CITY OF OAK HARBOR AND NAVAL AIR STATION WHIDBEY ISLAND
COMMUNITY COORDINATION

Introduction
The Whidbey Island Naval Air Station plays an important role in the population of Oak Harbor. Ault Field serves as an employment base and a market for services, while increasing the population of the City with military personnel and their dependents. For example, in 1993 there were 24,155 military and civilian personnel and dependents directly related to NAS Whidbey. Of this amount, 94 percent live in the North Whidbey/Oak Harbor area or a total of 78 percent of the total population. NAS Whidbey also has a significant impact on employment. Based on a survey of Oak Harbor residents\(^\text{12}\), approximately 50% of all employment in the North Whidbey and Oak Harbor area was in the active military\(^\text{13}\). In addition, because the U.S. Navy is a "basic" industry, i.e., an industry that brings in revenue and employment from outside the community, it attracts other secondary employment business such as retailers and service firms. In 1991 there were 0.2378 Navy dependent jobs for each basic military employee.\(^\text{14}\)

The following is part of the *North Whidbey Community Action Diversification Plan*, adopted in August 1995:

> The *Update for the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission* states that the “1991 and 1993 Commission findings remain valid today. The immense value of NAS Whidbey as the hub of an irreplaceable Northwest training complex, which is uniquely suited to the training needs of the EA-6B and P-3 aircraft, and which offers assets not found elsewhere in the country for aircraft of all branches and services...[is that] NAS Whidbey is a modern facility, with exceptional training assets. Air space is a precious commodity, which cannot be reclaimed when lost. The increasing crowding of airspace in other regions of the country has significantly impaired the ability of the military services to conduct realistic airborne training, a fact which greatly enhances the value of the unencumbered airspace in the Pacific Northwest...To close NAS Whidbey would not only lose irreplaceable training assets, but would also require significant and unnecessary construction costs to expand other facilities to accommodate the current and projected NAS Whidbey units. Reductions in force structure will occur in the post cold war military. However, the reductions must meet readiness standards and must be closely scrutinized for accuracy and feasibility. If all standards are uniformly applied, NAS Whidbey will remain open well into the 21st century.”

Just as the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission recognized the importance of the NAS Whidbey to the Navy, the City of Oak Harbor recognizes its importance to the greater Oak Harbor community. This section of the Comprehensive Plan provides a summary of the goals and policies that support the mission of NAS Whidbey and displays the spirit of cooperation between the City of Oak Harbor and the Navy. NAS Whidbey and Oak Harbor are interconnected by planning issues. Goals and policies that either directly support NAS Whidbey

\(^\text{12}\) Seattle Pacific University, Center for Entrepreneurship of the School of Business and Economics

\(^\text{13}\) Employment Forecast of Greater Oak Harbor 1995 - 2013, Oak Harbor Planning Department (Revised 3/17/93).

Island or that support the military and civilian personnel who are employed there, can be found in every element of the Comprehensive Plan. Listed below are key goals and policies. Please note that not all policies associated with a particular goal are shown.

Comprehensive Plan Elements
Land Use Element
Maintaining land use compatibility with NAS Whidbey is of paramount importance to the City of Oak Harbor. The City has adopted an Aviation Environ Overlay Zone, noise disclosure statement and noise zone construction standards as part of the Municipal Code. The following goal and policies to help maintain land use compatibility:

**Goal 9 -** To consider, and where appropriate, implement the Navy's Air Installation Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) recommendations, and all other pertinent related information, in making land use decisions.

**Policy:** 9.a Require residential development to occur outside of high aircraft noise level areas (above 70 Ldn).

**Discussion**
Ldn is the day/night average sound level, measured in decibels. Ldn is the common means of measuring sound.

9.b Encourage residential development to locate outside of moderate aircraft noise areas (60 to 70 Ldn), allowing for residential development where a demonstrated need exists and compliance is met with policy 9.e.

9.c Ensure that land use and population densities in Accident Potential Zones remain low to conserve the highest degree of public health, safety, and welfare.

9.d Ensure that no new land use proposals, structures or objects interfere with the safe operation of aircraft or deny the existing operational capability of Ault Field. Land use proposals, structures, or objects that may create an obstruction to air navigation will be reviewed for compatibility with airport operations. Hazards to air navigation will not be permitted.

9.e Ensure that new structures built for human occupancy in designated noise impacted areas, as identified in the aviation environs section of the city code, are constructed to a noise level reducing standard that is appropriate for the outdoor noise levels that will be experienced by the inhabitants. In addition to indoor noise level reducing construction design standards, outdoor noise level reducing measures should be considered in site planning, building location and alignment, and site design.
9.f Ensure the disclosure of potential noise and accident potential impacts on prospective buyers, renters, or lessees of property or structures they intend to purchase, rent, lease, or otherwise occupy.

9.g Continue monitoring and update the Aviation Environs portion of the municipal code.

Urban Growth Area Element
The Urban Growth Area (UGA) plays a significant role in planning for Oak Harbor's future. Oak Harbor's UGA also assists the City in meeting State planning Goals; such as encouraging development in urban areas where public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner, reducing the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling low density developments, and protecting the environment and enhancing the state's high quality of life. Consistent with the County-Wide Planning Policies, the term UGA includes both the incorporated land and the surrounding unincorporated area that is planned to accommodate future urban development. Policies that relate to NAS Whidbey include:

Goal 3 - The City and County shall adopt inter-jurisdictional cooperation policies regarding land within and surrounding the UGA.

Policy: 3.c Continue to use an amend as necessary the Interlocal Agreement between Oak Harbor and Island County as the primary means of implementing compatible land use policies, procedures, public facility planning, and development standards and regulations within the UGA.

3.d Plan development within the UGA for future annexation to the City by ensuring uses are compatible with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Housing Element
The ability to provide adequate opportunities for housing, and affordable housing, is important to the City of Oak Harbor. It is especially important to the City’s relationship with NAS Whidbey as the personnel employed by the Navy are only partially housed in Navy housing. Affordability of housing is recognized as a key factor in the ability of Oak Harbor to meet the needs of all its citizens.

A housing analysis was performed in 1993 during the drafting of the first GMA comprehensive plan. It was determined that for households in need (those households earning less than $20,000 and paying more than 30% of their income for housing) there was an unmet need of 953 units. This unmet need was projected to be 1,647 units by 2010. The housing analysis recommended that 40% of all new units constructed should be affordable. An analysis was performed in 1999 to monitor the progress in construction of affordable housing units. The analysis concluded that between the period of 1994 to 1998, 36% of all new units were affordable. This is very close to the 40% goal of the 1993 study. Two Comprehensive Plan goals directly support the City’s efforts in providing for adequate housing:
Goal 1 - Ensure that adequate opportunities exist for low and moderate-income families to obtain affordable housing.

Goal 3 - The City shall identify sufficient land for housing.

Environmental Element
The City of Oak Harbor recognizes the value of its natural environment and supports environmental protection and enhancement. The community recognizes that total preservation may not be feasible in an urban area. Rather, the City should seek to implement environmental Goals within the context of planned growth. This approach accepts the demand for growth and suggests that urbanization can be sensitive to those resources found to be valuable to the community.

The City recognizes that it must coordinate with the Navy on environmental issues, since NAS Whidbey is such an integral part of the community and has stewardship over many environmentally sensitive areas.

Goal 3 - Encourage alternative methods of resource protection and stewardship.

Policy: 3.c The City and/or land trust should work with the Navy and other applicable agencies to acquire open space lands.

Utilities Element
Water
Oak Harbor obtains water from Anacortes via 10- and 24-inch transmission lines, and from an aquifer below the City via three wells. The Anacortes supply is the primary source. Oak Harbor has entered into a 20-year Water Supply Agreement with Anacortes, and renegotiates water charges and committed water volume with an annual amendment. The Navy is a wholesale water customer of the City. The Navy and the City have an equal allocation of water capacity through the existing transmission lines. The supply and transmission system has sufficient capacity to meet the projected 2013 peak-day demand for the UGA service area, with an excess capacity of 16% if the City’s wells are not producing and 21% if the wells are producing.

Wastewater treatment
The City and the Navy share a wastewater treatment facility on the Seaplane Base. An existing contract determines the amount of treatment capacity allocated to both entities.

Existing goals and policies address wastewater discharge requirements:

Goal 4 - Minimize aesthetic and environmental degradation from utility operation, installation, replacement, repair and maintenance.

Policy: 4.f Meet National Pollution Discharge Permit requirements for sanitary sewer discharge.

Discussion:
The City should coordinate with the Navy to help address the sewer discharge from the Navy base to achieve the National Pollution Discharge Permit requirements. The City should consider any methods necessary to reach these requirements, including possible regulation of garbage disposal units. (See Environment Element.)

**Transportation Element**
Transportation within Oak Harbor and to and from the Ault Field and the Seaplane Base is addressed in general terms by the goals and policies of the Transportation Element. The City of Oak Harbor recognizes that efficient transportation systems support NAS Whidbey operations.

**Goal 1**
Ensure the City's transportation and circulation system remains reasonably safe and efficient while accommodating the growth anticipated within the Oak Harbor UGA.

**Goal 3**
Ensure viable transportation alternatives.

**Goal 5**
Improve the pedestrian accessible system.

The City should:

**Policy:**

5.e Complete the Waterfront Trail, from Scenic Heights to Maylor Point, through a cooperative effort with private property owners and the Navy.

**Discussion:**
Completion of the Waterfront Trail as described above will provide connectivity between existing and proposed activity centers as well as provide a link to the City’s waterfront heritage.

**Capital Facilities Element**
The Capital Facilities Element links adequate physical infrastructure and facilities with development. As with the other elements, coordination between the City and the Navy on capital facility projects benefits both parties.

**Goal 2**
Implement capital facilities projects in accordance with the funding policy priorities of Oak Harbor.

**Policy:**

2.c Coordinate with the Navy, Island County, and other applicable agencies during planning stage for timely siting and development of facilities of regional significance to ensure the consistency of each jurisdiction's plans.

**Economic Development Element**
As was noted earlier, as the largest employer in North Whidbey, NAS Whidbey has a significant economic impact on the greater Oak Harbor area. Yet it is realized that additional economic growth is required in order for Oak Harbor to maintain economic stability. This chapter of the
Comprehensive Plan is in part based upon the ‘North Whidbey Economic Diversification Action Plan,’ which contains the following mission statement:

“North Whidbey is committed to creating a planned and diversified local economy that creates opportunities for fairly paid employment and a strong local tax base, while respecting the unique quality of life we treasure. To accomplish this mission, we will create proactive community and customer service support programs which will maintain NAS Whidbey, support the vitality of existing businesses and encourage compatible new economic activities.”

The Economic Development Element provides the goals and policies intended to assist in meeting this goal.

**Goal 4 - Continue working with the Navy to enhance economic opportunities.**

**Policy: 4.a** The City of Oak Harbor supports the continuing operation of NAS Whidbey as a military installation. Should the present character of operations and mission change in the future such that the Navy can support joint use, then the opportunity for joint use of Ault Field should be explored.

**Discussion**

The opportunity for joint use of Ault Field was explored in the North Whidbey Community Diversification Action Plan of April, 1994. The Plan's conclusion; "The operations of NAS Whidbey and related directives regarding military, security and other logistical, environmental and surplusing issues clearly make joint use not a viable option, particularly for the scope of time of this study" (Chapter 1, page 10).

Laws, regulations, policies, and criteria regarding joint use of military airports can be found in the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, the Federal Airport and Airways Development Act of 1970, the Federal Airport and Airways Improvement Act of 1982, and Secretary of the Navy Instruction 3770.2. Associated airspace, land use, facilities, environmental, etc., regulations, policies, and/or criteria may also apply and can be found in applicable Public Law, Executive Order, the National Environmental Policy Act, Department of Defense and Department of the Navy policies and regulations, Federal Aviation Regulations, etc.

**4.c** The City should work together with the Navy to encourage Naval procurement of local products and services.

**Goal 5 - Implement long-range economic diversification projects to provide job opportunities and reduce economic reliance on Naval Air Station Whidbey Island.**

**Discussion**
The majority of the policies within this Goal can be referenced directly to the "North Whidbey Community Action Plan".

**Policy:**

**5.a** The City, in cooperation with Island County and other stake-holders, should work to increase the number of jobs in primary industries and the retention of existing employment.

**5.c** The City should work to establish the North Whidbey Enterprise Area to facilitate the creation of primary jobs in targeted business sectors (see North Whidbey Economic Diversification Action Plan and map).

**5.d** The City should plan to annex the Enterprise Area and coordinate the extension of utilities, in conformance with the UGA and Utilities Element.

**5.e** For consistency with the Enterprise Area concept, review existing standards, such as requirements for fire flow and sanitary sewer.

**5.f** The City should pursue the financing and construction needed to upgrade Goldie Road and Oak Harbor Road corridors and extension of Cemetery Road, in conformance with the Transportation Element.

**5.g** Adopt performance zoning and design standards for the Enterprise Area to allow flexibility in site design and use, while requiring a high standard of aesthetics, circulation, and overall compatibility with the small-town character of Oak Harbor and unincorporated Island County.

**5.h** The City should adopt a minimum target to increase the share of North Whidbey area manufacturing jobs from 4 to 8 percent as well as increase transportation and utility jobs from 1 to 3 percent of all non-agricultural workers by the year 2013.

**Discussion**

The wording of this policy is to suggest an increase in private sector jobs, rather than governmental jobs.

**5.i** Encourage non-polluting industries to locate within the city and/or urban growth area.

**5.j** The City should pursue funding and construction of the North Whidbey Enterprise Area sewer as a means of encouraging economic growth and job creation in this area.
Government Service Element

**Goal 6** - Offer Youth Services and programs to all youths of our community and their families. They should reflect the diversity and uniqueness of the North Whidbey/Oak Harbor community.

**Policy:** 6.a Services will be developed for all military and non-military youths of the community.

Urban Design Element

The Urban Design Element provides the goals and policies that direct the visual appearance of the community. These goals and policies directly contribute to the quality of life for all the citizens of Oak Harbor.

**Goal 4**  
**Discuss**

The City of Oak Harbor defines a viewshed as a panoramic view from a single location. Significant viewsheds include views of Mt. Baker, Mt. Rainer, Cascade mountain range, Olympic mountain range, Oak Harbor Bay, Maylor Point (especially wooded and tidal flat areas) and Saratoga Passage.

**Policy:** 4.f The City and the Navy should cooperate on the protection of viewsheds and view corridors.

**Goal 8** - The City should adopt measures to enhance the entryways into Oak Harbor with early and continuous community input.

**Policy:** 8.c Form partnerships with the Navy, the Washington State Department of Transportation, Island County and other property owners to implement the entryway design guidelines.

Related Documents

Comprehensive Plan Non-Project Environmental Impact Statement

A non-project environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared during the drafting of the first GMA comprehensive plan (1995). This EIS evaluated five alternatives for addressing growth in Oak Harbor. Each of the alternatives analyzed issues previously discussed above such as housing, employment and the environment. Throughout this analysis the presence of NAS Whidbey played a critical role in planning for the future of Oak Harbor. For instance, noise and safety issues resulting from aircraft operating from Ault Field are addressed in the Comprehensive Plan through the designation of uses compatible with the Accident Potential Zones (APZ’s) and noise sensitivity areas (DNL or Ldn contours) established by the Navy. In addition, it is projected that NAS Whidbey will provide 500 additional residential units to serve military families over the next 20 years, including the necessary roads and utilities, and has joint agreements with Oak Harbor on sewer treatment and potable water.
Shoreline Master Program
The City of Oak Harbor Shoreline Master Program contains an applicability to federal agencies section. Direct federal agency actions and projects occurring on lands subject to the Washington State Shoreline Management Act and within the City’s shoreline jurisdiction shall comply with WAC 173-27-060 (as filed on 9/30/96, effective 10/31/96).

Oak Harbor Municipal Code Chapter 6.90, Noise Disclosure Requirement
This chapter requires that any person selling, leasing or offering for sale any property within the noise contours of 60Ldn or above must give notice to the prospective buyer or lessee of the fact that property is in an area impacted by noise.

Oak Harbor Municipal Code Chapter 17.30, Noise Attenuation Standards
The purpose of this chapter is to safeguard life, health, property and public welfare by establishing minimum requirements regulating the design and construction performance standards of buildings for human occupancy in the noise sensitive vicinity of the Whidbey Island Air Station and Ault Field, to ensure compatibility between the air station and surrounding land uses, and to protect the air station from incompatible encroachment.

Oak Harbor Municipal Code Chapter 19.50, Aviation Environ Overlay Zone
This chapter serves as an overlay district that applies additional standards and requirements to properties located within an underlying zoning district. It also shares the same purpose statement of OHMC 17.30, Noise Attenuation Standards. The two subdistricts of this chapter (Noise Zone A and B) determine which of the noise attenuation standards from OHMC 17.30 apply to a given project.