



COUPEVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

October 6, 2026 @ 6:00 pm

– Hybrid Meeting: In-person or Online via GoTo –

To Join In-Person

Commissioners Hearing Room, Island County Annex Building, 1 NE 6th Street, Coupeville, WA 98239

To Join Virtually

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

Access via phone | +1 (872) 240-3212 (United States) | Access Code: 205-095-981

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. September 1, 2026

5. 1st PUBLIC INPUT – Items NOT on the agenda

PLEASE NOTE: Public comments related to specific agenda items will be taken following the staff presentation and the Planning Commission's discussion of each item.

6. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Revisit discussion of Staff's 2027 work plan

7. DISCUSSION

- a. Staff Report – current staff projects

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

9. 2nd PUBLIC INPUT

10. ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting: November 3, 2026 @ 6:00 pm

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

Date (1st Tuesday)	Topic
January 6, 2026	New Planning Commissioners • Ricardo Reyes • Brandon Roos Project Timeline • Comprehensive Plan - Periodic Update • Other Code Updates Periodic Update • Zoning Changes (discussion)
February 3, 2026	Countywide Planning Policies (discussion) Portable Signs (discussion)
March 3, 2026	Countywide Planning Policies (recommendation) MOA (discussion)
April 7, 2026	Supportive Housing (discussion) MOA (discussion)
May 5, 2026	Temporary Homeless Encampments – Religious Organizations (discussion) Density Bonus – Affordable Housing (discussion)
June 2, 2026	2025 Coupeville Comprehensive Plan (discussion) CTC Title 16 - Development Regulations (discussion)
July 7, 2026	Comprehensive Plan (recommendation) Zoning Maps (recommendation) Code Amendments (recommendation)
August 4, 2026	CANCELLED
September 1, 2026	CTC 16.34 – Critical Area Ordinance (discussion) 2027 Staff Work Plan (discussion)
October 6, 2026	2027 Staff Work Plan (discussion)
November 3, 2026	CTC 16.34 – Critical Area Ordinance (recommendation)
December 1, 2026	

**TOWN OF COUPEVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
September 1, 2026
6:00pm**

CALL TO ORDER

At 5:59pm, Chair Upchurch called the meeting to order and read the Land Acknowledgement.

PRESENT

Commission Chair Susan Upchurch, Commissioners Michelle Cook, Von Summers, Ricardo Reyes, and Brandon Roos

STAFF PRESENT

Community Planning Director Josh Pitts

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Action: A motion was made by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Summers, to approve the agenda of the September 1, 2026 Regular Meeting as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Action: A motion was made by Commissioner Summers, seconded by Commissioner Cook, to approve the minutes of the July 7, 2026 Regular Meeting as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC INPUT

- Dee Bonner addressed the Commission regarding the ordinance allowing bed and breakfasts in residential areas. Bonner is opposed to the new B&B/Quilting Retreat on Summit Loop and would like to do away with the ordinance allowing B&B's in residential areas.
- Diana Piazzon addressed the Commission regarding the B&B/Quilting Retreat on Summit Loop. Piazzon read the advertisement from the Retreat's website. Piazzon asks who will be on site if the owner isn't living there, and how will parking work for 13 guests.
- Gary Piazzon addressed the Commission requesting clarity on the Bed and Breakfast ordinance. Piazzon thought B&B's were limited to two rooms, but 5 bedrooms are being advertised on Summit Loop.
- George Thawley addressed the Commission asking why he hasn't been notified of the conditional use for the B&B on Summit Loop. Thawley read a copy of the notice sent to his neighbor.
- MaryAnn Thawley addressed the Commission asked how they would feel if that type of business moved into their neighborhood.

DISCUSSION**Critical Areas Ordinance Amendments**

Community Planning Director Pitts led a discussion with the Commission about amendments to the Town's Critical Areas Ordinance. The ordinance is intended to preserve natural resources and fish and wildlife habitats, protect drinking water, and reduce risk of natural hazards.

Proposed amendments include: revised wetland categorization, updated examples used to identify landslide hazard areas, changes to the required assessments and plans for fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, and changes to some definitions in the code. Commissioners asked questions about who determines impact on wetlands, financial burdens of studies and assessments on property owners, repairs versus new builds, changes to aquifer recharge area definitions, and the process for approval after the Planning Director's review and who conducts the public hearing.

2027 Staff Work Plan

Community Planning Director Pitts led a discussion with the Commission about the 2027 Staff Work Plan. The work plan includes projects the Commission and the community have brought to the attention of the Planning Department's attention. The work plan includes Fire Inspection Code, Home Occupation Business Code, Transient Accommodations Code, Ebey's Design Guidelines, Sign Code, Conditional Use Permit and Variance Authority and Duties, Civil Code Enforcement, Affordable Housing in High-Density Residential zones, Street-Level Residential in Commercial zones, Commercial Overlay in Residential Zones, Future Roads and Trails, an RCO Grant for Captain Coupe Park, and Annexation of Parcels. Chair Upchurch asked about prohibiting jet skis and water skis on the Cove, citing noise pollution and wildlife habitat. Chair Upchurch also asked about the announcement Mayor Hughes made at the August 11 Council Meeting, about the MOA. Upchurch and Pitts discussed the announcement and the process of dwelling credit allocation.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:05pm, Chair Upchurch adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

COMMUNITY PLANNING DIRECTOR

Deputy Clerk Chris Jolly

Josh Pitts



TOWN OF COUPEVILLE

MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: October 6, 2026
To: Town of Coupeville Planning Commission
From: Josh Pitts, Community Planning Director
Subject: 2027 Community Planning Work Plan

BACKGROUND

Staff is preparing the 2027 Planning and Community Development Department Work Plan to identify and prioritize planning projects for the upcoming year. The Work Plan provides a framework for allocating staff resources and advancing projects consistent with Town Council goals, Planning Commission priorities, identified community needs, and available staff capacity. The projects are listed in order of priority within their respective sections. The Town Council reviewed the draft Work Plan at a workshop on September 14, 2026.

SUMMARY OF WORK PLAN ITEMS

COUPEVILLE TOWN CODE

CTC 16.10.110 – Transient accommodation

3-6 Months

Review whether Bed and Breakfasts should continue to be permitted in all residential zones and whether they should be allowed in ADUs. Consider limiting the use to lower-density residential zones or areas with larger parcels where it may be more compatible with surrounding residential development. Evaluate whether occupancy limits should be based on the number of guests rather than the number of guest rooms. Consider renaming the subsection from “Bed and Breakfast” to “Hosted Rentals.”

CTC 16.13 – Ebey's Code & Ebey's Design Guidelines

9-12 Months

The Ebey's Code and Design Guidelines have not been comprehensively updated since 2011. Prioritize review and revision of CTC 16.13.090 through 16.13.120, which establish the requirements and procedures for Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs). Update the Ebey's Design Guidelines to make the standards clearer, more concise, and easier to use, including updated imagery and improved formatting and organization. The code and guidelines should be reviewed and revised together, in coordination with Island County. Island County has indicated that the Town may take the lead on this effort.

CTC 2.52 / 6.06 / 16.14 – CUP & Variance Authority and Duties

2-3 Months

Review and clarify all Town Code provisions governing conditional use permits and variances to ensure the appropriate review and decision-making authority is clearly identified. Amendments

should consistently define the respective roles and responsibilities of the Planning Commission, Town Council, and Hearing Examiner.

CTC 16.28 – Signs

3-6 Months

Continue efforts to clarify and amend sign regulations, including provisions for sandwich board signs and the current sign area allowance. Evaluate whether the cumulative permanent sign area limit of five percent of the largest building façade remains appropriate and whether revisions are warranted. Ensure that sign regulations are practical for existing and future development while maintaining the Town’s desired visual character.

CTC 15.12 – Fire Code Enforcement

2-3 Months

Review and amend CTC 15.12 to clarify property owner responsibility for fire code compliance and associated inspection fees. The amendment would resolve ambiguity regarding the respective responsibilities of occupants and property owners and establish a consistent basis for enforcement. The current code creates an administrative burden by requiring staff to identify and track the responsible party, particularly as occupants and property uses change. Assigning responsibility directly to the property owner would provide a more consistent and administratively efficient enforcement process. This item is dependent on approval of the civil code enforcement ordinance.

CTC Civic Code Enforcement

2-3 Months

Develop a civil code enforcement ordinance establishing clear standards and procedures for identifying and addressing nuisances and other violations of Town ordinances. The ordinance would define conditions or activities that adversely affect public health, safety, or neighborhood quality and establish an enforcement framework, including criteria for determining when violations may be addressed as civil infractions or criminal offenses.

OTHER PROJECTS AND STUDIES

Annexation of Parcels

6-9 Months

Evaluate the potential annexation of the following parcels: R13104-510-2820, owned by the Coupeville School District, and R13233-100-2130, a Town-owned parcel.

Identification of Future Paths / Trails

6-9 Months

Develop a map identifying existing and potential future trails and pedestrian paths to guide the long-term development of a connected Town-wide network. Identifying potential connections, particularly in undeveloped areas, will help preserve opportunities as properties are divided and developed. The effort should also clarify the types of pedestrian connections the Town wishes to prioritize, including recreational routes, connections to services, and other pedestrian mobility needs.

Identification of Future Roads**6-9 Months**

Develop a map identifying existing and potential future roads to guide the long-term development of a connected Town-wide road network. Identifying potential connections, particularly in undeveloped areas, will help preserve opportunities for future roadway connections as properties are divided and developed.

Street Level Residential in Commercial Zones**6-9 Months**

Evaluate whether long-term residential occupancy at street level should be permitted in commercial zones through live/work spaces. Consider appropriate locations, applicable zoning provisions, and development standards to ensure compatibility with commercial uses and the character of the surrounding area.

ONGOING**RCO Grant – Capt. Coupe Park****12+ Months**

Staff recently prepared an application for the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office's Planning for Recreation Access grant to support planning, technical analysis, and community engagement for potential improvements at Capt. Coupe Park. Potential work includes evaluating upgrades to the boat ramp, dock, and associated infrastructure to help prepare the project for future design, permitting, and construction funding opportunities.

NEXT STEPS

Following the Planning Commission's discussion, staff will consider the Commission's comments and make any appropriate revisions to the draft Work Plan. The revised Work Plan will then be presented to the Town Council for approval. Once approved, the 2027 Planning and Community Development Department Work Plan will be made available on the Town's website for public reference.



TOWN OF COUPEVILLE

MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: October 6, 2026
To: Town of Coupeville Planning Commission
From: Josh Pitts, Community Planning Director
Subject: Update on Work Plan Items

ONGOING PROJECTS

Memorandum of Agreement

Under the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), dwelling unit credits (DUCs) were allocated to subareas rather than individual parcels. This approach was intended, in part, to accommodate the different housing types designated for each subarea, including single-family homes, cottages, and high-density housing. While some subareas have been fully developed, others remain undeveloped. Recently, some property owners have raised concerns regarding the allocation of DUCs, particularly in light of new statewide legislation allowing up to two dwelling units per parcel.

In coordination with the Town Attorney, Mayor Molly and planning staff have identified a potential approach to allocate DUCs to individual properties within the affected subareas. This approach would not require an amendment to the MOA but would instead establish an agreement among property owners within each respective subarea.

Status: On September 21, 2026, Mayor Molly and planning staff met with property owners from Subareas B and F to discuss the proposed allocation of DUCs. Attendance was good, although not all property owners were present. Materials discussed at the meeting were mailed to those who did not attend. Property owners were asked to review and return the signed agreement by October 5, 2026. This date is a requested return date, not a firm deadline, as some property owners may wish to consult with their attorneys before signing.

CTC 16.34 – Critical Areas Ordinance

As part of the Town's 2025 Comprehensive Plan update, the Town is required under the Growth Management Act (GMA), including RCW 36.70A.060, to update its Critical Areas Ordinance (CTC Chapter 16.34). The GMA provides an additional 12-month extension for completing these updates.

The GMA requires cities and counties to designate and adopt development regulations that protect critical areas, including natural resources, fish and wildlife habitat, and drinking water sources, while reducing risks associated with hazards such as flooding and landslides. Because critical area functions and values can be difficult or impossible to restore once lost, these regulations must be based on the best available science (BAS).

Status: The Washington State Department of Ecology and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife have provided feedback on the proposed updates. Staff is incorporating the recommended revisions and anticipates presenting the updated ordinance to the Planning Commission in November.

RCO Grant – Capt. Coupe Park

Staff prepared and submitted an application to the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) for its Planning for Recreation Access grant program. The grant would support planning, technical analysis, and community engagement related to potential improvements at Capt. Coupe Park. Potential project components include evaluating upgrades to the boat ramp, dock, and associated infrastructure to help prepare the project for future design, permitting, and construction funding opportunities.

Status: The grant application was submitted on September 10, 2026. The Town expects to receive notification regarding the award decision in late October.

Habitat for Humanity – Heritage Prairie

Habitat for Humanity of Island County owns two parcels at the corner of NW Alexander Street and NW Seventh Street (Parcels R13233-307-3620 and R13233-315-3620). The organization intends to develop four dwelling units, likely configured as two duplexes. Town staff is assisting Habitat for Humanity with the environmental review process required under U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations in 24 CFR Part 58. The Town is serving as the Responsible Entity for the review, which is necessary for Habitat for Humanity to obtain HUD funding.

Status: Due to the project location and the proposed stormwater discharge route, staff is coordinating consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service to evaluate potential effects on federally listed species and designated critical habitat. The review will help determine whether the proposed development and stormwater management approach will adversely affect these protected resources.