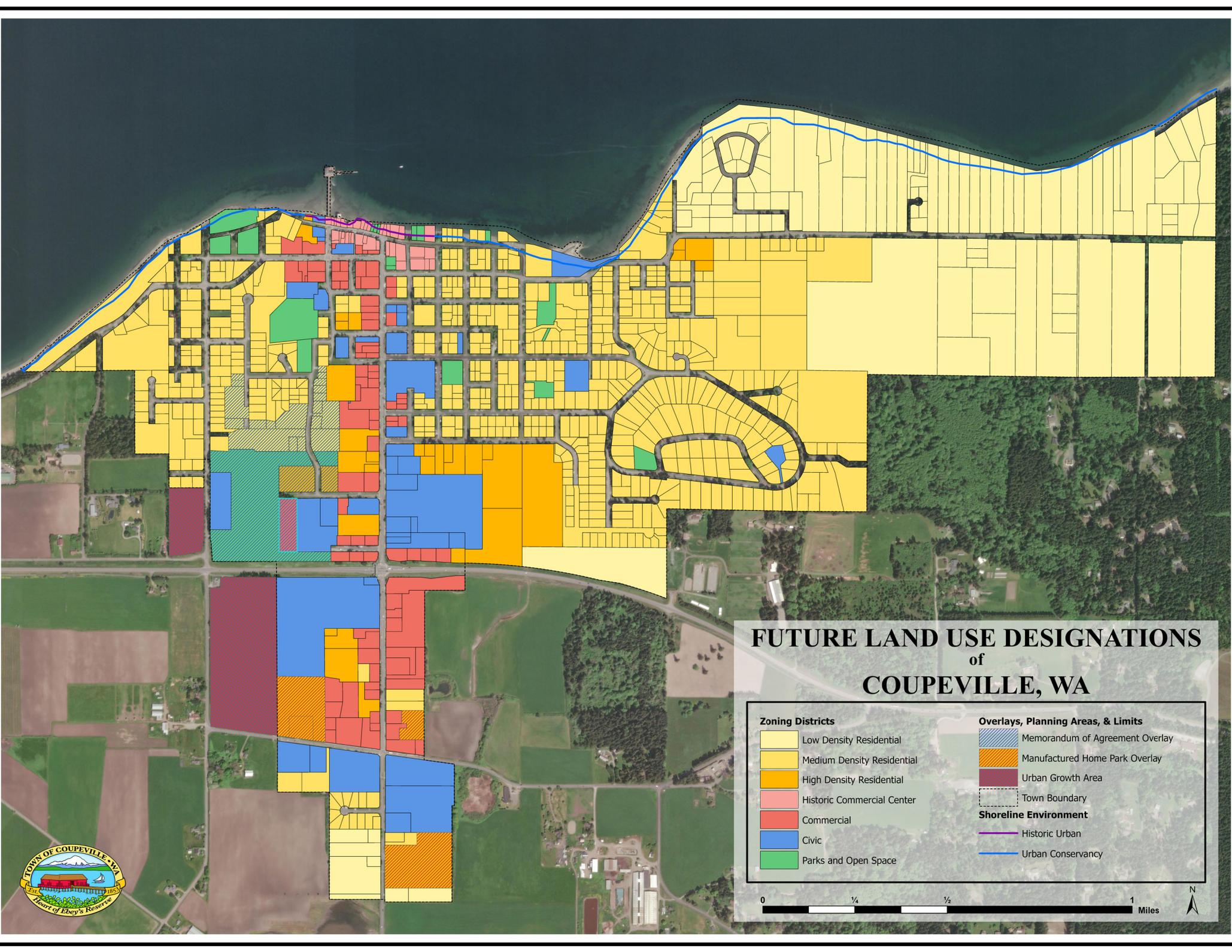
Low Density Residential	Town Boundary
Medium Density Residential	Parcels
High Density Residential	MOA Planning Area
Historic Commercial Center	Rural Reserve Planning Area
Commercial	Federal Property
Civic	Shoreline Environment
Parks and Open Space	Historic Urban
	Urban Conservancy



ZONING MAP of COUPEVILLE, WA

Zoning Districts		Overlays, Planning Areas, & Limits	
	Rural Reserve		Memorandum of Agreement Overlay
	Low Density Residential		Manufactured Home Park Overlay
	Medium Density Residential		Urban Growth Area
	High Density Residential		Town Limits
	Historic Commercial Center		Historic Urban
	Town Commercial		Urban Conservancy
	General Commercial		
	Civic		
	Parks and Open Space		





FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS of COUPEVILLE, WA

Zoning Districts		Overlays, Planning Areas, & Limits	
	Low Density Residential		Memorandum of Agreement Overlay
	Medium Density Residential		Manufactured Home Park Overlay
	High Density Residential		Urban Growth Area
	Historic Commercial Center		Town Boundary
	Commercial		Shoreline Environment
	Civic		Historic Urban
	Parks and Open Space		Urban Conservancy

