

Town of Coupeville

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2025-2045

VOLUME 1



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Plan at a Glance

Vision & Plan Introduction

This chapter introduces Coupeville's 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

The Land Use Element 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

The Historic Preservation and Community Design Element combines historic preservation and community design as a singular, integrated element to protect Coupeville's historic and cultural resources and guide future development.

Housing Element

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, including planning for housing by income band and providing for supportive housing.

Economic Stability Element

The Economic Stability Element provides guidance on the types of businesses that are compatible and complementary in Coupeville. It also addresses tourism and promotes employment opportunities.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element

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.

Natural Systems Element

The Natural Systems Element aims to protect Coupeville's natural systems, such as air and water quality, and protect people and property from natural hazards.

Climate Element

The Climate 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

The Transportation Element guides the development of the Town's transportation system, including non-motorized transportation, to accommodate existing and future growth.

Capital Facilities Element

The Capital Facilities Element guides the maintenance, preservation, and expansion of the Town-owned or operated facilities and services, including public buildings, streets, parks, water, stormwater, and sewer.

Utilities Element

The Utilities Element establishes an overall strategy for providing adequate utility service to accommodate projected growth.

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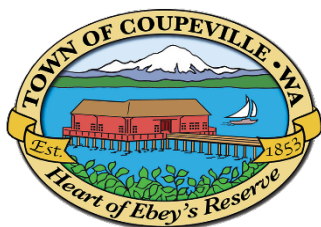
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FACET



Introduction: Vision and Plan

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



Central Coupeville and waterfront.



Parade in Coupeville (photo credit: Sue Hamilton).



Price Sculpture Forest (photo credit: Bondi Budde).

Introduction to Coupeville

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

The Town of Coupeville was established in 1853 and was formally incorporated in 1910. The Town encompasses 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 historic commercial area and the bulk of the residential areas north of the highway, and schools and a newer commercial area 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 secured through conservation easements, land purchases, local land use regulation, and the cooperation of landowners. Major features of the Reserve enjoyed and valued by residents and visitors include numerous 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.



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

Brief Town History

According to Ana Ramirez, the Education Curator at the Hibulb Cultural Center and Nature Preserve, “Prior to European contact, the lands along Penn Cove were home to several Coast Salish Tribes, 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 1700s. The Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 brought an influx of White colonials, which led to the displacement of Coast Salish peoples from their ancestral lands and forced most of them onto reservations. Colonel Isaac Ebey, the first local claimant, gave his name to the settlement of Ebey’s Landing on the shores of Admiralty Inlet, south of Coupeville. Captain Thomas Coupe founded Coupeville in 1853. By 1855, Ebey’s Landing and Penn Cove had been divided into a patchwork of land claims. Newcomers were drawn to large open prairies that were easily converted to farmland, woodlands that provided an abundance of timber resources, and the insulated cove.

After it began growing in the 1860s, Coupeville became the center of the area’s development. Logging and agriculture formed 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. Whidbey Island’s location was leveraged by the U.S. Army in the early 1900s with the construction of Fort Casey, and then



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).

again in the 1940s with the construction of Fort Ebey. Both forts were part of a coastal defense plan to protect Admiralty Inlet and the greater Puget Sound region.

Since World War II, and particularly since 1970, Coupeville has experienced considerable growth and change. Retirees have been drawn to the town's friendly community, mild climate, and beautiful setting. The completion of State Route 20 in 1967 improved access across Whidbey Island and connected communities to ferry terminals. As the county seat, Coupeville has seen the effects of 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 landscape and historic structures. They also came to realize the importance of tourism to the local economy. The Central Whidbey Island Historic District (established in 1973) 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 comprehensive plan update 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 focused on essential 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 eight Planning Commission meetings to discuss strategies, goals, policies, and the draft version of the plan

Coupeville Comprehensive Plan Update Community Vision Survey

Coupeville is updating our Comprehensive Plan, which is the roadmap to where we want to go as a community over the next 20 years. We need your help to confirm our collective ideas, community values, and necessary priorities. This survey is the start of a planning process expected to last through 2025. We appreciate your feedback!

Survey takers may optionally enter into a raffle for a \$50 gift certificate from Safeway.

Prefer to fill out the survey online? Visit the link or scan the QR code with a smartphone.
www.safeway.com/ILV8WVW

Please return completed survey by Friday, December 31, 2021 to:
 Donna Kiser, Planning Director
 Coupeville Town Hall
 412 Stewart Street, PO Box 720

1) What do you love about Coupeville? Write a 1, 2, and 3 only need to give your top three choices.

☐ the quality of life it is enjoyable to live here ☐ the business/recreation opportunities ☐ variety of activities, historic downtown, and old shops and homes ☐ the architecture, environment, historic, scenic, and culture ☐ Living within Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve ☐ The sense of community and engaged citizens ☐ The well-kept historic and natural setting	☐ proximity to agricultural activities ☐ the recreational activities, scenic views, parks, trails, and water of course ☐ the small town feel and excellent arts ☐ Great schools ☐ Low crime rate and the community's efforts to invest ☐ other
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2) What are you most concerned about for Coupeville? Write a 1, 2, and 3 only need to give your top three choices. I am most concerned about...

☐ The local economy and lack of living wage jobs ☐ The overall cost of living ☐ The loss of affordable housing especially for the younger generation ☐ Our poor ability to deal with climate change and sea level rise ☐ Our poor ability to deal with the effects of climate change on our environment ☐ The loss of certain businesses and the loss of our small town feel ☐ Our poor ability to deal with the loss of our small town feel	☐ Health issues, including aging residents, and additional population ☐ Accessibility issues, including aging residents, and additional population ☐ The loss of affordable housing especially for the younger generation ☐ The loss of certain businesses and the loss of our small town feel ☐ Our poor ability to deal with the effects of climate change on our environment ☐ The loss of certain businesses and the loss of our small town feel ☐ Our poor ability to deal with the loss of our small town feel
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A survey was mailed to Town residents and property owners in November 2021



Town Workshop #2 in October 2022.

- Several Town Council adoption meetings
- Creation and maintenance of a website for the planning process
- Regular updates in the Coupeville newsletter
- Regular notifications via email to interested parties

This plan addresses many of Coupeville's ongoing and emerging challenges identified by community members, including:

- Lack of affordable housing supply and housing options, especially for community members with low to moderate incomes
- 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, including:

- A strong identity centered around historic, agricultural, Indigenous, and maritime heritage
- Community commitment toward preservation of the Town's historic resources
- Small town, 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, WhidbeyHealth Medical Center, and the 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. Fully planning means adopting the required elements listed in the table below and regulating critical areas (sensitive environmental areas).

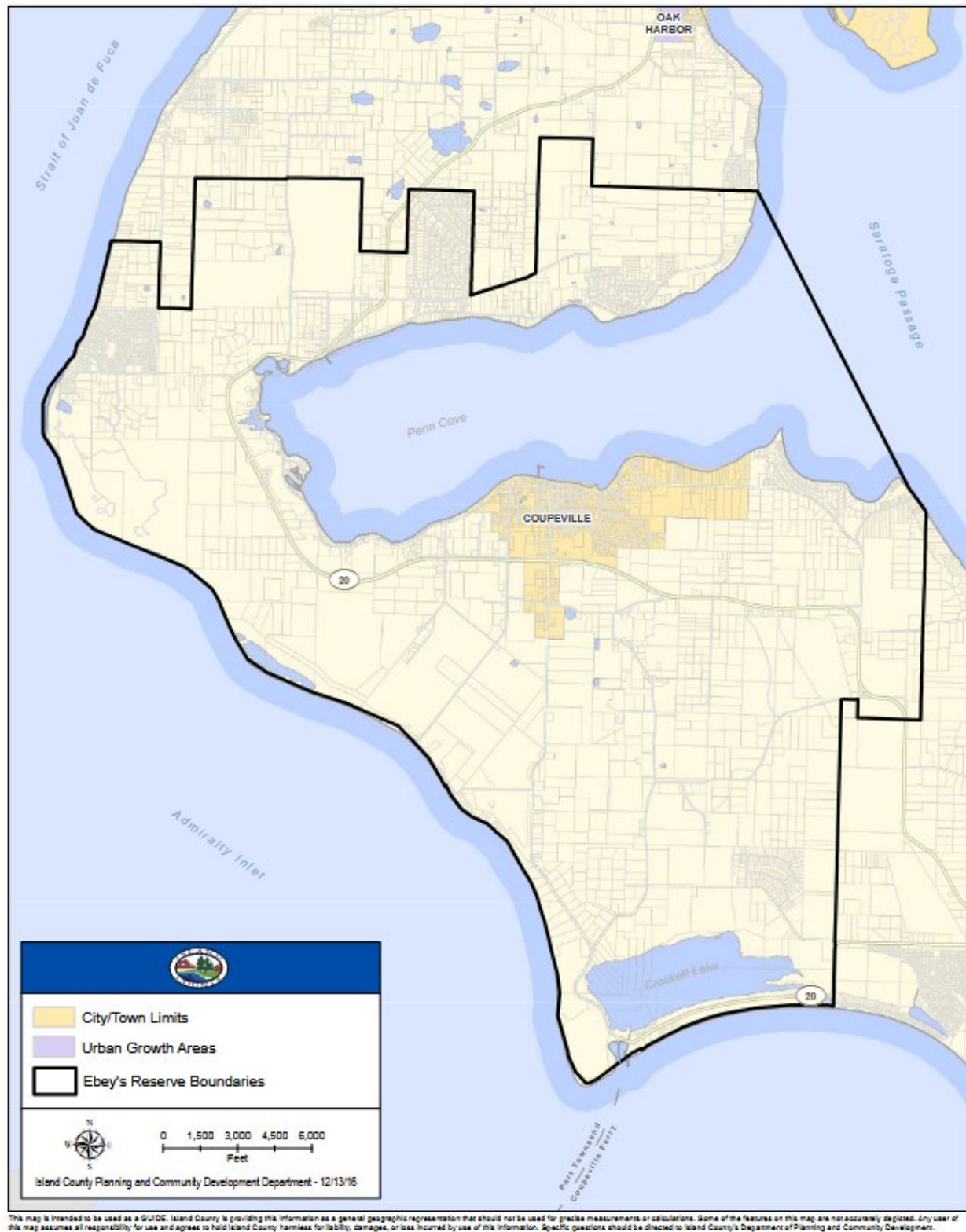
The Comprehensive Plan is the primary document that is supported by other Town plans and development regulations. This plan is designed to assess existing conditions and present a vision of growth and development for the next 20 years.

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 can accommodate projected population and employment growth over the next twenty years. Although Coupeville updated its Comprehensive Plan in 2023, additional updates are required to meet more recent changes to State requirements, particularly regarding 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 over 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 exempted 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 the 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.



Source: Island County Comprehensive Plan 2016, Map 5A, with Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve boundary.

Table 1. Comprehensive Planning Elements.

Required elements
<i>The GMA requires Coupeville to address topic areas called "elements." These are:</i>
Land Use
Housing
Capital Facilities
Utilities
Transportation
Climate Element

Optional elements
<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>
Economic Development (locally renamed as Economic Stability)
Park and Recreation (locally renamed as Parks, Recreation & Open Space)
Natural Systems
Historic Preservation and Community Design

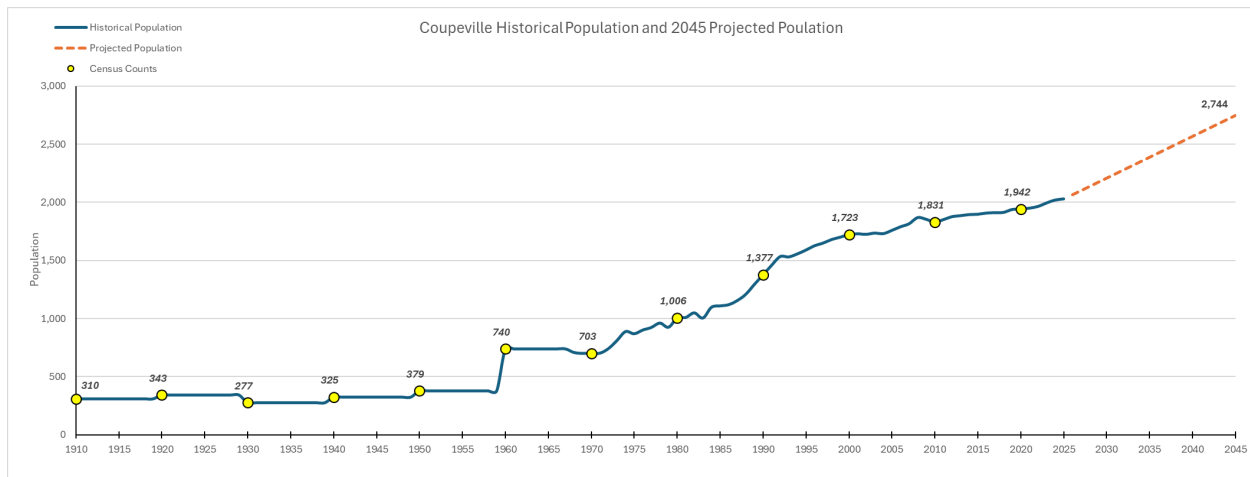
Population Forecast, Housing Capacity, and Land Capacity

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

As of 2025, Coupeville has an estimated population of 2,030 people. In 2021, the Washington State Legislature dramatically 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.

According to the 2024 OFM Postcensal estimates, Coupeville has an estimated 1,048 housing units, representing an increase of 115 units since 2010. Using the projection method selected by the Island County Countywide Planning Group, Coupeville's projected housing needs are 350 by 2045, corresponding to a population projection of approximately 2,744.

Figure 9 - Coupeville Population, Historical (1910 - 2025) and Projected (2026-2045)



Note: Historical estimates in census years are a count, while intercensal years are estimates. No intercensal population estimates exist prior to 1960. Sources: OFM Historical April 1 Intercensal Estimates of Population, 1890 – 2020 decennial census - updated June 2024; 1960 - 2025 postcensal estimates updated June 2025; 1990-2000 prepared March 2002; 2000-2010 last revised June 23, 2016; 2021 last revised November 30, 2021; OFM GMA Population Projections for Counties 2020 - 2050, December 2022; Island County 2025 Periodic Update Appendix B: Housing Allocation Methodology, 2016; BERK, 2022; Facet, 2024.

A 2024 land capacity analysis and housing needs assessment found that Coupeville has sufficient capacity in the Low Density Residential (LDR) and Medium Density Residential (MDR) zones to accommodate households earning 120% or more of the area median income (AMI). However, the analysis identified insufficient capacity to meet the housing needs of households earning below 120% AMI, particularly those earning 80% AMI or less, over the 20-year planning period. In response, the Town intends to rezone select parcels to increase opportunities for housing affordable to households earning 80% AMI and below.

That said, the land capacity analysis also determined that Coupeville has adequate land to accommodate its 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 shows that Coupeville has an estimated capacity for 179 additional

housing units based on current conditions. This capacity increases to 250 housing units if sewer service is expanded to all areas of town. A separate analysis of housing unit capacity by income bracket has been completed for the Housing Element and outlines adequate provisions and modifications to development regulations, incentives, and policies to meet the projected need of 351.

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

Implementation

As a policy document, the Coupeville Comprehensive Plan works as 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 several 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 the 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 through the Capital Facilities Element and the associated Capital Facilities Plan and capital budget, which are updated annually to plan for the modification and expansion of infrastructure like roads, utilities, and parks.

The operating budget also impacts 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 the maximum possible benefit from the expenditure of public funds. This is achievable with a budget planning process that facilitates 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 to respond to changing conditions and needs of the community. The Growth Management Act requires that amendments to a comprehensive plan be considered no more frequently than once per year, 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 if new information is present that was not available at the time of initial adoption. Town staff and the Planning Commission review proposed amendments to the Plan, take public input, and forward 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 Town of Coupeville in the early stages of the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

It is envisioned that the adoption of some of these goals and policies will require several years to enact. The Town 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 Town'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, recreational, public facilities, and other land uses. This element also describes development patterns that support Coupeville's vision for the future. The Land Use 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.

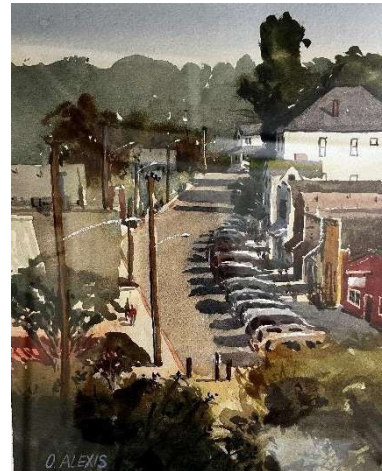
The Growth Management Act requires cities and towns to show how they will be able to accommodate 20 years of growth through sufficient buildable land that is zoned appropriately.

Appendix A - Land Use contains the Land Use Element background information with data and analysis that provides 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, with a significant amount of undeveloped land.

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 nearly the entire claim of Thomas and Maria Coupe (filed November 20, 1852) and most of the John Alexander claim



Painting of Front Street in Coupeville



Cliff house (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

(August 1, 1852), each totaling approximately 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. As the County seat, Coupeville is also home to WhidbeyHealth Medical Center, which offers a variety of medical services, and the Coupeville School District.

Housing is distributed throughout the Town of Coupeville. Early residential development occurred on small lots in the central portion of Town. More recent development has been suburban in nature, with large lots in outlying parts of town. While most of the existing housing is the traditional “detached, single-family” housing type, the Town also has three mobile home parks, as well as a steadily increasing number of multifamily dwellings.

Future Growth and Land Capacity

Consistent with RCW 36.70A.070(1) and WAC 365-196-405(2)(i), this section describes Coupeville’s future land use designations, corresponding zoning districts, anticipated development intensities, and estimated residential densities. It also evaluates whether sufficient land capacity exists within the Town and Urban Growth Area (UGA) to accommodate projected population and housing growth over the 20-year planning period.

Future Land Use Designations

The Future Land Use Map (Map LU-1) organizes land within Coupeville into three primary designations: Residential, Commercial, Civic and Parks/Open Space. Each designation corresponds to one or more zoning districts and establishes the general pattern, intensity, and character of future development. Development standards, including residential density, floor area ratio (FAR), and building height, are regulated through the Town’s development code.

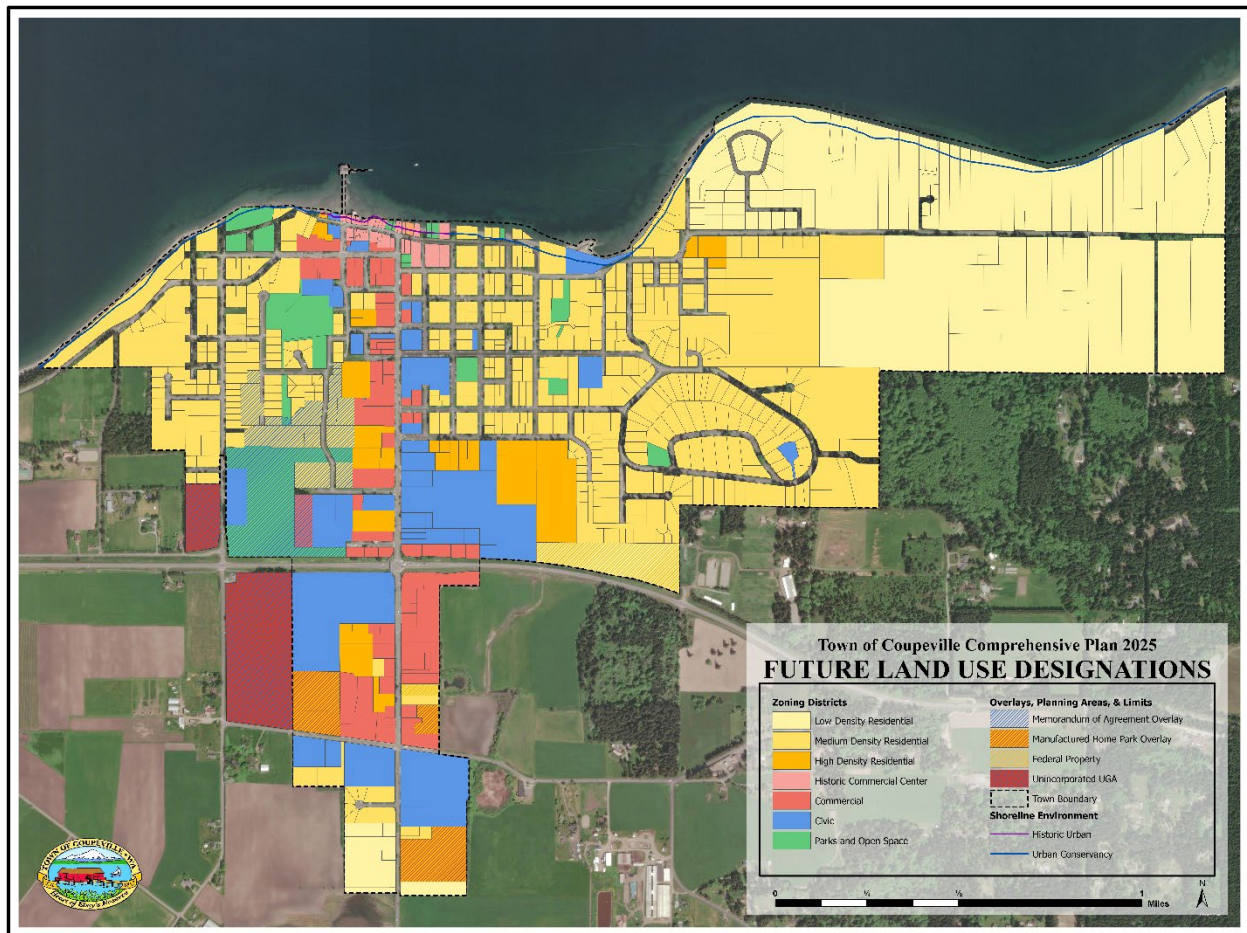
Residential

The Residential designation supports a range of housing types at low to moderate densities and includes the Low-, Medium-, and High-Density residential zoning districts. Historically, the Low- and Medium-Density zones primarily accommodated single-family homes and accessory dwelling units, with densities generally ranging from approximately 2 to 4.5 dwelling units per acre depending on lot size. The High-Density zone has traditionally supported multifamily housing at densities up to 11 dwelling units per acre. In response to state middle housing requirements under RCW 36.70A.681, the Town increased allowable residential densities to up to 6 dwelling units per acre in the Low-Density zone, 13.5 dwelling units per acre in the Medium-Density zone, and 22 dwelling units per acre in the High-Density zone to expand housing capacity and support a greater range of housing choices.

To expand housing choice and affordability, the Town adopted middle housing regulations applicable to all residential zones. These regulations allow a broader range of housing types,

including duplexes, triplexes, cottage housing, and small apartment buildings, in areas previously limited to detached single-family development.

Map LU-1. Future land use designations



Commercial

The Commercial designation includes the Historic Commercial Center and Commercial zoning districts. These areas function as centers for retail, services, employment, and housing. Development is generally more compact and may include mixed-use buildings with commercial uses at street level and residential or office uses above.

Civic and Parks/Open Space

The Civic and Parks/Open Space designations apply to lands used for public, institutional, educational, recreational, and open space purposes. While these areas have not traditionally accommodated residential uses, recent code amendments have expanded opportunities to support community needs.

For example, supportive housing is permitted within the Civic zone, allowing for STEP housing and similar uses on publicly owned or institutionally zoned properties. This approach provides

additional housing opportunities while preserving land designated for residential and commercial development.

Table LU-1. Land use designations.

Future Land Use Designations	Description	Implementing Zones
Low-Density Residential (LDR)	This designation is intended for areas where more intensive urban development is constrained by environmental conditions, topography, the cost of extending urban services, or the need to maintain an appropriate transition between the Town and adjacent rural lands. The lands within this designation are intended to minimize impervious surfaces, protect natural features, and/or protect the cultural and physical integrity of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. Land use and density: Single-household dwellings are the 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 areas that are difficult to develop owing to topography or other factors should be zoned RR. Areas with public sewer service should be zoned LDR. - 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 a 2-acre minimum lot size (Rural Reserve).	Rural Reserve Low-Density Residential
Medium-Density Residential (MDR)	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 plan to feature) adequate public services to serve residential development. Land use and density: Single-household dwellings are the 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 the size and design of the dwellings. Residential densities depend on the current context:	Medium-Density Residential Memorandum of Agreement (MOA Area)

Future Land Use Designations	Description	Implementing Zones
	- 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 ADUs per lot, or up to 3 middle housing units per lot.	
High-Density Residential (HDR)	Purpose: Allows for high-density residential use in areas that are near commercial areas, parks, trails, and transit routes, and are located to permit efficient provision of public services. 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: - Those areas currently without public sewer service are limited to 2-acre minimum lot sizes (Rural Reserve). - All other areas are allowed up to 22 units per acre. - Minimum densities for new subdivisions and other multi-unit developments are important to maintain and enhance housing capacity and diversity.	High-Density Residential Memorandum of Agreement (MOA Area)
Commercial	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. Land use and density: Commercially designated areas have land uses that serve the entire Town. The TC zone is appropriate for commercial areas centered on Main Street and provides a variety of neighborhood services. The GC zone is appropriate in areas that prioritize automobile-oriented access and are characterized by existing light industrial development and larger-scale retail and service uses. Residential uses are allowed in the TC zone with no maximum density, subject to other zoning requirements. Residential uses	Town Commercial General Commercial

Future Land Use Designations	Description	Implementing Zones
	are allowed in the GC zone up to a maximum of 15 units per acre.	
Historic Commercial Center	Purpose: Provides for a range of commercial, residential, and water-oriented development that is appropriate in scale and character within historic downtown Coupeville. This area balances services and amenities for both Coupeville residents and tourists. Land use and density: A variety of commercial retail, office, and service uses are permitted. Residential uses are limited, largely consisting of historic single-household homes, short-term rentals, and apartment units generally not at street level.	Historic Commercial Center
Civic	Purpose: Includes areas used for schools, religious institutions, government buildings, public parking lots, hospitals, public cultural centers, parks, public recreation centers, affordable housing, supportive housing, and other similar uses. 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.	Civic High-Density Residential Medium Density Residential Town Commercial Memorandum of Agreement
Parks and Open Space	Purpose: Intended to identify existing public parks, recreation, and open spaces within Town limits. 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.	Parks and Open Space Memorandum of Agreement
Manufactured Home Park Zoning Overlay	Purpose: Intended to protect existing affordable housing stock and provide for affordable homeownership and rental housing. 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 in residential areas.	High-Density Residential

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 a 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.

This policy provides the Town with a tool to evaluate 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.

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 when property owners propose or demonstrate a significant benefit to the Town, including protection of historic resources, environmental protection, an increase in housing supply and variety, an increase in park space, and a 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.
- C. Viable and appropriate for housing development, community facilities and services, or park, recreation, and open space purposes.
- D. Supportive of other goals and 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 thoughtfully, 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 historic 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.
- LU-1.9 Manage and maintain the Town's Official Zoning Map to ensure continued consistency with the Future Land Use Designation Map.
- 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 the height limit from 28 feet to 34 feet to potentially allow three-story buildings in a few select High Density Residential and Commercial areas.
- 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 Design Guidelines

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

- 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.

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.

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

A. Accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Encourage attached and detached ADUs 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 construction throughout Coupeville.



Accessory Dwelling Unit.

- 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 common open space, and strict cottage size limitations.



Cottage housing in Coupeville.

C. **Small homes.** Encourage and incentivize the integration of small detached single-household homes. Such homes, provided they are no more than 1,400 square feet and emphasize a pedestrian-oriented design, would fit well into Coupeville's context and serve a wide demographic of the population.

D. **Duplexes / Triplexes.** Allow for and encourage duplexes and triplexes in more residential areas, provided the zoning and design provisions promote pedestrian-oriented designs compatible with existing neighborhoods. Review options, if expanded opportunities are appropriate in the zoning code, such as changing the buffer requirements.



Example of a duplex.

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.



Example of Townhouses in Coupeville.

F. **Multifamily housing.** Review development regulations to evaluate barriers to development of multifamily housing located within walking distance of transit and commercial services, including zoning and availability of land, height and density limits, and other standards.



Example of multifamily housing (photo credit: Opticos Design)

G. **Assisted living.** Review development regulations to evaluate barriers to the development of assisted living, nursing homes, and similar supportive facilities.

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



Example of tiny homes.

- LU-2.2 To protect the limited housing stock availability in Coupeville, 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 by 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

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, benefiting both the economy and the environment.

- 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.



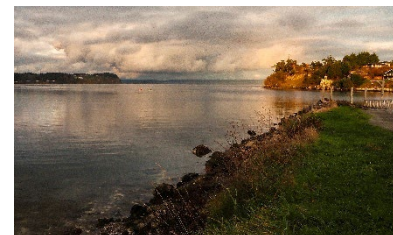
Kapaw's Iskreme (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

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 from each other to reduce the need for driving, and by encouraging multi-unit housing types that have reduced energy needs for heating and cooling.
- LU-4.2 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.
- 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.



ADU (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Coupeville shoreline (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.

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.

LU-4.9 Reduce the pollution impacts of fossil-fuel infrastructure, such as by prohibiting the development of new fossil-fuel gas stations. Facilitate the development of Level 3 electric vehicle charging stations and hydrogen fuel stations in Town and 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.

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



Orca (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



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



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, WhidbeyHealth 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.



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

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).

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

LU-6.1 Establish and maintain planning processes that allow 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.

- LU-6.3 Work cooperatively with Island County to discourage urban uses outside of Coupeville's boundary that intrude upon prime farmland, forest, and natural resource areas integral to the Reserve. Re-establish joint planning areas if needed.
- LU-6.4 Update processes and procedures throughout the Coupeville Town 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 effectiveness 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 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 (Reserve).

Central Whidbey Island Historic District and Ebey's Landing National Historical 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 and historic buildings. It included more than 8,000 acres of land surrounding Penn Cove. Located within the district are original Donation Land Claims established by early White colonials according to the provisions of the Donation Land Claim Act 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. 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).



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 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 Historical Reserve Trust Board

Nationally significant, when the Reserve was established, it represented a new approach to preserving land and heritage resources. The Reserve's distinct landscape, rural character, and heritage resources are economically important within the agricultural, recreation, and tourism industries, are socially important within our community, and are worthy of continued proactive preservation. This new approach recognized the Town of Coupeville as a key partner in the Reserve.

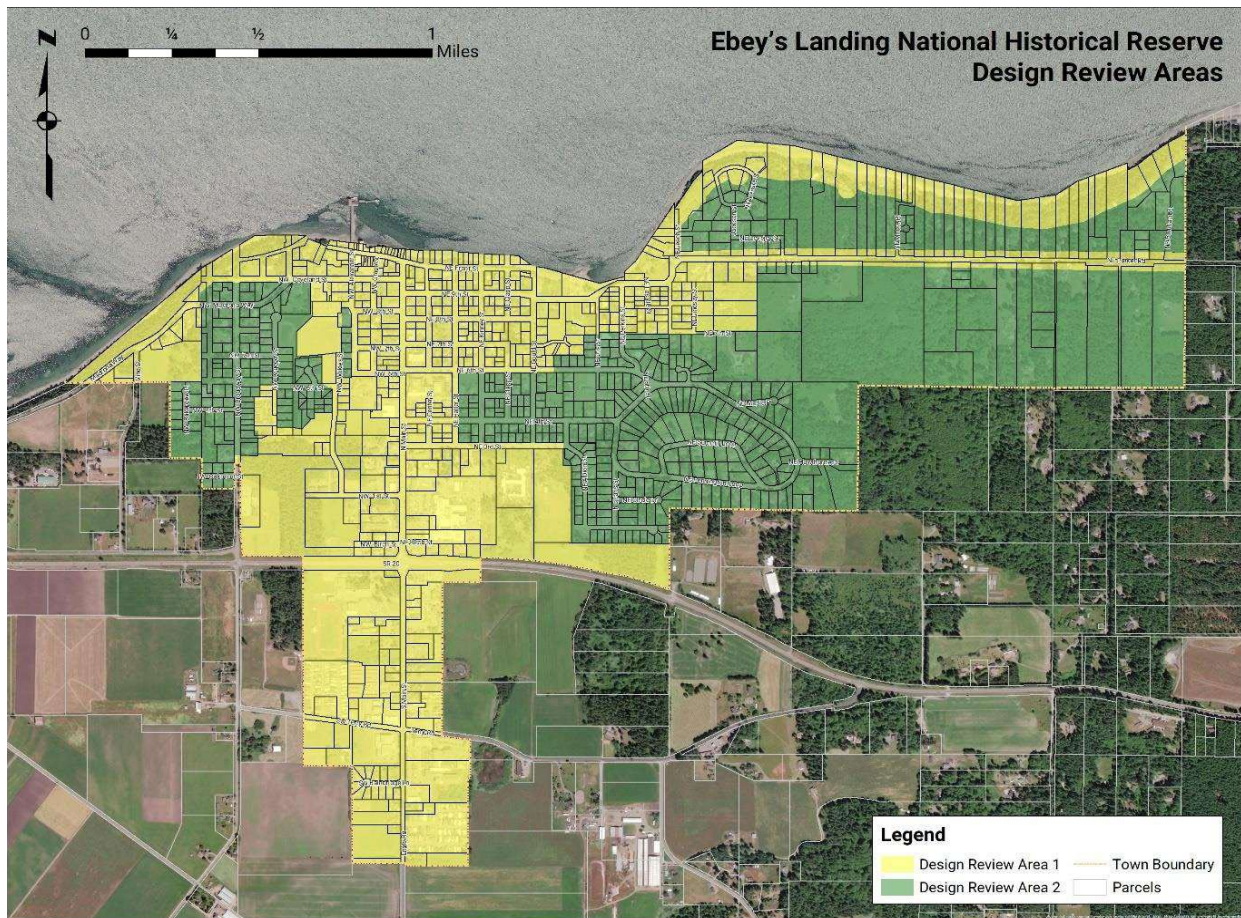
Ebey's Reserve Trust Board

The nine-member Trust Board is made up of representatives appointed by the four government partners of the 1988 Interlocal Agreement: the Town of Coupeville, Island County, Washington State Parks, and the National Park Service. Island County, in coordination with the Trust Board, employs a Reserve Manager. The Trust Board employs other staff as needed. The Trust Board's key responsibilities are to coordinate the partnership defined in the 1988 Interlocal Agreement, to monitor scenic easements acquired by the National Park Service within the Reserve, and to advise local, state, and federal partners on preservation in the Reserve. The Historic Preservation Coordinator supports the Historic Reserve Committee and the Historic Preservation Commission by providing expertise during the design review process.



Colonel's House.

Learn more about the Reserve and historic preservation.
ebeyreserve.com



Design review areas in Coupeville.

Ebey's Reserve Design Review Process

The Ebey's Reserve Design Guidelines were adopted in 2011, along with Coupeville Town Code Chapter 16.13 - Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Design Review and Community Design Standards, which provide a mechanism to protect the historic resources in the Reserve and evaluate the appropriateness of new development within the Reserve. "Design review" is the process of applying context-specific design guidelines to proposed development and land use projects, including new construction, remodels, and restoration of historic resources. The review process serves as a tool to help property owners care for, preserve, and protect the overall character and appearance of the Reserve. Design review ensures sensitive rehabilitation and new construction that respects the unique historic character of the Reserve. The Town of Coupeville

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.

and Island County have unified municipal codes that are closely aligned, helping maintain consistency throughout the Reserve.

The design review process is supported by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), a volunteer board with members appointed by the Town of Coupeville and Island County. The HPC reviews projects within the Reserve and issues either recommendations or decisions on Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs). The success of the design review process is reflected in the well-preserved buildings, landscapes, and overall character of the Reserve that we enjoy today.

Goals and Policies

Goal HP-1: Historic Resources. Protect, preserve, and celebrate Coupeville's historic 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, siting, and massing.
- HP-1.2 Update and maintain zoning provisions to accommodate modest and compatible infill development in the Historic Commercial Center and areas near 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 Support the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic and cultural resources in Coupeville through zoning, financial, and other incentives. Where appropriate, incentives should be provided to incorporate coastal adaptation strategies during preservation, restoration, or rehabilitation of historic structures or cultural resources to increase resilience to the impacts of rising sea levels.

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).

HP-1.4 Encourage the purchase of development rights through conservation easements by other entities (such as the National Park Service and the Whidbey Camano Land Trust) to protect 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 historic preservation goals in a fair, equitable, and predictable manner. Ensure non-historic areas are not over-regulated.

HP-1.6 Emphasize the Town's historic context and highlight those features in tourism messaging and throughout the community.

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. Resilience strategies, 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 to partner with and support the Trust Board of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

HP-1.9 Coordinate with Island County and the Reserve to provide ongoing staff support, training, and guidance to the Historic Preservation Commission.

HP-1.10 In partnership with Island County and the Reserve, maintain a database of historic structures in Central Whidbey that is compatible with statewide standards developed by the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.



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



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



Front Street, circa 1920

- HP-1.11 In partnership with Island County, explore the possibility of becoming a Certified Local Government.
- HP-1.12 Install prominent gateway features at entry points into the historic commercial center.
- HP-1.13 Protect significant sites prone to floods, windstorms, sea level rise, extreme temperatures, and other hazards worsened by climate change.



The Coupeville Wharf (photo credit: John Hummel).

Goal HP-2: Cultural Resources & Practices. Enhance the resilience of cultural resources and practices, including against extreme weather and other natural hazards worsened by climate change.

- HP-2.1  Protect significant historic sites and buildings prone to floods or other hazards worsened by climate change. When appropriate, encourage incorporating coastal adaptation strategies during the preservation, restoration or rehabilitation of historic structures or cultural resources to increase resiliency to rising sea levels.

- HP-2.2  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).

- HP-2.3 Ensure that cultural resources, including significant historic sites, traditional foods, and natural resources, are prepared for the impacts of extreme weather worsened by climate change.
- HP-2.4 Maintain effective and up-to-date protocols and plans for the inadvertent discovery of cultural resources and for the coordination with Tribal partners and the Washington Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation.

Goal HP-3: Quality Development. Promote compatible, high-quality, pedestrian-friendly development that reinforces Coupeville's small-town identity within Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

HP-3.1 Update zoning provisions to implement Coupeville's community design goals. Specifically:

- A. While respecting the historic 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 adjacent contextual elements, maximize opportunities for common open space, and help meet Coupeville's environmental goals 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, architecturally compatible homes and dwelling units.
- C. Update sign regulations that balance the visibility and identity needs of businesses within the neighborhood context.
- D. Ensure view corridors are acknowledged and protected within the context of historic preservation.

HP-3.2 Re-evaluate and update the design guidelines at least every ten years to reflect current community goals and objectives; adjust as necessary to improve effectiveness.

- A. Employ site and building design techniques that promote safe, inviting pedestrian access and connections.
- B. Establish structural massing and articulation standards that respect the character and scale of Coupeville's historic business district, commercial areas, and neighborhoods.



The Frain/Burton Engle House.

Small homes help preserve Coupeville's historic character while providing starter and more affordable housing options.

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.

- C. Emphasize 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 highlights special vistas, especially prominent views from public streets and gathering places.
- F. Employ site planning and building design techniques that support safe and inviting pedestrian access and connections.
- G. Review parking standards in residential and commercial areas to minimize impacts on community character, including the number of required spaces, location of spaces, and appropriate screening.
- H. Protect 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.



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



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



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

Housing Element

Introduction

The Housing Element addresses the preservation, improvement, and development of housing in Coupeville. It identifies land for a variety of housing types and outlines policies to meet the existing and projected needs of residents across income levels, ages, and abilities. At the same time, it seeks to preserve neighborhood character by ensuring new development remains compatible with its surroundings. This element requires balancing multiple interests, including community character, demographic trends, and affordability.

The Housing Element is supported by a housing needs analysis that quantifies existing and projected housing needs and identifies the number of housing units required 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, to supplement information, and to implement goals and policies within the Comprehensive Plan. Under the GMA (RCW 36.70A.070), the Housing Element is required to:

- Include goals and policies that support the preservation, improvement, and development of diverse housing types, including single-household residences and middle housing options such as duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes within urban growth areas.
- Include an inventory and analysis of projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community, including emergency housing and permanent supportive housing.
- Identify sufficient land capacity for projected housing needs.



Residential mailboxes.



Homes in Coupeville.



Green ADU (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



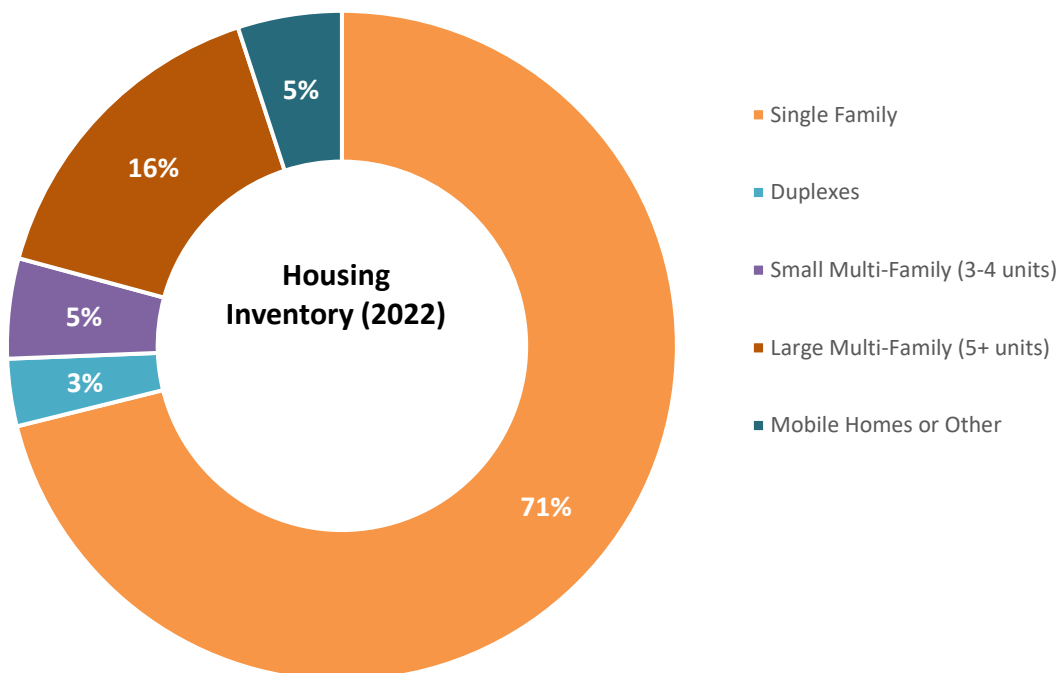
Red ADU (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

- Make adequate provisions for existing and projected needs for all economic segments of the community.
- Identify local policies and regulations that contribute to racially disparate impacts, displacement, or exclusion in housing, and develop strategies to address and correct these impacts.
- Identify areas that may be at a higher risk of displacement from market forces.
- Establish policies to prevent displacement and support residents at risk of displacement.

Existing Conditions Summary

According to the 2025 Office of Financial Management (OFM) postcensal estimates, Coupeville has approximately 1,048 housing units, representing an increase of 115 units since 2010.

As of 2022, more than two-thirds of all housing units (about 71 percent) are one-unit detached structures, commonly referred to as single-family homes. Approximately 64 percent of all housing units are owner-occupied. The median value of owner-occupied homes in 2024 was more than \$609,000, an increase of 105 percent since 2015. Area median income increased only 38 percent over that same period.



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

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

	Lower Market Home (2024)	Median Home (2024)
Cost to Purchase		
Value/Purchase price	\$461,186	\$609,518
Assumed 10% down payment	\$46,119	\$60,952
Mortgage amount	\$415,067	\$548,566
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	\$32,736.96	\$43,266.24
Property tax, annual (0.953%)	\$4,395.10	\$5,808.71
PMI, annual (1%)	\$4,150.67	\$5,485.67
Insurance, annual (0.56%)	\$2,305.93	\$3,047.59
Annual Costs	\$43,588.66	\$57,608.21
Monthly Costs	\$3,632.39	\$4,800.68
Affordability		
Monthly Income Needed (3.336 x monthly costs)	\$12,117.65	\$16,015.07
Annual Income Needed	\$ 145,411.80	\$192,180.84

Note: Zillow Home Value Index (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 assessed 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. Assessed value is assumed to be the Value/Purchase price.

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

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

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

	2015	2021	2022	2024
Average monthly Rent (Oak Harbor metro area)	\$1,072	\$1,692	\$1,858	\$1,914
Annual 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 the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates.

Sources: Zillow Observed Rent Index (ZORI), March 2015 - September 2022; U.S. Census, 2010-2015 and 2016-2020 ACS 5-year Estimates (Table S1901); U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Income Limits, 2015-2022; BERK Consulting, Inc., 2022; Facet NW, Inc., 2024.

Housing Need Compared to Capacity

Through a process outlined in the Island County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) and in collaboration with Island County and other municipalities in the county, the Town of Coupeville established the following housing needs by income level. These represent the number of 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	351

*The location of 10 existing permanent supportive housing (PSH) 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 (MDR) 90
- High-Density Residential (RH) 4
- Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) 45

Grouping zones and their allowed uses and densities by income category, compared to the aggregated need, 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% Non-PSH	40	Low-Rise Multifamily, Mid-Rise Multifamily, ADUs	194	4 + 69 ADU = 73	(121)
0-30% Non-PSH	34				
31-50%	71				
51-80%	61 – 10 multifamily – 2 ADU = 49				
81-100%	29	Moderate Density	56	36	(20)
101-120%	27				
>120%	89 – 5 = 84	Low Density	84	201	117
Total	351		351	310	(41)

Source: Facet, 2024.

The exhibit above identifies a projected shortfall of 121 housing units for households earning 80% AMI and below, as well as a gap of 20 units within the moderate-density zoning category. By comparison, there is a surplus of 117 housing units affordable to households earning more than 120% AMI.

As detailed in the Housing Needs Assessment appendix, housing production has not historically occurred at a pace sufficient to meet projected demand for households earning 0% to 80% AMI within the planning period. In contrast, moderate-density and low-density housing have generally been constructed at rates sufficient to meet demand.

¹ From 2020-2044 Housing Allocations

Residential Displacement

Overview

Displacement risk refers to the likelihood that households, businesses, or organizations may be forced to leave a community due to factors beyond their control. Displacement may occur in several forms:

- Physical displacement occurs when households must relocate due to eviction, foreclosure, natural disasters, or unsafe housing conditions.
- Economic displacement occurs when rising housing costs, including rent, property taxes, or utilities, make remaining in the community unaffordable.
- Cultural displacement occurs when the people, institutions, and community features that define an area change or leave, reducing a sense of belonging for existing residents.

Department of Commerce Displacement Risk Mapping

To support new housing element requirements, the Washington State Department of Commerce developed a draft displacement risk map based on a methodology developed by Lisa Bates (2013). The analysis evaluates displacement risk using indicators related to social vulnerability, demographic change, and housing market conditions.

Using U.S. Census tract-level data, each tract is assigned a displacement risk score to identify areas that may be experiencing—or are vulnerable to—displacement pressures.

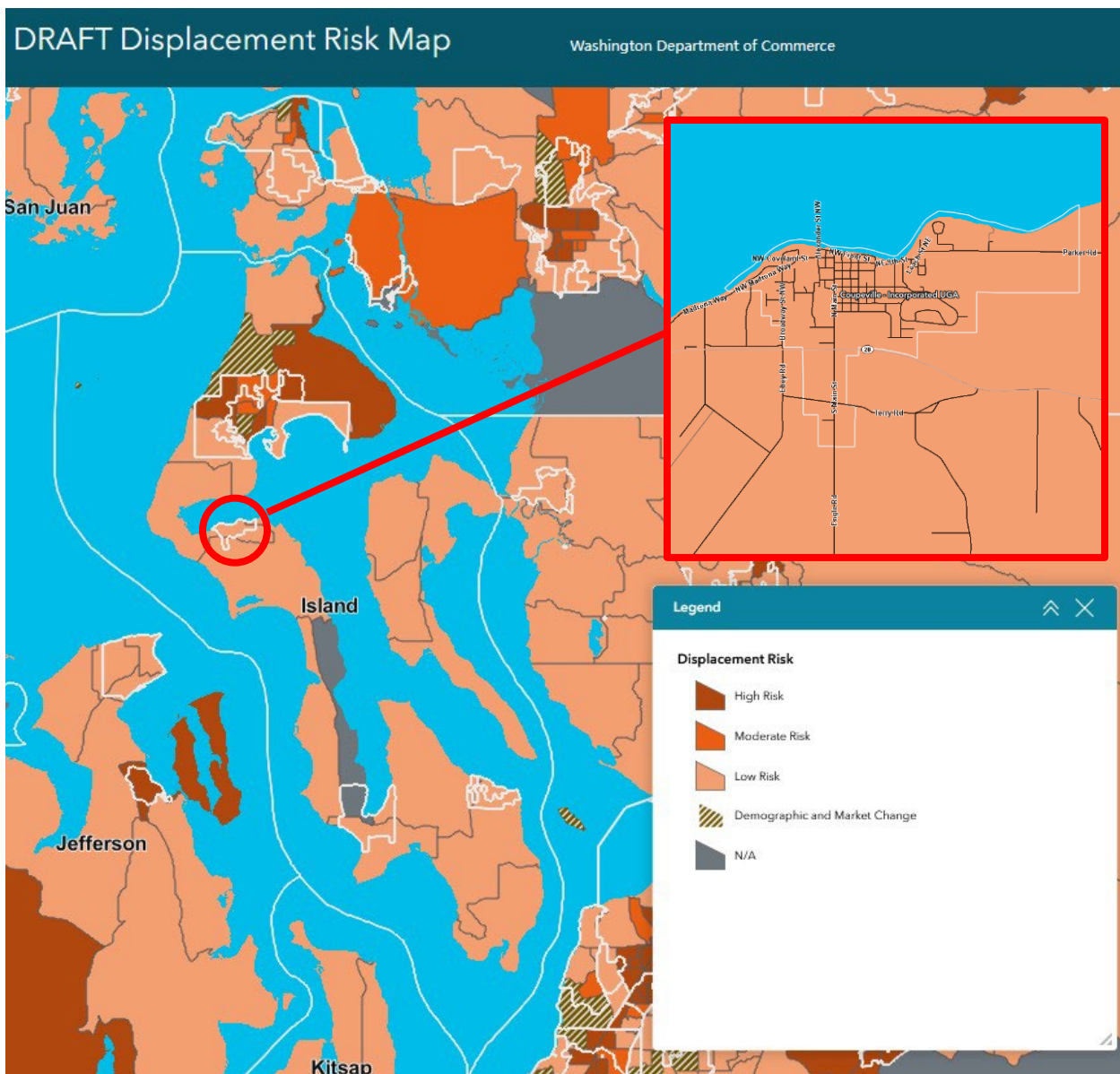
The analysis identifies Coupeville as having a low risk of displacement, based on relatively low levels of social vulnerability, limited demographic change, and stable housing market conditions.

Because Coupeville is not assigned its own census tract, the Town is grouped with adjacent unincorporated areas of Island County (see Table H-5). As a result, the analysis does not reflect neighborhood-level conditions within Town limits and may not capture localized displacement pressures. Local knowledge and community input remain important in identifying areas of concern.

Table H-5. Displacement Risk Score

Displacement Rist	Social Vulnerability	Demographic Change	Market Trend	Population	Census Tract
Low	No	Disinvestment	Stable	5158	9710

Source: Washington Department of Commerce, 2026.



Coupeville Displacement Map. Source: Washington Department of Commerce, 2026.

Local Considerations

Some areas of Coupeville may experience increased displacement pressure associated with zoning changes and infrastructure investments that expand redevelopment potential.

Historically, properties along Parker Road lacked access to municipal sewer service, limiting opportunities for redevelopment and subdivision. As sewer infrastructure is extended, these properties may gain additional development potential, including opportunities for subdivision and a wider range of housing types, such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Consistent with the Comprehensive Sewer Plan and Town Code, subdivision proposals in these areas may require installation of sewer collection infrastructure.

While expanded infrastructure and housing opportunities may provide community benefits, they may also contribute to increased housing costs, property values, taxes, and utility expenses. These changes may place added financial pressure on some households and contribute to displacement concerns.

Strategies to reduce displacement risk are identified in the goals and policies of this Housing Element.

Adequate Provisions

The Town of Coupeville faces significant constraints to providing adequate housing for existing and projected needs across all economic segments, as required by RCW 36.70A.070(2). As a small, geographically isolated community on Whidbey Island, Coupeville operates within a limited and atypical housing market characterized by high development costs, limited land availability, infrastructure constraints, and modest development activity. These conditions affect both housing affordability and the feasibility of new housing construction.

Housing barriers in Coupeville fall into two closely related categories. The first includes barriers that limit access to affordable and income-restricted housing. The second includes barriers that limit overall housing production. Because the limited housing supply places upward pressure on housing costs, these barriers are interdependent. Addressing housing affordability, therefore, requires actions that both increase housing production and support housing that requires subsidies or incentives to be feasible.

Coupeville has historically experienced low levels of housing development due to its remote location, limited local employment base, and lack of recent comparable projects. These conditions increase perceived financial risk and create challenges related to construction costs, access to labor and materials, and project financing. Existing development standards related to density, building height, and lot coverage have further constrained development feasibility. The Town's adoption of middle housing regulations in 2025 was an important step toward reducing these constraints and expanding housing capacity.

Land availability is also constrained by Coupeville's role as the Island County seat and the location of WhidbeyHealth. A substantial portion of land within Town limits is publicly or institutionally owned and not reasonably expected to contribute to residential housing supply. Appropriate zoning of these properties is necessary to clearly document land capacity assumptions and to distinguish between theoretical and realistic housing capacity.

This section identifies key barriers to housing development and affordability and outlines actions the Town is taking, or may pursue, to address those barriers. The analysis includes capacity for moderate-density and low-rise multifamily housing, low-rise multifamily housing, and accessory dwelling units.

BARRIERS

The following barriers affect the Town's ability to provide adequate housing capacity and affordable housing options.

Limited Supply of Subsidized and Income-Restricted Housing

Subsidized and income-restricted housing is present in Coupeville but remains limited in quantity. A portion of existing and projected housing needs, particularly for lower-income households and workforce residents, will require subsidies or incentives to be built. Market conditions alone are unlikely to support these housing types without external funding or regulatory support.

Land Values and Redevelopment Feasibility

Housing development in Coupeville must typically absorb land acquisition costs and, in many cases, the cost of removing existing development. Given current land values, redevelopment of improved parcels is often not financially feasible, even for market-rate housing. As a result, new housing development is most feasible on vacant parcels, which are limited in number.

Limited Vacant Land Supply

Vacant land within the Town proper is scarce. This significantly constrains opportunities for new housing development and limits the Town's ability to rely solely on market-driven production to meet housing needs. Increasing allowable housing types, expanding capacity within existing zones, and applying incentives that help overcome land cost barriers are critical strategies in a community with limited vacant land.

Infrastructure Availability and Cost

The availability and capacity of infrastructure, including water, sewer, stormwater, and transportation facilities, directly affect development feasibility. Sites without adequate infrastructure require significant upfront investment, which can make housing projects financially infeasible. While the Town continues to expand and maintain infrastructure systems, gaps remain in areas where housing development is otherwise feasible.

Limited Flexibility for Moderate Density and Attached Housing

More attainable housing types, including small lot single-family homes, cottage housing, modular housing, and attached units such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, and apartments, are sensitive to regulatory constraints. Existing standards related to density, lot coverage, and building form can limit project feasibility. Community engagement has consistently indicated support for increasing housing supply and expanding housing choice to help moderate rising housing costs.

ACTIONS

To address identified barriers and provide adequate housing for existing and projected needs, the Town will continue to pursue the following actions. These actions are intended to improve

development feasibility, support housing that requires subsidies or incentives, and expand housing choice.

Policy and Regulatory Actions

The Town will continue to evaluate and update development regulations and permitting processes to increase flexibility, reduce unnecessary constraints, and support moderate-density, multifamily, and middle housing development in appropriate areas.

Development Incentives

The Town will review and refine available incentives, including density bonuses, lot coverage adjustments, and other regulatory tools, to encourage production of housing types that address identified needs and help offset development costs.

Technical Assistance

The Town will provide technical assistance to housing developers, nonprofit organizations, and public partners to support project development, identify funding opportunities, and navigate local regulations.

Financial Tools and Funding

The Town will identify and pursue opportunities to leverage local, regional, state, and federal funding sources to support housing that requires subsidies or incentives. While local funding capacity is limited, strategic use of available tools and partnerships is necessary to help address the gap between housing need and market feasibility.

Partnerships and Coordination

The Town will continue to coordinate with Island County, public agencies, housing providers, and service organizations to advance shared housing goals and maximize available resources.

Additional detail regarding housing needs, capacity assumptions, funding considerations, and implementation strategies is provided in Appendix C – Housing.

Goals and Policies

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

- H-1.1 Provide an adequate supply of appropriately zoned land to accommodate Coupeville's housing allocations by income bracket.
- H-1.2 Promote a variety of housing types and densities across all price ranges to meet current and future housing needs and preferences.

- H-1.3 Encourage integration of smaller housing and "middle" housing types, such as cottages, duplexes, townhouses, and accessory dwelling units.
- 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 the development of multifamily housing in areas close to shopping, employment, services, and public transportation.
- H-1.7 Update the Housing Needs Assessment data regularly to monitor the progress of implementing the Comprehensive Plan and to explore ways to incentivize and require affordable units in new residential developments. At a minimum, consider:
- Density and/or height bonuses in designated zones in exchange for affordable housing with rent or other similar restrictions, including provisions for long-term affordable housing.
 - 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 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.



ADU (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

Incentivizing small homes. The average size of new single-family homes in the United States has been growing for decades, peaking at 2,653 square feet in 2016, according to the US Census Bureau. In desirable communities, such as Coupeville, with relatively low density, 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.

- Adjustments to minimize lot sizes for one or more zones
- Additional future land use map changes.

H-1.8 Establish a new zoning designation or overlay for existing mobile home parks to protect affordable housing stock. Enact regulations that provide protections against the displacement of mobile home parks while exploring partnership opportunities.



Examples of middle housing.

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

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

- H-2.1 Prioritize the protection and preservation of historically significant sites and structures, especially structures that are notable examples of the architectural design 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 that 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 ability for Coupeville residents to age in place. Consider the location of accessible housing, proximity to services, housing design,

	and the overall cost of housing for people on fixed incomes.	
H-3.2	Promote supportive housing near services and transit access to accommodate people with disabilities, people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness, to assist with the transition to more stable and secure housing.	Does new housing development affect adjacent property values? Research shows that the 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
H-3.3	Encourage private sector efforts to secure federal and/or state funding 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 to meet Coupeville's housing allocations.	

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

H-4.1	Encourage preservation and maintenance of existing housing. Conserve the Town's existing housing stock through continued investment in adequate public services, appropriate zoning, design standards that buffer residential areas from conflicting uses, and rehabilitation programs.	About 28% of Coupeville dwelling units rely primarily on wood or fossil fuel for heating, according to 2020 Census data.
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 a similar character and appearance as traditional site-built housing in Coupeville and complies with Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Design Guidelines.	
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.	

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 local governments, healthcare providers, 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 that help seniors living in Coupeville travel around Whidbey Island without a car, especially those who cannot physically drive or cannot 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 encourage healthy living, active lifestyles, and aging in place. For example, locate senior-accessible housing near medical services, transit stops, and grocery stores.

- 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 up-to-date counts of people experiencing homelessness and people with special needs in Coupeville to understand the scope and scale of need.
- H-6.5 Consider human services objectives when developing Town regulations and codes. For example, code enforcement actions may cause the displacement of residents. Provide referrals to critical community resources to assist residents at risk of displacement.
- H-6.6 Educate the community about accessible, supportive housing and promote such housing along with human service facilities and programs. During project review and development, conduct early and ongoing public outreach to incorporate community-wide concerns, including changes in traffic patterns, availability of public services, and potential environmental impacts.
- H-6.7 Enact development regulations that create opportunities to construct sufficient emergency shelters and emergency housing facilities to meet Coupeville's housing requirements while also reducing negative impacts on the community.

Goal H-7. Mitigating Displacement. Promote housing stability through the preservation of existing affordable housing and implementation of strategies to reduce displacement.

- H-7.1 Identify and monitor areas at elevated risk of displacement associated with changes to zoning, development regulations, infrastructure investments, and housing market conditions.
- H-7.2 Partner with nonprofit organizations, housing advocates, and other stakeholders to increase awareness of fair housing laws and promote equitable access to housing opportunities through education and outreach.
- H-7.3 Encourage the preservation, maintenance, and long-term affordability of existing housing through incentives, education, and partnerships, including opportunities for deed restrictions and community land trusts.
- H-7.4 Track the supply of regulated affordable housing and coordinate with housing providers to preserve long-term affordability.
- H-7.5 Support strategies that reduce displacement during redevelopment and encourage retention of existing residents whenever feasible.

-
- H-7.6 Prioritize relocation of existing homes over demolition when feasible through education, incentives, and supportive policies.
 - H-7.7 Monitor the impacts of vacant second homes on housing availability and evaluate strategies to encourage long-term occupancy.
 - H-7.8 Prioritize public investment in existing neighborhoods where infrastructure deficiencies are unlikely to be addressed through private development.

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 owners and residents. The committee intentionally



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



Town Hall (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



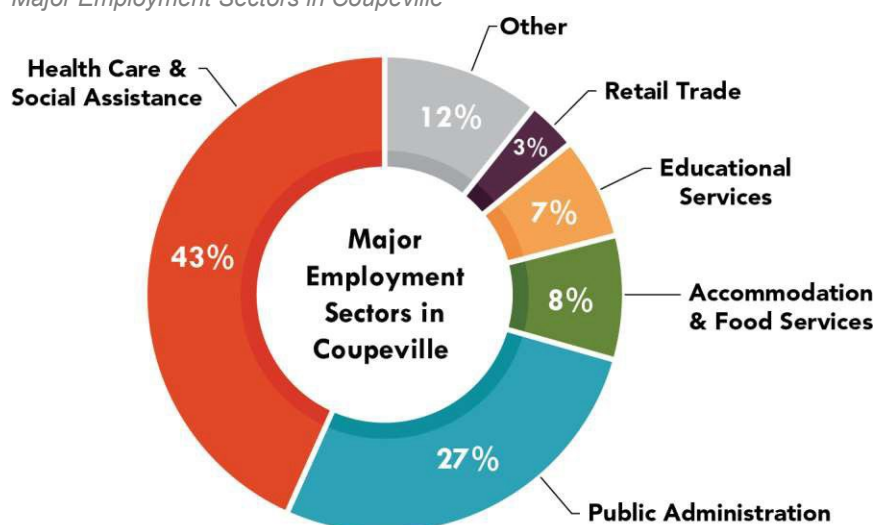
Whale wheel carved by local woodworker Roger Purdue (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

expressed a preference for "economic stability" as opposed to "economic development" because stability implies using the Town's current assets more efficiently. 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 account 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



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 who live in the Town also work in the Town. 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 to 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 earnings 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 establishment of small, 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 have fewer impacts on the cultural landscape.
- ES-1.7 Ensure that the Town regulations governing businesses balance legitimate business needs with the protection of residential integrity.
- ES-1.8 Continue to support seasonal farmers' markets to promote local products.



Wharf Dog storefront (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



McGregor Studio (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



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

- ES-1.9 Support the establishment of affordable childcare services within the Town of Coupeville and Central Whidbey Island for children of all ages through potentially expedited permit review processes, assistance with grant applications, and by designating child day care centers as a principal use in appropriate zones.
- ES-1.10 Build a coalition of employers, businesses, and housing non-profits to address housing needs that will help attract and retain employees.



Children on a slide (photo credit: Amber Faust).

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

- ES-2.1 Support and partner with *Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands* in its Regenerative Tourism campaign, which provides unique visitor experiences by connecting with the community and promoting sustainable tourism in Coupeville.
- ES-2.2 Support Coupeville's arts community and Creative 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 restoring the wharf and enhancing 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 by connecting 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 is 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](https://www.wa.gov/arts)).

- ES-2.6 Support tourism marketing for Coupeville and Whidbey Island, including active cooperation with efforts to 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, and on providing permanent public restrooms and other facilities.
- ES-2.8 Consider branding and wayfinding elements 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.
- ES-2.10 Design streets and public facilities to support and strengthen Coupeville's character, identity, and economic vitality.
- A. Maintain and enhance the Town's historic waterfront through cohesive landscaping, gateway design elements, and educational and directional signage.
 - B. Encourage pedestrian movement through the historic waterfront by incorporating thematic signage, designated walkways, informal gathering spaces, and parking management.



The Town gateway sign is decorated for the holiday season.

Goal ES-3: Employment Opportunities. Foster an array of sustainable employment opportunities for all incomes 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 encouraging innovative use of underutilized space.



Coworking space.

-
- ES-3.2 Encourage expansion of existing employers and the 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 opportunities in entrepreneurship, training, innovation, and mentoring.
- ES-3.4 Engage in regular communication with local businesses and partners 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.
- ES-3.6 Encourage the development of co-working spaces that support Coupeville's residents who work remotely.
- ES-3.7 Continue to support the major employers within Coupeville, including Island County, WhidbeyHealth, and the Coupeville School District.

A **living wage** is the minimum income necessary for a person 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** – a wage sufficient not only to support oneself, but also to raise a family.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element

Introduction

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element guides the expansion and maintenance of Coupeville's park system and environment. These areas interweave with the built environment to preserve Coupeville's small-town character. Additionally, these areas protect wildlife habitat and support cultural, biological, geological, and ecological processes in the community. Maintaining this system while planning for future improvements is the goal of this element.

Existing Conditions Summary

The Town of Coupeville owns and maintains several 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).

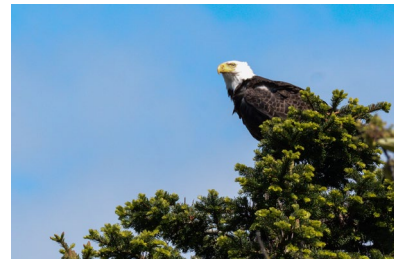
The Town owns and maintains nine parks totaling approximately 12.2 acres, 22.7 acres of open space, and a growing network of approximately 7.7 miles of trails and walkways (including 3.5 miles of sidewalks). The Town is also served by several public recreation facilities owned by other providers, such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

Refer to Table PR-2 and Table PR-3 for more details, and Figure 33 for the location of the facilities. Trails and sidewalks are detailed in the Transportation Element.



Picnic shelter at Coupeville Town Park.

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.



Bald eagle (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

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 proximity to associated uses, within residential neighborhoods (primarily local access), or unlinked to specific neighborhoods (generally with good access/parking).
Open Space	Generally undeveloped with a focus on passive natural systems, 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 unpaved routes (including sidewalks) connecting neighborhoods and other recreation facilities.	Varies according to location.	Connect neighborhoods or other facilities.

Table 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
North Main Park (Island County Park)	Park	0.20	Island County

Site Name	Facility Type	Acres	Owner/Provider
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 is excluded from the existing but included in the future LOS open space calculation in the CFP Appendix.

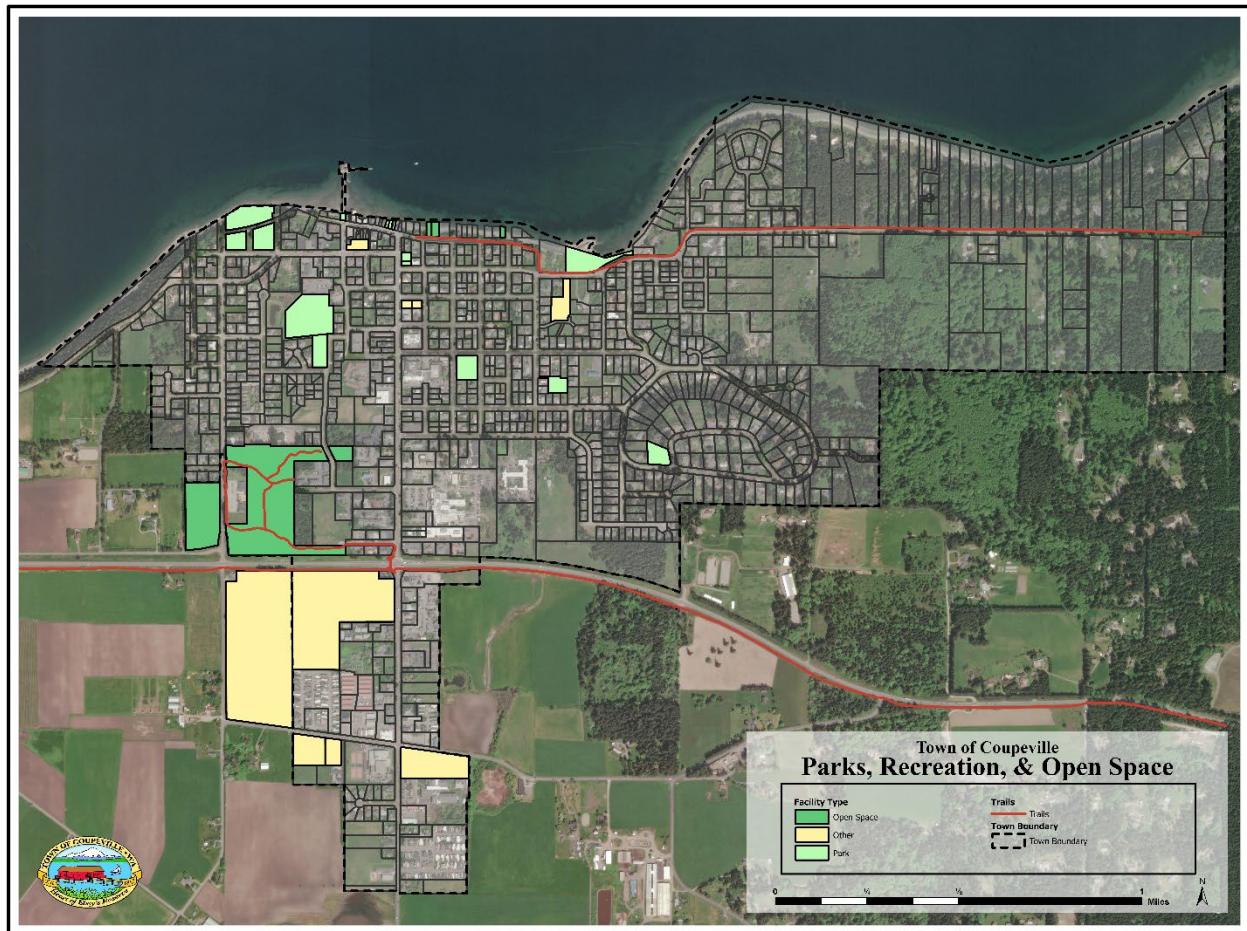
PR-3 - Existing trails and walkways (does not include sidewalks).

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	1351	Island County
Path in Peaceful Valley (NW Krueger, NW 6 th St, NW Wilkes St)	1,259	384	Town of Coupeville

Site Name	Length (ft)	Length (m)	Owner/Provider
Path on NE Front Street from Gould to N Main Street	1,371	418	Town of Coupeville
Path on NE Leach, 9th Street, and Gould to NE Front Street	1,826	557	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW 3rd Street from NW Wilkes to the end of NW 3rd Street.	747	228	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Broadway from Black Road to Madrona Way	2,687	818	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Krueger from NW 7th Street to the end of the cul-de-sac to Comm. Green path	600	183	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Madrona Way from NW Broadway to Vine Street	1,152	351	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Parker Road	5,141	1567	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Wilkes Street from NW 6th Street to NW 1st Street	1,125	343	Town of Coupeville
Trail from NW Broadway to NW Wilkes Street	1,033	315	Town of Coupeville
Trail from NW Broadway to the west end of NW Birch Street	1,205	367	Town of Coupeville
Class 1 Trail on SR 20 from NW Broadway to the east edge of the NPS property	4,432	1351	Island County
Path in Peaceful Valley (NW Krueger, NW 6th St, NW Wilkes St)	1,259	384	Town of Coupeville
Path on NE Front Street from Gould to N Main	1,371	418	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 connects 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, support the economic and tourism base, and respect changing recreation needs across the community.

Park System

PR-1.1 Develop a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) plan to 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 that promote walkable access to parks and ensure safe pedestrian routes to parks and facilities.
- Policies for connectivity, site selection, access for all residents, community engagement, environmental protection, transportation, and public safety.
- Recommendations for updated level of service (LOS) standards.

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 pickleball courts.
- A dedicated community outreach effort.

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

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

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

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
Open Space	3.5 acres

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

Acquisitions, Upgrades, New Facilities

- PR-1.6 Regularly identify desirable lands for future park, trail, and open space development. Prioritize acquisition and protection of the Thomas Coupe House property and other significant historic resources.
- PR-1.7 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-1.8 Upgrade existing playgrounds regularly and actively pursue opportunities to incorporate new, inclusive play structures in future developments or renovations.
- PR-1.9 Include a measurable standard for providing parks and trails in new plats, based on the adopted Town-wide LOS (see Policy PR-1.4) in the subdivision chapter of the Coupeville Development Regulations.
- PR-1.10 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.



Grace Street Parklet

Other Policies

- PR-1.11 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 the Memorial Day Parade and Picnic.
- PR-1.12 Encourage continued participation in the Town's community garden.
- PR-1.13 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-1.14 Incorporate educational opportunities on climate preparedness and resilience into park design and recreation programming.
- PR-1.15 Prioritize acquisition and expansion of trail systems, including removing barriers to trail connectivity.
- PR-1.16 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-1.17 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-1.18 Develop a parks and recreation webpage and informational materials highlighting facilities within and adjacent to Coupeville.



Town Park (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Whidbey Race Week (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



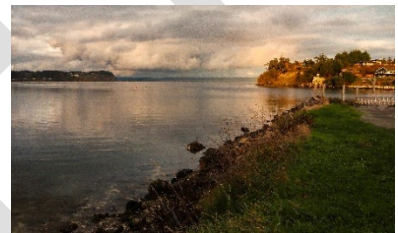
Walking path (photo credit: Elaine Fritsch).

Goal PR-2: Funding. Strive to allocate sufficient 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 users.
- 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 shared use of public facilities to take advantage of cost savings and to offer the greatest benefit to residents and visitors.
- PR-2.5 Research and actively seek funding from public and private sources for new parks, recreation, and open space areas, 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 funding for parks, recreation, and open space planning, facilities, maintenance, expansion, and acquisition.



Town Park (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



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 that 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 transfer of development rights. 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 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.

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



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

- 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 highlighting the benefits of landscaping and native vegetation for stormwater management, air quality, wildlife habitat, noise reduction, aesthetics, and ecotourism.



Tree planting event.

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.
- PR-4.3 Support Island Transit, the Reserve, and other partners in establishing a seasonal shuttle that circulates throughout the Reserve to improve access to educational opportunities for tourists and provide Coupeville residents with an alternative to single-occupancy vehicle travel to the state parks.
- 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 with service organizations or private entities to develop native landscaping sponsorships, tree purchases, native planting

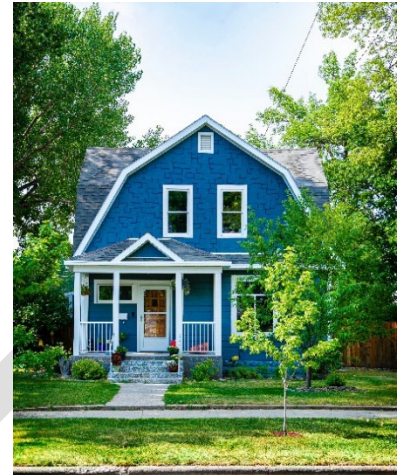
Island County Non-motorized
Trails Plan
islandcountywa.gov/723/Parks-and-Trails-Documents



Island Transit on Whidbey Island (photo credit: AvgeeKJoe)

programs, or community awards for outstanding landscaping efforts.

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



Street tree in front of the 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 and are sensitive to issues of universal accessibility. Increase awareness of accessible features via signage, publicity, and other means.
- PR-5.3 Enhance public access and enjoyment of Coupeville's shorelines through improved physical and visual access.
- PR-5.4 Support cultural arts facilities and programs within Coupeville's parks 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
- PR-5.6 Prioritize acquisition of parkland and open space in underserved neighborhoods as identified in a future Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. Preliminarily identified underserved areas include South Coupeville.



Grace Street bike rack.

Natural Systems Element

Introduction

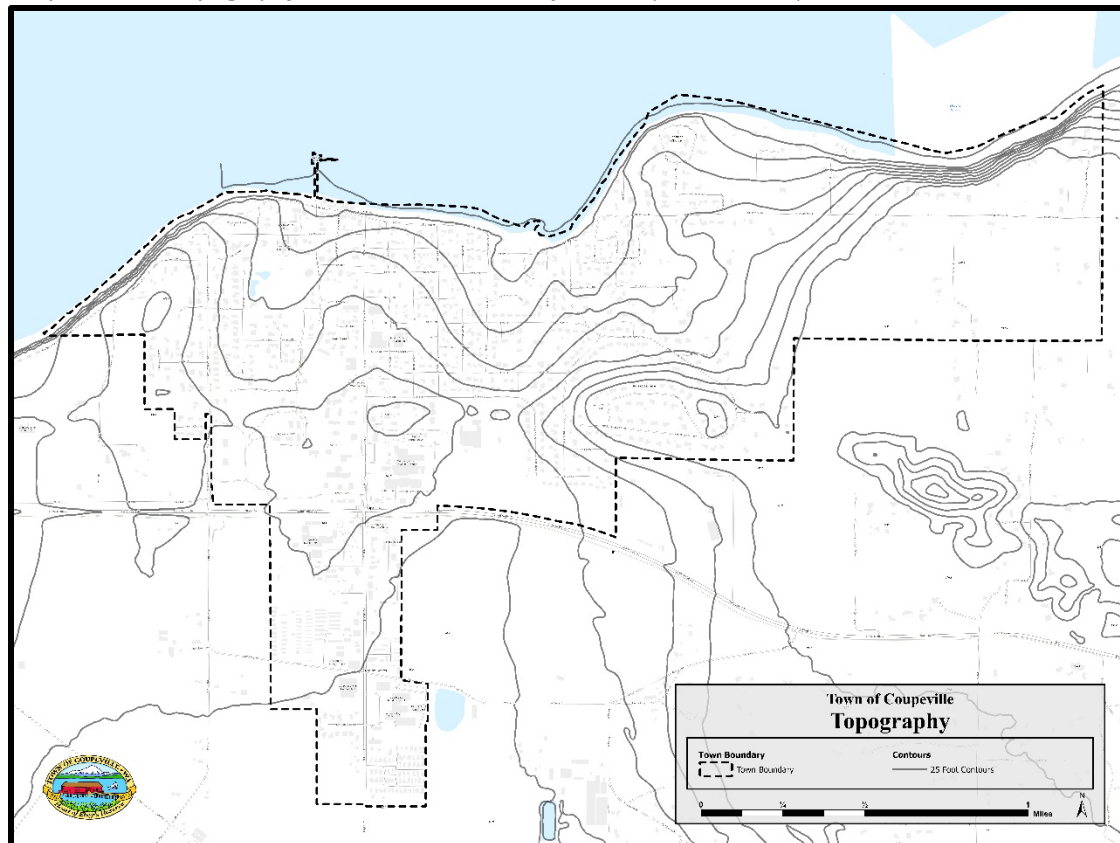
Coupeville is a small town nestled in a spectacular natural setting. In addition to providing aesthetic beauty, the area's natural systems also provide important ecological functions and values. The Natural Systems Element aims to protect these systems while safeguarding people and property from natural 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 under 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 shoreline areas.



The central Coupeville waterfront and bluff.

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



Existing Conditions Summary

Coupeville is positioned on and around three hills: one in the northeast end of Town and two in the central portion. 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 transitions into the surrounding prairie.

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

Coupeville is classified as being within the "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 in large numbers on and near the shoreline. Coupeville also supports a variety of bird species, including songbirds, raptors, and corvids. The waters of Penn Cove contain an abundance of aquatic life, including a diverse and sizeable shellfish population.

Goals and Policies

Goal NS-1: Natural Systems Protection. Manage development to minimize disruption of natural systems, preserve the community's natural aesthetics, and reduce risks 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 the use of pesticides harmful to the environment. Promote safer alternatives to harmful pesticides to protect the soil, water, and wildlife.
- NS-1.4 Continue encouraging water conservation to protect sole-source groundwater aquifer supplies.
- NS-1.5 Continue implementing low-impact development standards and promoting sustainable development within the Town and Reserve to protect and improve the water quality of Penn Cove, preserve tree cover, and support 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, explore measures to minimize conflicts between people 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 Incorporate nature-based design principles to create spaces that connect people with the natural environment.
- NS-2.2 Seek to integrate 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 Develop wildlife corridors, particularly those linking protected lands and water bodies outside of Coupeville.

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](https://www.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).

- NS-2.5 Consider using vegetated open space corridors as part of an integrated system to absorb and treat stormwater.

Goal NS-3: Tree Canopy and Vegetation. Protect and enhance trees and vegetation to support natural systems and provide additional benefits.

- NS-3.1 Manage tree canopies and vegetation on publicly owned land, such as parks, to provide habitat, reduce wildfire risk, and strengthen green infrastructure.
- NS-3.2 Encourage retention of existing trees and native vegetation in new developments.
- NS-3.3 Prioritize the use of native drought and pest-resistant trees and shrubs, and minimize lawn areas.
- NS-3.4 Periodically review and update the Town's tree protection policies to ensure tree protection goals are being met.
- NS-3.5 Support efforts to control and, where feasible, eradicate invasive plant species.
- NS-3.6 Identify locations within Town limits to install interpretive signs to highlight the importance of urban tree canopy cover.



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 when developing policies and development regulations that 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.

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

- 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 achieve no net loss of critical area functions and values, and where possible, strive for net ecological gain and the restoration of critical area function.
- NS-4.6 The Town should designate critical areas, 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 location of critical areas.
- 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 authorized activities are permitted.
- NS-4.9 Identify funding opportunities to establish a monitoring and adaptive management program to evaluate the effectiveness of critical area regulations over time.

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.

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

Sea level rise is a significant consequence of climate change. The Town has conducted a sea level rise vulnerability assessment to evaluate what areas and assets are most at risk.

<https://townofcoupeville.org/comprehensive-plan-update/sea-level-rise-vulnerability-assessment/>

Goal NS-5: Shorelines. Promote 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 guidance for management of 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).

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, sustainable economic opportunities, and maintaining the historic character of the Town. The 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 by addressing disruptions to climate-reliant industries (e.g., tourism, agriculture) and integrating public health strategies with physical and structural improvements. RCW 70A.65.010 defines climate resilience as:

“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.



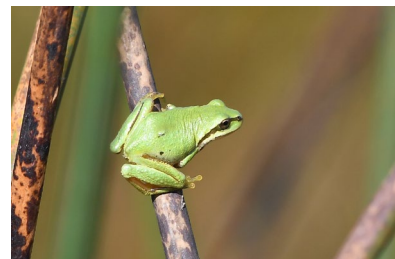
Stormy day in the wharf (photo credit: John Hummel).



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, climate change, and resilience. 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 aggravated 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, 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 changing temperatures and precipitation patterns;*
 2. *Identify, protect, and enhance natural areas to foster climate resilience and provide vital habitat for safe species migration;*
 3. *Identify, protect, and enhance community resilience to climate impacts, including social, economic, and built-environment factors that support adaptation consistent with environmental justice.*

A GHG emissions reduction sub-element is not mandatory for the Town of Coupeville based on its size, but 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-related hazards. A Vulnerability and Risk Assessment of the Town's assets was conducted to prioritize where action should be taken 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, see Appendix G.

Priorities for the Town of Coupeville

'Climate Change and Sustainability' was previously designated as a Policy Theme in the 2023 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-related 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 wildfires; 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:



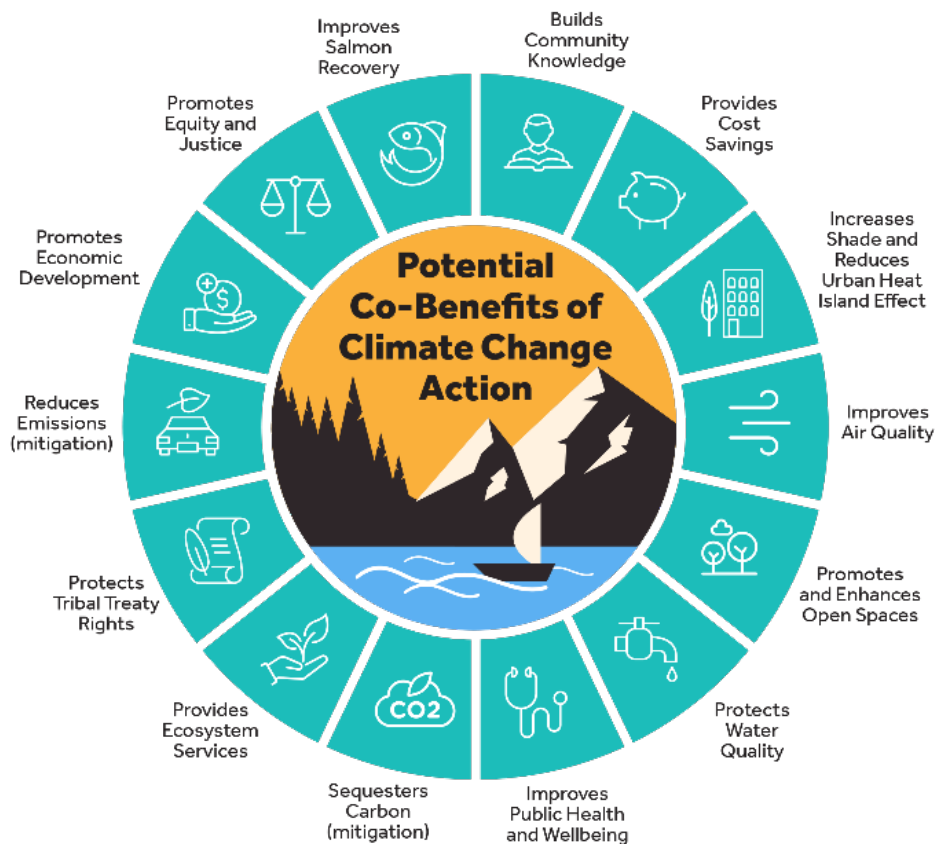
The Town of Coupeville has 2 miles of shoreline, putting the character of the Town and its economic viability at risk. Therefore, specific studies and actions related to coastal adaptation have been developed. Coastal adaptation strategies will be marked by the following wave symbol:



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



Similar to the Natural Systems Element, the Climate Element aims to protect people and property from natural hazards. Many human actions are drivers of climate change, so proactive approaches intended 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 on several areas where multiple associated benefits may be realized, while also identifying and addressing how human activities contribute to climate change.



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 wildlife habitat, private property, and Town infrastructure. The Town of Coupeville has already demonstrated its commitment to addressing these climate-related hazards and exploring effective adaptation and mitigation strategies. Additionally,

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

the Town has taken steps 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. 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
- Increasing 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, improving 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. Earthquakes, 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 the impacts of a changing climate, and 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 address the effects of climate change (adaptation) to strengthen 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 outlined in state law. Educate the public about climate change and incentivize activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Guiding Policy 2: **Adaptation.** Minimize 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 strengthen community resilience to climate change impacts by developing actions that achieve robust, long-term outcomes, ensuring climate resilience policies are integrated into 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 of critical areas and changes to Coupeville's shoreline.
- Maintain the Town's self-sufficiency by protecting water resources and supporting food security.
- Restore and enhance coastal resources, allow public access, and ensure healthy nearshore habitat and upland areas for species reliant on these shore zones.
- Align climate resilience strategies with land use and building standards so future growth occurs in suitable areas, except those areas that are acquired for restoration rather than economic development.

- Strengthen emergency response and preparedness through 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-driven hazard applicable to the Town. Commerce encourages jurisdictions to address all 11 comprehensive planning sectors. For additional information, see Appendix J.

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, construction, and redevelopment of commercial and residential properties and their surrounding sites, including the reduction and treatment of 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 measures to protect structures from extreme winds caused by severe weather events.



Bioretention swale (photo credit: Aaron Volkening).



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.



Goal CR-2: 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-2.1 Coordinate with Island County to identify and implement strategies for reducing residential development pressure in the wildland-urban interface.
- CR-2.2 Integrate a climate impacts risk assessment and policies into the Island County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- CR-2.3 Factor climate impacts into operations planning and preparedness coordination, response, and recovery activities among first responders and partners, including public health, law enforcement, fire, school, and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel.
- CR-2.4 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-3: Emergency Management. Develop and maintain local government staff members' technical expertise and skills related to climate change and environmental justice to improve community-wide policy implementation, equity, and resilience.

- CR-3.1 Support the Town's Neighborhood Emergency Team's (NET) ability to run drills and provide training and educational materials to residents about risks and mitigation opportunities.
- CR-3.2 Work with Island County, Washington Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network, and other local jurisdictions to develop recovery planning efforts.



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

- CR-3.3 Develop and implement a strategy to expedite the management of debris (e.g., downed tree limbs and blocked roads and streams) after a disaster to reduce the risks of subsequent fire, flood, injury, and disease.

Goal CR-4: Health & Well-Being. Protect community health and well-being from the impacts of climate-related hazards, prioritizing focus on overburdened communities in Coupeville, and ensuring that the most vulnerable residents do not bear disproportionate health impacts.

- CR-4.1 Protect the health and well-being of outdoor workers exposed to extreme heat and other climate-related hazards.



- CR-4.2 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-5: Water Resources. Coordinate with Island County to protect and preserve groundwater aquifers and recharge capabilities from drought, extreme heat, and other hazards worsened by climate change.

- CR-5.1 Utilize water conservation methods and technologies in irrigation infrastructure development in parks and recreation areas to improve climate resilience.
- CR-5.2 Encourage green infrastructure and low-impact development to manage increased storm intensity and reduce stormwater runoff.



Lawn irrigation (photo credit: Brian J Matis).

Goal CR-6: Zoning and Development. Establish land use patterns that increase the resilience of the built environment, ecosystems, and communities to the adverse effects of climate change.

- CR-6.1 Consider climate change in floodplain management planning, including sea-level rise, extreme precipitation, and stormwater runoff.



- CR-6.2 Establish regulations to direct new structures away from areas vulnerable to sea-level rise hazards.



Penn Cover (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

- CR-6.3 Plan for the long-term resilience of essential public services and hazardous facilities by prioritizing siting, expansion, and, where feasible, relocation outside areas vulnerable to sea-level rise and flooding.



- CR-6.4 Develop regulations requiring new or substantially improved structures to be elevated or relocated to reduce the risk of damage caused by sea level rise.



- CR-6.5 During the periodic update cycles of the Shoreline Master Program and Critical Areas Ordinance, review and, if necessary, increase required buffers and setbacks for steep slopes and erosion-prone shorelines to avoid the need for structural protection during a building's expected life.



- CR-6.6 Develop, implement, and periodically update a plan to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts to the shoreline.



- CR-6.7 In areas with significant vulnerability to climate hazards, facilitate and support long-term community visioning, including consideration of managed retreat.



- CR-6.8 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-6.9 Educate residents and consult with qualified professionals regarding the benefits of prescribed burn activities, when appropriate.



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



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

Goal CR-7: 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 worsened by climate change.

- CR-7.1 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-7.2 Consider planning to relocate infrastructure that may be at high risk of flooding, sea level rise, landslides, and other natural hazards.

- CR-7.3 Strengthen and protect areas of the local transportation system that serve as emergency access routes for communities.

Goal CR-8: Transportation. Encourage land conservation to protect ecological functions for properties at risk of climate-related hazards.

- CR-8.1  Prioritize acquiring properties or easements identified in the Coastal Adaptation Strategy that may be necessary for public health and safety in the future.

- CR-8.2  Design and locate new or expanded roads to minimize shoreline impacts and account for sea-level rise projections. Projects should preserve ecological functions and avoid interfering with water-oriented uses.



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

Goal CR-9: Waste Management. Protect and adapt critical infrastructure, including water and sewer facilities, to ensure resiliency to the effects of a changing climate.

- CR-9.1 Evaluate the long-term adequacy of water delivery infrastructure to ensure that changes in hydrological patterns can be anticipated and managed effectively.

- CR-9.2  Evaluate potential increases in future flow projections for the Town's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) to increase resiliency and capacity over time.

- CR-9.3  Encourage planning to produce reclaimed water for reuse or aquifer recharge, including an investigation into a new wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) to treat a portion of flows on the south side of the Town.



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

Goal CR-10: Ecosystems. Protect and restore coastal ecosystems to strengthen the resilience of species, habitats, and communities to climate change.

- CR-10.1  Consider sea-level rise projections in coastal and nearshore habitat restoration projects.

- CR-10.2  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.

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 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).



Sailboat 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 Island County and acts as the region's long-range transportation strategy.

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

[Island RTPO Comprehensive Safety Action Plan \(CSAP\)](#), adopted in April 2025, includes 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 potentially 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 and addresses the Town's climate change goals.

T-1.1 In conjunction with, or as 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.



The Rhododendron Trail on the south side of Highway 20.

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.



A gravel pedestrian path

T-1.4 Preserve unimproved public rights-of-way when reasonable to assure they are available in the future for development of connections.

- T-1.5 Support the continued operation and expansion of Island Transit to provide frequent and 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 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 Develop an ADA Transition Plan to integrate accessibility into the Town's multimodal transportation system.
- T-1.9 Support the continued operation and expansion of Washington State Ferries to provide sustainable ferry service to Whidbey Island.
- T-1.10 Provide safe and convenient non-motorized crossings along SR 20 on the east and west ends of town, where logical connectivity to local and regional trails is needed.
- T-1.11 Prioritize small-scale transportation upgrades throughout the Town over large projects that may not be economically feasible.
- T-1.12 Support regional non-motorized trail network development, specifically the "Bridge to Boat" trail.



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.



Front Street (photo credit: John Feit).

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.



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

T-2.4 Town vehicle LOS standards are:

- LOS C average delay per vehicle for signals, roundabouts, and all-way stop control intersections.
- LOS D for the worst traffic movement at unsignalized two-way, stop-controlled intersections.

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

- Within Town: Urban standard sidewalks on both sides or a shared two-way multiuse pathway on one side.
- Within Town, where approved: Urban standard sidewalk on one side or shared two-way multiuse pathway on one side.

UGA: = or > 5-foot-wide shoulder on roadway.

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

- A. Within Town: Urban standard marked bike lanes on both sides or a shared two-way multiuse pathway on one side.
- B. Within Town, where approved: Shared lane markings or shared two-way multiuse pathway on one side.

UGA: = or > 5-foot-wide shoulder on roadway.

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

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 Develop street standards for arterials, collectors, and access streets that provide guidance on the 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 and easily maintained by private property owners.



Coupeville Inn sign (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

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.

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



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

Goal T-5. Financial Stability. Provide a stable, long-term financial foundation for improving the 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).
- T-5.2 Continue to partner with WSDOT, Island County, the Island Regional Transportation Planning 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 on the transportation system.
- T-5.4 Consider adopting a Transportation Impact Fee program for new development.



Children riding scooters.

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.
- 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.



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

Goal T-7: Vehicle Miles Traveled Reduction. Reduce vehicle miles traveled to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals.

- CR-7.1 Partner with the school district to promote safe, walkable routes.
- CR-7.2 Create a safe, well-connected, and attractive bicycle and pedestrian transportation network to encourage active transportation.
- CR-7.4 Continue supporting Island Transit's endeavors to improve transit speed, frequency, coverage, and reliability in Coupeville and Island County.
- CR-7.5 Prioritize and promote public transit, and active transportation expansion and use through coordination of land use and transportation planning.
- 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).



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

Capital Facilities Element

Introduction

Capital facilities are urban services and facilities that support current residents, businesses, and tourists, and are needed to serve future development or meet another community need. The GMA defines public facilities as “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 “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.

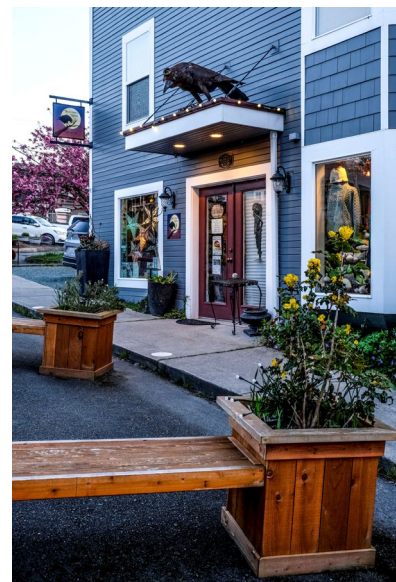
Capital facilities are significant projects for jurisdictions to fund, build, and maintain, and the sooner a jurisdiction plans for its needs, the better it can meet those needs. Local governments that are planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) must include a Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) in 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 an efficient, effective, and equitable manner. The



Coupeville Town Hall.



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



Coupeville at dusk (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

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 the consolidated capital facility inventory and capital funding analysis for each capital facility category. The CFP Appendix also provides a 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 the 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 locations 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.

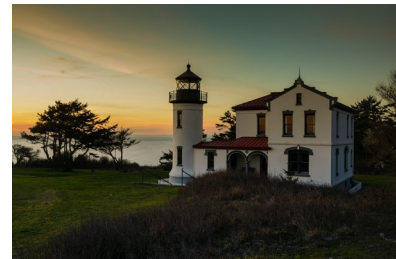
The process of addressing these five requirements helps the Town make wise use of funds by organizing and prioritizing projects. The first four requirements are addressed in the CFP Appendix and summarized here.

The fifth requirement is addressed in Policy CF-3.7.

The GMA also requires that 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 may be publicly or privately owned or operated, and

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).

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, parks 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.

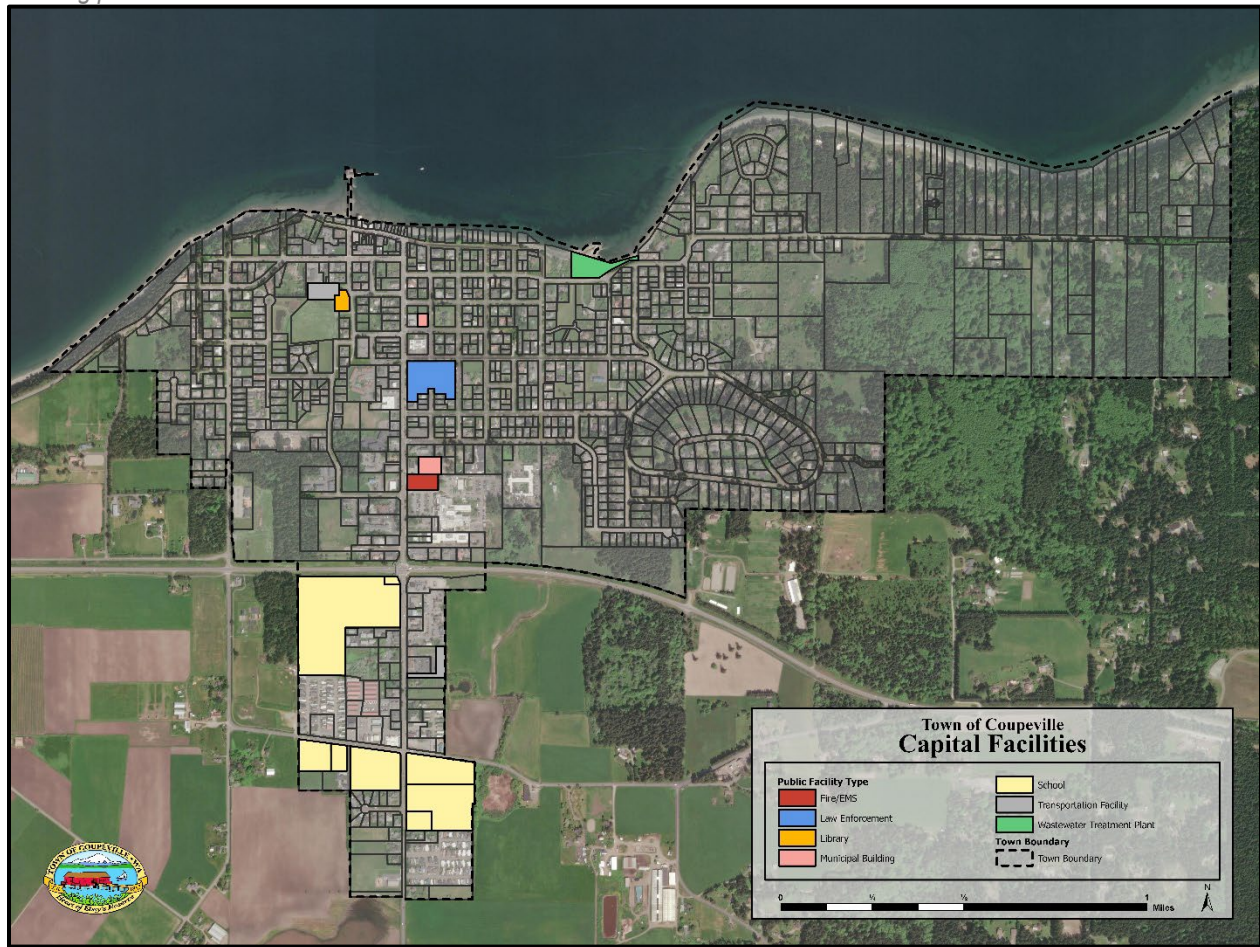
in Table CF-1, are incorporated by reference. Figure 42 shows the location of major community services in the Town.

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 the 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 advanced 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: • Strategic Plan (Vol. 2) • Standard Coverage & CPR Plan (Vol. 3) • Long-Term Financial Plan (Vol. 5) • Capital Projects Plan (Vol. 6) • WhidbeyHealth Strategic Plan

Facility Type	Provider(s)	Description	Applicable Plan(s)
Schools	Coupeville School District (School District 204)	Provides facilities for instruction for the Town of Coupeville.	Coupeville School District 2023 Strategic Plan
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 the 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 its standards of coverage for fire and ambulance times. Coupeville plans to update its 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, Shoreline Master Program, Coastal Adaptation Strategy, 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. The direct or indirect income generation potential;
 - D. Whether the project is needed to correct existing deficiencies, replace needed facilities, or extend the life of existing facilities;
 - E. Whether the project eliminates or diminishes public or environmental hazards; and
 - F. 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 the 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.



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

- 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.
- 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.
- CF-3.3 Consider using impact fees as a funding mechanism to finance capital facility improvements. Consider exempting certain land uses that have a broad public purpose (e.g., low-income housing) from paying impact fees.
- CF-3.4 Consider subsequent operating and maintenance costs when planning capital facilities to ensure compliance with applicable 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.



*Coupeville Recreation Hall
(photo credit: Dave Wechner).*

See also Policy CF-2.2.



*Coupeville sunset (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.

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 fairly and equitably.

- 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 the impact on the natural environment, particularly in critical areas.
- CF-4.3 Consider future climate conditions during siting and design, including changes in 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 in 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).

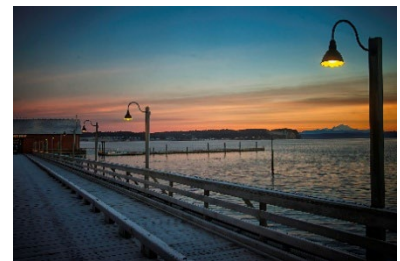
Goal CF-5: Coordination. Coordinate the provision of capital facilities through collaboration with neighboring governments, agencies, and private providers to ensure sufficient and uninterrupted service to residents as growth occurs.

- 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 services, such as Island County, Coupeville School District, Central Whidbey Island Fire and Rescue, WhidbeyHealth, the Island 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.



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



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.

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.

- 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 are coordinated and consistent with other planning goal requirements, such as promoting economic stability and living wage jobs, protecting the environment, and supporting affordable housing.

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 efforts.



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

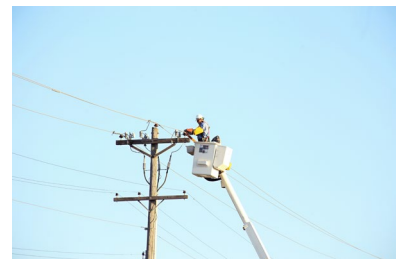
Utilities are the basic building blocks of town living. While we may take these services for granted, not thinking much about the electric lines that make it possible to turn the lights on, pipes that bring drinking water to our faucets, or the wastewater treatment facilities that clean the water we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

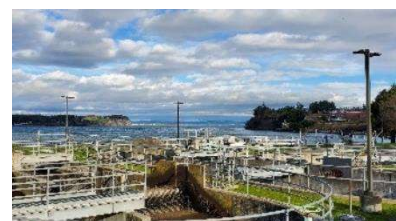
Existing Conditions Summary

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 preempt 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 Plant (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 drinking water to the Town of Coupeville.	Adopted Water System Plan Island County Coordinated Water System Plan
Stormwater	Town of Coupeville Public Works and Utilities Department	Provides facilities used in the 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 the 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 provides 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
Telecommunications	Various	Provide a range of services, including telephone, cable,	The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) regulates the rates and services of telephone

Facility Type	Provider(s)	Description	Applicable Plan(s)
		personal wireless communication, and internet.	companies operating in Washington per WAC 480-120. The WUTC does not normally regulate cable, internet, wireless phones, or 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 the 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. The 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 the 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 the 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	A municipal system that allows the collection of peak wastewater discharge, plus infiltration and inflow.
Power	Electric service is 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.

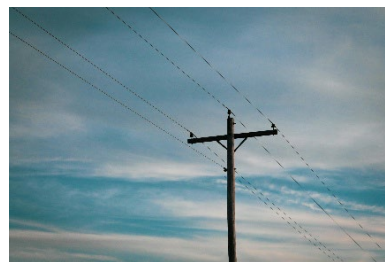
Utility Specific

- 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 to 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 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.
- 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 before construction activities (e.g., Call Before You Dig, etc.).

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).



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.



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

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 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.



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



A heron in an environmentally critical area.



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

- U-3.10 Promote public education on choosing and maintaining vegetation with growth habits that will not interfere with nearby utilities.
- 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.
- 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.
- U-4.8 Investigate the feasibility of Town led green beds / municipal compost.



Solar panel installation (photo credit: Gustavo Fring).



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).