



# Anacortes Housing Action Plan

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**MAY 5, 2022**

**CITY COUNCIL HOUSING AFFORDABILITY & COMMUNITY  
SERVICES COMMITTEE (HACS)**

# Public Engagement Plan

- Stakeholder interviews to gather input from housing advocates, housing providers, and others
- Community survey to identify demand for housing types among current population, with a focus on the needs of cost-burdened residents
- Check-in meetings with HACS committee
- ~~A "developer forum"~~

## Anacortes Housing Action Plan

### Public Engagement Plan

Version: March 10, 2022

#### Project Introduction

The City of Anacortes is embarking on a housing action plan (HAP) to address the increase in housing costs and the relatively limited diversity of housing available in Anacortes. In recent years significant strides have been made to improve the local housing situation, including an updated Comprehensive Plan, major development regulations update, and a voter-approved sales tax to fund affordable housing. As a result, production of some housing types has increased in the last several years.

Despite this progress, homeownership remains out of reach for many, rents are high and rental choices are limited, and there is a lack of group housing and special needs housing for seniors and people with disabilities. Anacortes was awarded a grant from the Department of Commerce to create an HAP to encourage construction of additional affordable and market housing in a greater variety of housing types and at prices that are accessible to greater variety of incomes. The HAP will be developed with robust public engagement.

#### Public Engagement Purpose and Approach

This Public Engagement Plan provides a framework for the project team to organize HAP engagement efforts. It outlines the purpose and objectives of engagement, key stakeholders, and methods. As the project progresses, the team will use this Public Engagement Plan to design activities that are aligned with the project schedule and respond to community needs. The plan will be revisited throughout the process to reflect accomplished activities and fill in emerging needs.

The Public Engagement Plan identifies a range of engagement options that meet the needs of the people, businesses, and agencies affected by the HAP planning effort, including methods that meet requirements for public health and safety in response to COVID-19.

Housing is deeply personal, and a good engagement process will build community advocates and reduce political tensions. To that end, the general approach for public engagement in this project includes:

- Clearly communicate the housing challenges in Anacortes and the sources of those challenges, along with the project's purpose, process, timeline, and final recommendations, so the community is well-informed.
- Given the robust public engagement during the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations update, alongside the ongoing outreach by the City Council's Housing Affordability & Community Services (HACS) committee, the HAP will focus on individual/targeted stakeholder outreach and HACS committee meetings instead of large public events. One-on-one outreach for technical topics like housing regulations and finance is often more effective and encourages more frank and constructive input.
- Effectively solicit valuable feedback from key stakeholders and community participants by arranging appropriate meeting environments and asking the right questions.

# Stakeholder Interviews

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- 18 stakeholders identified
- 13 interviews to-date
- General themes so far:
  - It is very difficult for low-moderate income renters to find housing
  - Competition with retirees and high-income households moving here
  - There is limited capacity of services to assist homeless individuals, including supportive housing, transportation, mental healthcare
  - Cost of construction continues to increase throughout the region
  - There may be partnership opportunities for affordable housing development
  - There are some minor opportunities for tweaks in the development regulations

# Community Survey

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- PEP and scope aims to “ensure at least a representative population is reached”
- Special efforts should be made to reach renters
- Special efforts should be made to reach people who work in Anacortes but don’t or can’t live in town
- A scientific survey is beyond current scope and budget

## **Community Survey**

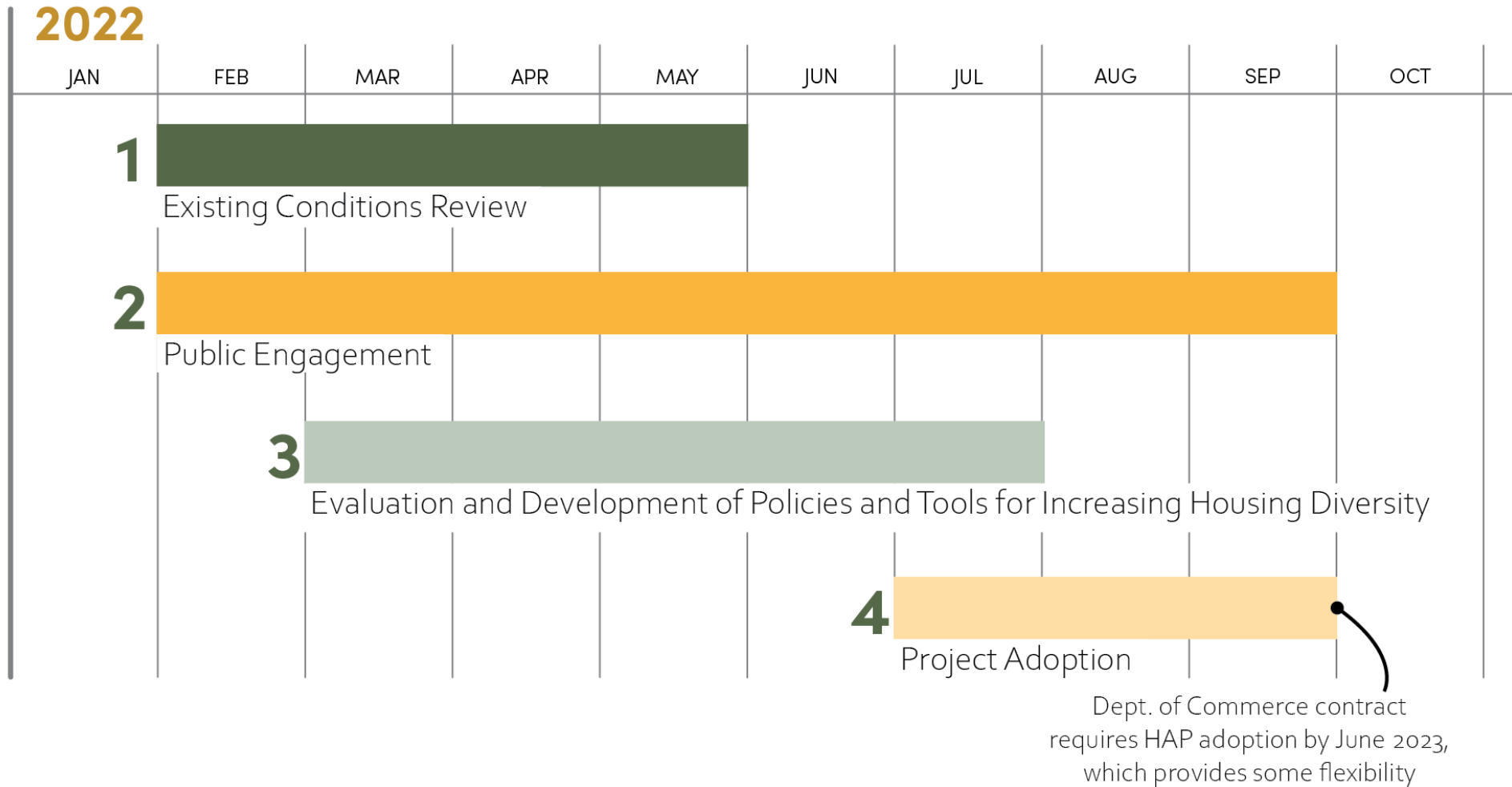
The scope of work provides for one survey. This will be a community survey to identify demand for housing types among the current population, with a focus on special needs housing, supportive housing, and the challenges for cost-burdened residents. Because most housing data is available from official sources, the survey could focus on collecting qualitative information and be designed as a story-collection tool. The HACS committee will be provided a draft of the survey for comments/edits.

The survey will be distributed online and in a mailing. Targeted efforts can help aim for demographic representation, including: word of mouth; City and community group email listservs; a notice in the A-Town magazine; and social media boosts to targeted populations. Incentives like prizes or gift cards from local businesses could also help increase response rates.

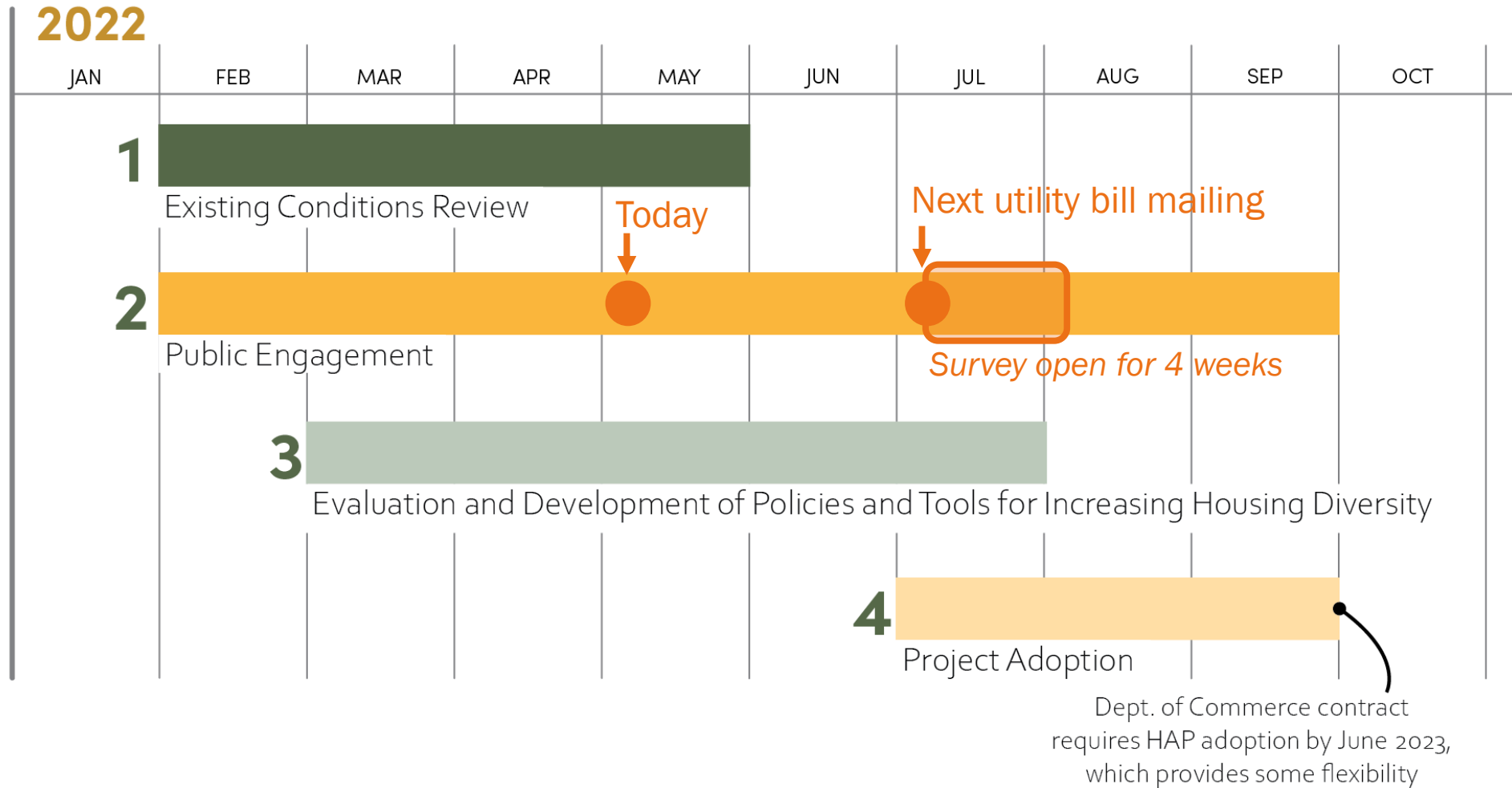
If resources allow, the City will use a utility bill mailing to send paper copies of the survey to all Anacortes addresses to ensure at least a representative population is reached. Special distribution activities may be needed for residents and dwelling units who do not directly receive utility bills, such as those who live in multifamily buildings or ADU’s. In this case, City staff will include an adequate number of copies with a request for the building owner/manager to distribute to each resident or placed in a common area. Paper copies of the survey will also be made available at community hubs such as City Hall, library, post office, and medical center.

The paper copy should have a link/QR code to the online version in case recipients prefer that method.

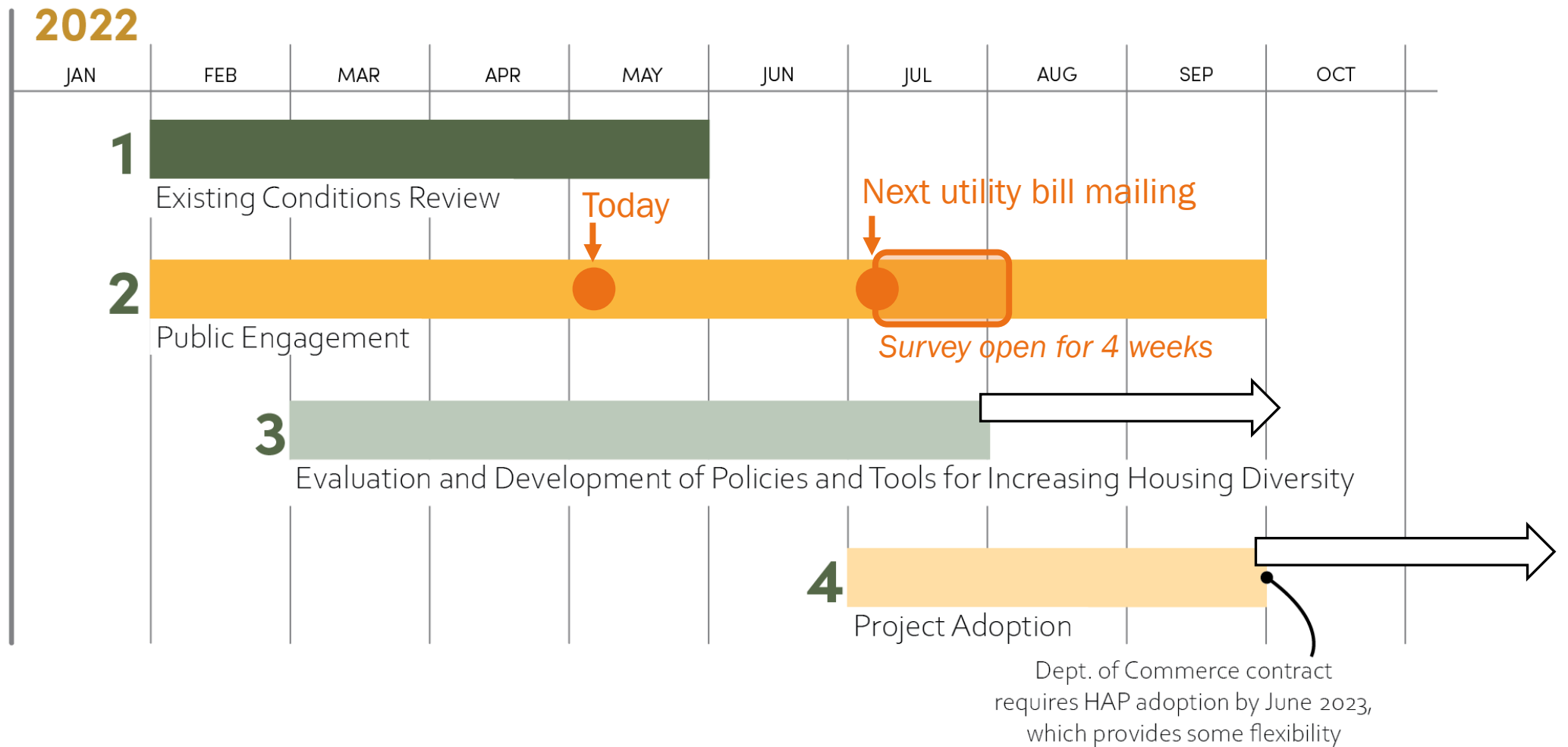
# Survey Schedule



# Survey Schedule



# Survey Schedule



# Community Survey

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Screen share